

Karen Barad and the Unresolved Challenge of Collectivity: A Case for New Materialisms

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Abstract

In this paper, I start by pointing out that despite their differences, Slavoj Žižek and Karen Barad share an understanding of the notions of relationality, processuality, and immanence as central tenets of materialist philosophy. As I argue, however, it is collectivity that acts in both Žižek's and Barad's works as a safety valve that lends immanence, processuality, and relationality their materialist quality. To support this argument, I demonstrate that certain forms of collectivity underlie the passage from Werner Heisenberg's uncertainty to Niels Bohr's indeterminacy in Barad's interpretation of Bohr's 'philosophy-physics'. However, I claim that there is a further form of collectivity, which I call 'collectivity as inclusive and holistic overdetermination', that Barad overlooks and that conditions the *indeterminability* of indeterminacy. As I argue, the latter also has implications for political agency. I conclude by briefly sketching out how these forms of collectivity can determine the production of subjectivity and, as a consequence, shape the subject's collective action.

I. Materialism as Collectivism

In this article, I attempt, first, to rethink the concept of collectivity within the framework of new materialisms. To do so, I take into account Karen Barad's, one of this movement's figureheads, agential materialism. Thereby, I demonstrate how collectivity permeates—both intentionally and unintentionally—Barad's conceptualisation of matter, the way that matter is structured, and, lastly, the relationship between the different material elements. Nevertheless, this article has a further second objective, namely, to show how collectivity is an essential part of any thinking of materialism. By rethinking materialism as what I have called elsewhere "a collective science,"¹ my aim is to rehabilitate both materialism and collectivity as a way of thought and mode of practice that opposes a differential and inclusive, i.e., collective understanding of subjectivity to the liberal and solipsist understanding of

1 Thomas Telios, "Shrapnels: Jacques Derrida's *Theory and Practice*: Towards an Enigmatic Materialism of Hope," *Symposium. Canadian Journal for Continental Philosophy* 27, no. 1 (2023): 77–95.

the subject as an atom. As I argue, this has a further—severe—consequence in regard to the subject’s political practices: if the subject is to be considered as a collective entity, then also this collective subject’s practices cannot but be also collective. The latter entails, however, that also the subject’s relationship to its/the Other as well as the way that the subject and its/the Other can work with one another, must be reconsidered. As I intend to make plausible, it is only from the viewpoint of such an understanding of collectivity as the way, relationship, and condition of subjectivity production as well as the regime of how subjectivity relates dependently to its/the Other that materialism can avoid regressing into what Barad aptly describes as the “the metaphysics of individualism.”²

Notwithstanding, this should not mean that such an account of collectivity is missing only from Barad’s—emerging—neo-materialist understanding of materialism. Collectivity as a structural and constitutive element of materialist thinking and not only as a promising concept of organization of practice like, for instance, in the form of the proletariat, the multitude, etc., is, in general, absent from the materialist edifices. Take, for example, one of the most robust and opulent recent understandings of materialism, namely Slavoj Žižek’s Hegelian-Lacanian conception of materialism. In his *Afterword: Lenin’s Choice*, Žižek examines whether Theodor W. Adorno’s concept of the “predominance of the objective” and Vladimir I. Lenin’s “theory of reflection” qualify as materialist concepts. In the course of his discussion, he debunks externality as an idealist trap to which both Adorno and Lenin, despite their fervent attempts, ultimately fell prey. For Žižek, to assume that an externality (like an object or a social situation) is the determining factor of the subject leads to the diremption of an outer, ideal, absolute world that serves as the ultimate determining factor of the subject’s constitution and thereby results in a Trojan horse that reintroduces idealism through the back door. Against this “pseudo-problematic of the thought asymptotically approaching the ever-elusive ‘objective reality,’ never able to grasp it in its infinite complexity,”³ Žižek argues for an understanding of materialism according to which it is “the absolute *inherence* of the external obstacle which prevents thought from attaining full identity with itself.”⁴ Rather than “clinging to the minimum of objective reality *outside* the thought’s subjective mediation,”⁵ Žižek’s immanent understanding of materialism consists of two elements: The first is the internalisation of the external object which from that point on appears as having always-already—to use an Althusserian expression—been inherent in the subject’s mode of being. The second counts as a species of materialism, any epistemological or practical-political operation that prevents the subject

2 Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 393.

3 Slavoj Žižek, “Afterword: Lenin’s Choice,” in *Revolution at the Gates: A Selection of Writings from February to October 1917*, ed. Slavoj Žižek (London: Verso, 2002), 179.

4 Žižek, “Afterword: Lenin’s Choice,” 179.

5 Žižek, “Afterword: Lenin’s Choice,” 179.

from completely grasping itself by dirempting it from itself, thus opening up a gap between the subject and itself. This is because “materialist” is a term that can apply to anything that is already given (and therefore immanent) and that, by being internalised, prevents the subject from becoming finite, that is, from being identified and determined.

These topics are again taken up in more detail in Žižek’s *The Parallax View* (2006). Two additional elements are added to that of immanence in order to form what we might call the *materialist triad*: relationality and processuality. Whereas immanence answers the question of “*how, from within the flat order of positive being, the very gap between thought and being, the negativity of thought, emerges,*”⁶ Žižek (echoing Kierkegaard) defines processuality in terms of the need “*not to overcome the gap that separates thought from being, but to conceive it in its ‘becoming.’*”⁷ Concerning relationality, the subject acquires its processual mode of perpetual be(com)ing because it appears as the “*reflexive twist,*” a “*necessary redoubling of myself as standing both outside and inside my picture, that bears witness to my ‘material existence.’*”⁸ These three characteristics constitute what Žižek calls the *parallax moment*, which encapsulates the following insights: (a) what we know as the subject is the result of the strained relation between the subject and its *potential* self (relationality); (b) the subject, therefore, sees itself as forced to remain open and in a state of *iterative* becoming (processuality); (c) the external determinant of the subject will be *internalised* and—more importantly—will appear as having *always* been an integral part of the subject’s identity (immanence). Seen in this way, the parallax moment is not a concrete moment or instance within the subject’s temporal process of be(com)ing. Rather, it corresponds to the realization that subjectivity is tantamount to the chasm that necessarily emerges as soon as thought tries to conceive of itself, or—as Žižek puts it: a “*gap which separates the One from itself.*”⁹

In what follows, I argue that it is collectivity that must be acknowledged as the safety valve that guarantees that immanence, processuality, and relationality can avoid the idealist pitfalls and unfold their materialist qualities. To substantiate my argument, I turn to the work of Karen Barad, one of the leading thinkers on new materialisms, whose understanding of materialism is also permeated by the notions of relationality, processuality, and immanence.¹⁰ As I demonstrate, collectivity underlies—in two subtle

6 Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2006), 6.

7 Žižek, *The Parallax View*, 6 (emphasis added).

8 Žižek, *The Parallax View*, 17.

9 Žižek, *The Parallax View*, 17.

10 Žižek acknowledges the commonalities between Barad’s understanding of materialism and his own. While in his later book, *Absolute Recoil: Towards a New Foundation of Dialectical Materialism* (London, Verso, 2014), he accuses new materialists of rehumanising and anthropomorphising non-human material instead of de-idealizing or anti-essentializing it, in his earlier *Less than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism* (London: Verso, 2012), 931–944; he launches a more fundamental critique that

but unequivocal forms—Barad’s explication of the transition from Werner Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle to Niels Bohr’s indeterminacy principle. However, there is a third form of collectivity that both conditions and serves as a foundation for indeterminacy, thus accounting for indeterminacy’s *indeterminability*. I call this form “collectivity as inclusive and holistic overdetermination,” and it is striking that Barad does not seize the opportunity to harness the promise of collectivity in this form. As I contend, however, in accordance with Dorothea Olkowski (2016), the latter has important repercussions both for the subject’s political agency and for the concrete forms of political practices that could be derived from it since it robs Barad of the chance to rethink the interdependence of the subject and its/ the Other within this collective paradigm.¹¹ As will be shown, this disregard is more of a consequence of Barad’s understanding of materialism as informed through Jacques Derrida’s radical alterity than mere neglect. Therefore, in the last part of the article, I will try and sketch how thinking collectivity as “an inclusive and holistic overdetermination” could help us reconsider not only the subject’s structuration but also the way it relates to the Other as well as, ultimately, the kind of practices that could be derived from this collective structuration of the subject and the Other as a collective.

II. From Uncertainty to Indeterminacy: Collectivity as Ontological and Methodological Necessity

The significance of Barad’s contribution within and beyond the context of new materialisms cannot be put into question.¹² For the purposes of our discussion, Barad’s concept of agential realism seems to fulfil all three of Žižek’s criteria for materiality. Within the framework of her agential realism, matter is processual because it “does not refer to a fixed substance” but is rather “substance in its intra-active becoming—not a thing, but a doing, a congealing of agency. Matter is a stabilizing and destabilizing process of iterative intra-activity.”¹³ Further, and unlike traditional ontologies, matter’s agency manifests

pertains to the very core of what he conceives of as an indispensable element of materialism, namely dialectics. Notwithstanding Evelien Geerts and Iris van der Tuin’s profound and devastating critique in their “The Feminist Futures of Reading Diffractively: How Barad’s Methodology Replaces Conflict-based Readings of Beauvoir and Irigaray,” *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge* 30, (2016): 1–19; I would contend that dialectics is important because it defines—perhaps even *pace* Žižek—a collective and multi-layered process. Unfortunately, I cannot delve deeper into this debate here.

11 See Dorothea Olkowski, “The Cogito and the Limits of Neo-materialism and Naturalized Objectivity,” *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge* 30, (2016): 1–13.

12 See Katharina Hoppe and Thomas Lemke, “Die Macht der Materie. Grundlagen und Grenzen des agentuellen Realismus von Karen Barad,” *Soziale Welt* 66, no. 3 (2015): 261–280.

13 Barad, “Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28, no. 3 (2003): 822; see also Karen Barad, “Nature’s Queer Performativity,” *Qui Parle* 19, no. 2 (2011): 125.

itself as a *dynamism of forces*. Bringing about the end of the constructionism that the discursive turn instantiated, Barad argues that the primary semantics of matter are neither material nor discursive but “material-discursive practices through which (ontic and semantic) boundaries are constituted.”¹⁴ Therefore, they are “strictly”¹⁵ relational, meaning that matter exists simultaneously *as a relation and in a relation* where all designated “things” are constantly exchanging and diffracting, influencing and working inseparably. The third element of Žižek’s materialist triad, immanence, is equally obvious. Were matter decipherable through its qualities, e.g., the positive or negative potentiality to act or cause (agency), then the results that matter brings about would be determinable and identifiable in advance. This would render agency external to matter since the actions and their results would be presumable before being materialised. As Barad claims, however, agency is neither “something that someone or something has”¹⁶ nor “an attribute.”¹⁷ Rather, it is “the ongoing reconfiguration of the world”¹⁸ and, therefore, a performative, immanent “enactment.”¹⁹ As we have seen, however, these three notions would not be materialist without an underlying understanding of collectivity that lends them their materialist character. To ascertain the latter, we must turn to Barad’s radical rereading of Bohr’s theoretical writings.

Barad’s goal in revisiting Bohr’s philosophy-physics is to develop a “coherent framework.”²⁰ To this end, she proposes agential realism as an overarching paradigm to bridge and address “both the epistemological *and* [the] ontological issues”²¹ at stake. The first part of Barad’s argument consists of unmasking Heisenbergian uncertainty as a mere epistemic assumption. As Barad’s rendition of Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle lays bare, “a determinate value of the electron’s momentum is *assumed* to exist independently of measurement, but we can’t know it; we remain uncertain about its value, *owing* to the unavoidable disturbance *caused* by the measurement interaction.”²² Bohr, however, is unsatisfied with such a merely epistemic assumption of uncertainty and articulates the need to corroborate it ontologically so as to authenticate it. The reason, according to Barad, is that concepts like uncertainty “are meaningful” for Bohr—“that is, semantically determinate, not *in the abstract* but

14 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 141.

15 Hanna Meißner, “Conversing with the Unexpected: Towards a Feminist Ethics of Knowing,” *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge* 30, (2016): 1–19.

16 Barad, “Posthumanist Performativity,” 826.

17 Barad, “Posthumanist Performativity,” 818.

18 Barad, “Posthumanist Performativity,” 818.

19 Barad, “Posthumanist Performativity,” 826.

20 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 69.

21 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 69 (emphasis added).

22 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 116 (emphasis added).

by virtue of their *embodiment* in the physical arrangement of the apparatus.”²³ From this perspective, uncertainty, too, must be divested of its pure epistemic character since the latter is the result of certain “conditions of possibility.”²⁴ Uncertainty may well express an epistemic necessity, but this is neither *metaphysically* nor *transcendentally*, but rather *ontologically* conditioned. And this leads Bohr (and Barad) to shift the conceptual framework and supplement uncertainty with indeterminacy. While uncertainty could be misunderstood as connoting a stage of “unknowability per se,” indeterminacy should make clear that what only *seems* unknowable in reality *designates* the impossibility of pinpointing it to a single measurement *because* of “what can be said to *simultaneously* exist.”²⁵ Uncertainty thus becomes the epistemic form of an unavoidable delimitation imposed upon our cognitive horizon by the simultaneous (i.e., synchronous) existence of matter, rendering it not just uncertain but indeterminate. It is not impossible to know; nor is it uncertain whether we can know. On the contrary, what we know is indeterminate because it assembles *as* or *in* itself and bears within it, at each and every moment, the simultaneous co-existence of more than one measurement, meaning and location, making it impossible to single out which of those measurements, meanings and locations is uniquely responsible for what we know. In this light, indeterminacy is not the impossibility of determining something. Rather, it describes the awareness that what exists consists of more than one property, quality, or measurement. This accomplishes the paradigm shift from uncertainty to indeterminacy. By acknowledging that “what can be said to *simultaneously* exist”²⁶ functions as the ontological “condition of possibility” of what can be known to exist, Bohr (and Barad) found themselves obliged to supplement uncertainty with indeterminacy. However, as I will presently show, it is collectivity that conditions not only the paradigm shift from uncertainty to indeterminacy but also the conditions of indeterminacy, thus becoming the reason for indeterminacy’s *indeterminability*. In order to comprehend this, however, we need to take a step back and examine the forms of collectivity that permeate Barad’s reconstruction of Bohr’s philosophy-physics.

Thus far, collectivity has already appeared—subtly, but unequivocally—twice. It first appeared in the form of a *methodological necessity*. By postulating, with Bohr, that uncertainty needs to be understood as the result of an ontological structuration, Barad draws attention to the fact that in order to comprehend what is observed, we need to analyse it by taking into account not only its epistemic complexities (pertaining to *how* knowledge is possible) but also its ontological structuration (pertaining to *what* lies at hand and needs to be learned). Pure or abstract epistemological axioms on their own are not sufficient to provide us with insights concerning the nature of matter, just as pure facts are insignificant

23 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 116 (emphasis added).

24 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 117.

25 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 118 (emphasis added).

26 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 118 (emphasis added).

without epistemic interpretation. For Barad, theoretical principles—no matter how painstakingly reconstructed—must be corroborated by empirical reality.²⁷ And epistemology must be rectified with a *collective* understanding in which theory and practice inform each other in a reciprocal, mutual, and egalitarian fashion.

The second time collectivity springs forth is when both the *essence* of the structural mode and the *organisational structure* of this material reality is itself recognised as being collective in its structuration. Not only does the method of observation need to leave its solipsistic character behind and become collectivized. More importantly, the material reality in question is to be regarded as a collective one since what exists can only be asserted as existing in a simultaneous manner. This bears witness to the existence of more than one matter, meaning that if we are to grasp matter in its complexity, we must take into account its plurality, as well as the ways in which (types or bits of) matter relate(s) to (other types or bits of) matter. Matter's mode of existence is simultaneity, and as such, it is impossible for matter to persevere solipsistically on its own. Whereas the form of collectivity as a methodological necessity refers to the metatheoretical framework necessary for approximating matter, this second form of collectivity refers to how matter is structured. This is not to say that this form of collectivity is the result of a mental or conceptual perception process that dogmatically dictates us to impose upon the material reality a collective mode of its organisation. Rather, it is the differential, diverse, and simultaneous co-existence of different types of matter that forces our perception to collectivise our epistemological tools in order to grasp it in its variety and plurality. For this reason, it is appropriate to speak of this type of collectivity as an *ontological necessity*.

If this diagnosis is correct, then the forms of collectivity that underlie Barad's reconstruction of Bohr's philosophy-physics cast a new light on two elements that are also crucial to Barad's theory of agential realism: her theory of subjectivity and her concept of agential cuts. Barad is undoubtedly right to seek

27 Therein, Barad is still close to the classic or Western Marxist understandings of epistemology. For the young Marx, epistemic truths can assume themselves as such only if confirmed (*bestätigt*), as he says, from the empirical reality they attempt to capture and only by acknowledging the limitations that the social context and social interactions within which were generated impose upon them (see See Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 and The Communist Manifesto* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1988), 104–5). Similarly, Theodor W. Adorno disowns *scientific solipsism*, i.e., the idea that science is to be understood as a self-contained system of principles and deductions and that this method can be applied in an undifferentiated manner to both the natural and the social sciences. Instead, he pleads for constellational thinking, as he terms it, leaning on Benjamin, that underscores the dependency of scientific thought on societal presumptions that are framed within concrete ideological limitations (see Theodor W. Adorno, “Why still Philosophy?” in *Critical Models. Interventions and Catchwords*, ed. Henry W. Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 5–18).

to put an end to “the metaphysics of individualism.”²⁸ By illustrating, via her notion of intra-action, that the individual is not an integral entity but instead an entanglement—and therefore subject to processes and mechanisms of continuous and incessant re-articulation, reconfiguration, and recalibration—she makes an invaluable plausible contribution to the ongoing debate on decentering subjectivity. The forms of collectivity as ontological and methodological necessity help to elucidate some of the most difficult and hermetic passages of Barad’s conceptualisation of subjectivity. Take, for instance, Barad’s assumption—a direct critique of Butler’s understanding of subjectivity as a “place-holder”²⁹—that there is “no discrete ‘I’ that precedes its actions”³⁰ or that there is “no ‘I’ separate from the intra-active becoming of the world.”³¹ The notion of collectivity as an ontological necessity helps to relativise the metaphysical tone that such an assumption could implicate by highlighting the processual and historical nature of intra-actions. Intra-actions, just like the mechanisms that condition their emergence and the indeterminacy that characterises their interplay, are not metaphysical assumptions that need to be presumed. If this were the case, then Barad would have to fall back on the epistemic metaphysicalism of Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle, which was merely declared but not ontologically corroborated until Bohr undertook and fulfilled this task. Rather, indeterminacy and intra-actions exist and can unravel their interminable functionality only thanks to a *prefigured* collection or assemblage of entities that will subsequently, at a later stage, intra-act with one another. Further, it is thanks to the underlying, this time methodological, form of collectivity that we can make sense of Barad’s argument that “our (intra)actions [...] never leave us” but are instead “sedimented into our becoming.”³² And for Barad, it is, of course, the subject as a collective sedimentation that springs forward from the interplay of the different intra-actions and that comprises the innumerability of intra-actions that brought it forward. Barad calls such phenomena *agential cuts* and defines them as “boundary-drawing practices.”³³ They allow us to conceive of the subject’s structuration from within, i.e., by taking, each and every time, a different interplay of intra-actions as the dominant causality of the subject’s emergence *without* having to appoint and elevate one of these different causal explanations to the subject’s sole causality. This notwithstanding, the *agential separability* that enables a viewpoint of “exteriority-within-phenomena”³⁴ does not render the subject non-determinable. Rather, the subject must be approximated as an *indeterminate* entity, meaning that it emerges as a complex entity that bears within it all possible significations that were “sedimented into [its] becoming,” demanding—in the spirit of what was diagnosed as the underlying

28 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 393.

29 Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 10f.

30 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 394.

31 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 394.

32 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 394.

33 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 140.

34 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 140.

form of methodological collectivity—to be approached, not by clinging to a single dominant narrative but by incorporating as many viewpoints as were entangled in the subject’s process of structuration. If, as Barad postulates, entanglement leads to “cutting things together and apart,”³⁵ then there must nevertheless be a moment, albeit a fugitive one, where the elements that were cut together and apart can be thought of as already existing in a sort of relationship and not as just floating in a state of unidentified and unidentifiable limbo before entering new processes of articulation.³⁶ This logical observation demands that a further model of reflection be introduced—one that is capable of theorising this inherent relationality and interdependence of the different material units on one another by bringing to the fore this necessary operation of keeping apart what cannot but be considered jointly. As will be imminently shown, this preexisting interwovenness of matter can neither be addressed as an amorph mass nor be exhausted in bipolar or binary inter-elemental relationships. Rather, matter exists and appears through entanglements of matter and then again through entanglements of the entanglements *by mode of collectivity*. Within this framework, not only is indeterminacy manifested as the result of intra-action, but intra-actions should also be seen as the result of collections of matter that provide the material for entanglements, and that must be acknowledged as having to exist both prior to and through entanglement. In this light, emphasising the dependence of intra-action on the collectivity of matter that precedes it is not tantamount to arguing for “the prior existence of separately determinate entities,”³⁷ which would indeed be a characteristic of metaphysical individualism, of which Barad is right to warn us.³⁸ On the contrary, making intra-actions conditional on an already prefigured collectivity of matter runs counter to the metaphysics of individualism because it opposes the metaphysical solipsism of individualism to the preexisting plurality and complexity of collectivism.

As soon as not only subjectivity but every material entity must be understood as being part of a preexisting collectivity to which it must be juxtaposed, a third type of collectivity begins to shimmer through. This model of collectivity acquires the form of an *inclusive and holistic overdetermination* that neither simply ontologically conditions the subject’s (or *mutatis mutandis* the matter’s) epistemic indeterminacy nor simply demands that a plural methodology be applied to render it decipherable. More fundamentally, this type of collectivity seems to serve as a condition of indeterminacy, thus functioning as *indeterminacy’s indeterminability*. In order to grasp where the third form of collectivity emanates from, we need to revisit the—hitherto only roughly mentioned – notion of inseparability, which is central to Barad’s account of Bohr’s philosophy-physics.

35 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 140.

36 Antonio Gramsci calls this gap between entanglements an “interregnum”: Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971), 276.

37 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 394.

38 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 128.

III. From Indeterminacy to Indeterminability: Collectivity as Holistic and Inclusive Overdetermination

Turning now to Barad's notion of inseparability, it is important to mention that Barad does not introduce this concept to designate a state in which, due to the inherent complexity of entities that intertwine or overlap with one another, it is impossible to ascertain where the traces of agency lead back to. Rather, inseparability arises because those traces of agency that produce matter are overdetermined and therefore lead back to more than one etiological *causae*. In this light, inseparability does not connote the ontological quality of the inability to decipher and discern, which then renders the identification of matter impossible. Instead, inseparability confirms and acknowledges the epistemological insecurity of providing a sole and exclusive account of the production of matter. This renders the different accounts, retellings and narratives of how matter comes into being — processually, relationally and immanently — contingent, as Barad correctly asserts. Nevertheless, the surrounding collectivity of matter, which sets in motion the processes of entanglement from which matter emanates and which provides the framework out of which these contingent narratives unravel, must be acknowledged as having to be necessarily 'always-already'³⁹ at play. Therefore, while the different narratives of how matter comes to be are contingent, the collectivity is not contingent but *necessary*. In other words: The different accounts of how matter comes into existence or the alternative paths it could have taken may be contingent and as such indicative of the openness of matter production. The diversity of matter production, as well as the singularity of the produced matter, *necessarily* depend, however, on the collection of various preexisting elements which enframe them.⁴⁰ But that's not all: In the framework sketched here, the notion of contingency also needs to be revisited since it does not designate amorphousness or uncertainty. Rather, it refers to the infinite variations of overdetermination that cannot but be logically assumed to entangle with one another in a parallel and simultaneous — this is, *necessarily collective* — way. Only from this perspective, can materialism deal a fatal blow to the metaphysics of individualism. By historicizing the subject upon conditioning it from (a form of) collectivity that is both *holistic* and *inclusive*, materialism appears as a form of analysis that can accommodate all matter, leave nothing

39 Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 176. Commenting on her earlier work (Iris van der Tuin and Rick Dolphijn, "The transversality of new materialism," *Women: A Cultural Review* 21, no. 2 (2010): 153-171), Iris van der Tuin argues that "a new materialism is always already at work in the humanities" ("The New Materialist 'Always Already'. On an A-Human Humanities," *NORA-Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*, 19, no. 4 (2011): 285). In a similar vein, I would even argue that collectivity is always already at work both in materialism and in the humanities.

40 The reverberations of Martin Heidegger's notion of "Enframing" (*Gestell*) are hard to miss here. See Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper, 1977), 20.

outside, and, by convoluting the etiological chains of matter's emergence, forces matter to become (and – more importantly – remain) overdetermined since it can never again be thought of in its individuality but as the result of entangling collectivities.⁴¹

It is in this additional form as *holistic and inclusive overdetermination* that collectivity concludes the paradigmatic shift from uncertainty to indeterminacy and from indeterminacy to indeterminability. If uncertainty were found to be the epistemic guise of an ontologically conditioned indeterminacy that was the result of entanglements that needed a complex and plural methodological framework in order to be deciphered, then the collectivity of matter that preexists its every dis-entanglement would be the *raison d'être* and condition of indeterminacy. The holism of collectivity as overdetermination debunks the individualism of matter by demonstrating how matter is entanglement *per se* and how, behind the façade of matter's singular appearance, there is always collectivity at play, which at the same time ensures that individualism will not appear by supplementing metaphysics with historical processuality. Matter combines within itself the collective character of its eventuation and its solipsistic and individualistic appearance by hiding the former behind the latter. In parallel with the forms of collectivity as a methodological and an ontological necessity, collectivity expresses, in the form of *holistic overdetermination*, the logical necessity (i) of keeping apart what at a second stage will be considered entangled and (ii) of searching for the entanglements that always lie behind an individualist façade. However, if collectivity's holism functions as the structural conditionality of indeterminacy by overdetermining it, as we have seen, then collectivity as not only holistic but also inclusive overdetermination conditions the politicality of collectivity. In order to address the latter, we need to reexamine the role that the concrete social Other plays within Barad's theoretical framework.

IV. Rethinking Alterity: On Collectivity as a Political Program

In her most recent work, Barad defends some of her most relevant earlier concepts from critiques they have received. First, Barad redefines and strings together her notions of agential cuts, intra-actions, entanglement and agential separability as follows:

41 At this point, Barad is very close to Judith Butler's counter-offensive against those involved in "a war on the idea of interdependency" (see Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 67). At the same time, and as Kathrin Thiele accurately points out, she is also very close to "the quest of immanence" that Deleuze and Guattari initiated when they conceived of "an ontology that ... imagines an 'immanence immanent only to itself'" (see Kathrin Thiele, "Quantum Physics and/as Philosophy: Immanence, Diffraction, and the Ethics of Mattering," *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge* 30, (2016): §3).

*Agential cuts – intra-actions – don't produce (absolute) separation, they engage in agential separability – differentiating and entangling (that's one move, not successive processes). Agential cuts radically rework relations of joining and disjoining. Separability in this sense, agential separability, is a matter of irreducible heterogeneity that is not undermined by the relations of inheritance that hold together the disparate without reducing difference to sameness. Entanglements are not a name for the interconnectedness of all being as one, but rather specific material relations of the ongoing differentiating of the world.*⁴²

In addition to rethinking some of her own older notions, Barad introduces two new notions: that of “cutting together/apart”⁴³ and that of “(be)coming together-apart.”⁴⁴ These two neologisms connote the “iterative (re)configuring of patterns of differentiating-entangling,”⁴⁵ the “coming together of opposite qualities within, not as a flattening out or erasure of difference, but as a relation of difference within,”⁴⁶ and, last but not least, a “dis/jointed movement ... *that is the hauntological nature of quantum entanglements.*”⁴⁷ The latter formulations can be interpreted as alluding to traits and fundamental operations of materialism as a collective science in the above-sketched way. When Barad emphasizes that cutting together-apart designates “one move”⁴⁸ or that—as quoted above—differentiating and entangling consist of one sole move rather than successive moments in a (mono-)linear process, we can interpret this as implying the form of ontological collectivity. There, just as here, cutting together-apart could be assumed to indicate the collective movement that pertains to bringing distinctive matter together and letting it merge and entangle, before dispersing it and gathering it anew. Furthermore, superposition, although not a new concept, seems to slowly move us away from the idea of representing “*ontologically indeterminate states,*”⁴⁹ coming closer to what Barad only recently described as the ability to be at the same time here and there, now and then, dead and alive,⁵⁰ and which was referred to here as collectivity in the form of holistic and inclusive overdetermination. Last, but not least, the notion of multiplicity—though not *stricto sensu* a technical term in her earlier work—seems to gradually move to the foreground and connote something like a collective methodology. These similarities should suffice

42 Karen Barad, “Quantum Entanglements and Hauntological Relations of Inheritance. Dis/continuities, SpaceTime Enfoldings, and Justice-to-Come,” *Derrida Today* 3, no. 2 (2010): 265.

43 Barad, “Quantum Entanglements and Hauntological Relations of Inheritance,” 244.

44 Karen Barad, “On Touching. The Inhuman That Therefore I am,” *Differences. A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 23, no. 3 (2012): 208.

45 Karen Barad, “Diffracting Diffraction. Cutting Together-Apart,” *Parallax* 2, no. 3 (2014): 168.

46 Barad, “Diffracting Diffraction,” 168.

47 Barad, “Quantum Entanglements and Hauntological Relations of Inheritance,” 245.

48 Barad, “Quantum Entanglements and Hauntological Relations of Inheritance,” 245.

49 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 265.

50 Cf. Barad, “Quantum Entanglements and Hauntological Relations of Inheritance,” 250.

not only to substantiate Barad's alleged "Derridean turn"⁵¹ but to point towards a "collective turn" in Barad's work that should not go unnoticed. As I argue, though, it is exactly due to this novel but discernible recent trend in Barad's work that her theory becomes vulnerable to critique.

Thus far, I have shown that although Barad seems to acknowledge collectivity as both a methodological and an ontological necessity, she overlooks collectivity in the form of a holistic and inclusive overdetermination, which ultimately leads her to misjudge necessity as a modality inherent to collectivity. As mentioned in the introduction, this has serious consequences for forms of political agency and forms of political practice. Moving on now to address the latter, we must approach this issue independently of the question of whether Barad is aware of the collectivist paradigm underlying her work. Regardless of whether Barad would concede that a collectivist paradigm underlies her work, she is nevertheless conscious of the fact that, within her new-materialist, feminist body of thought, every conventional notion is to be subjected to reconceptualization. As she emphatically declares: "Quantum entanglements are not the intertwining of two (or more) states/entities/events, but a calling into question of the very nature of two-ness, and ultimately of one-ness as well. Duality, unity, multiplicity, being are undone. 'Between' will never be the same. One is too few, two is too many."⁵² Furthermore, it would be unfair to presume that the potential for an actualized concept of collective and political agency or an actualized catalogue of collective practices has eluded Barad's attention. As she states, commenting on Butler and echoing Badiou: "Any proposal for a new political collective must take account of not merely the practices that produce distinctions between the human and the nonhuman but the *practices through which their differential constitution is produced*."⁵³ This last quote should suffice to show that recognizing and theorizing the role and functionality of collectivity at play also serves Barad as a propaedeutic for carving out a new framework for political agency and new forms of collective practices. Within this collective framework, however, which seems to increase in importance in her recent work, the hitherto modes of entanglement between the Other and the subject must be recalibrated so as to account for the different circumstances in which the subject and the Other encounter each other. It is through the lens of the Other, of how the Other is addressed, of how the subject relates to its/the Other and, lastly, of how the subject's collective structuration as a collective necessitates that the subject labors with its/the Other that I would like—in what follows—to both scrutinize and challenge the political potential of Barad's understanding of materialism. The reason is that if collectivity, as argued so far,

51 Evelien Geerts and Iris van der Tuin, "The Feminist Futures of Reading Diffractively: How Barad's Methodology Replaces Conflict-based Readings of Beauvoir and Irigaray," *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge* 30, (2016): §20 FN21.

52 Barad, "Quantum Entanglements and Hauntological Relations of Inheritance," 251, and Barad, "Diffracting Diffraction," 178.

53 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 59.

is the necessary methodological, ontological, and normative warrant of materialism's materiality that protects materialism from regressing to a reverse idealism, then the political practices of such an inherently collective materialism can only be collective which means that they must be carried out from the subject in cooperation and solidarity with its/the Other. While this is undoubtedly still a very abstract way of talking about politics, I think that the framework that will be provided will still suffice in order to inspire considerations on the concrete forms of political practices that could be extrapolated from such a grounding of the Political.

Unfortunately, Barad does not take the step of fundamentally rethinking the functionality of Otherness and the role of the Other in her theory. Instead, she remains confined to the all too familiar post-Derridean (ethical) politics of alterity. As she writes, echoing Derrida's radical alterity program of the 1980s and 1990s:

Entanglements are relations of obligation – being bound to the other – enfolded traces of othering. Othering, the constitution of an 'Other,' entails an indebtedness to the 'Other,' who is irreducibly and materially bound to, threaded through, the 'self' – a diffraction/dispersion of identity. "Otherness" is an entangled relation of difference (*différance*). Ethicality entails noncoincidence with oneself.⁵⁴

Failure to overcome the intrinsic limitations of the Derridean framework does not mean that the politics of alterity have forfeited their radicality or that they have run out of steam. Quite the contrary: Alterity, just like critique, retains (the latter even *contra* Barad and Latour whom Barad directly quotes in an interview at the advent of the new-materialist turn)⁵⁵ its radical political potential – perhaps scathed, but certainly intact. Nevertheless, and unlike recent conceptualizations that have probed the challenges and newly found potentialities of the collectivist paradigm for thinking of notions such as alterity and critique,⁵⁶ Barad thinks that the Derridean framework of an ethics of radical alterity also encompasses her own new-materialist and feminist onto-epistemological framework. The latter pertains to her clearly Derridean assumption that entanglements *oblige*: by declaring that the subject comes into being only through entanglements, Barad allows for a shifting and deferment between the subject's actual, not-yet-entangled form and its prospective, entangled and accomplished form. This generates a gap within

54 Barad, "Quantum Entanglements and Hauntological Relations of Inheritance," 265.

55 Rick Dolphijn and Iris van der Tuin, *New Materialism: Interviews & Cartographies* (London: Open Humanities Press, 2012), 49. See also Bruno Latour, "Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern," *Critical Inquiry – Special issue on the Future of Critique* 30, no. 2 (2004): 225–248.

56 See Thomas Telios, "Why still Reification? Towards a Critical Social Ontology," in *Georg Lukács and the Possibilities of Critical Social Ontology*, ed. Michael Thompson (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 223–266.

the subject where its previous, former form becomes dependent on its prospective, consequent form. For Barad, this diremption connotes an understanding of ethicality which “entails noncoincidence with oneself.”⁵⁷ Derrida had claimed something similar for himself when he argued that “what I have attempted can *also* be inscribed under the rubric of the ‘critique of idealism.’ Therefore, it goes without saying that to the extent that dialectical materialism also operates this critique, it in no way incurs my reticence, nor have I ever formulated any on this subject.”⁵⁸ By equating, as I think we should, Derrida’s critique of idealism with Barad’s attempt to put an end to “the metaphysics of individualism,” it should be obvious why Barad feels comfortable moving within the Derridean paradigm.⁵⁹

However, it is precisely this identification with Derrida that prevents Barad from harnessing the full potential of the collective paradigm when it comes to sketching out ethical and political “questions of responsibility and accountability [that] lie at the core of scientific practice.”⁶⁰ This is not to say that Barad disregards or discards collective action and agency as agential possibilities of her entangled materialism since that would mean that she forfeits her anti-humanist, anti-essentialist and anti-idealist framework. As she undoubtedly claims: “Agency is not about choice in the liberal humanist sense; agency is about the possibilities and accountability entailed in reconfiguring material-discursive apparatuses of bodily production, including the boundary articulations and exclusions that are marked by those practices.”⁶¹ Further, echoing herein Badiou,⁶² Barad clearly intends to ground collective actions holistically and immanently, i.e., as actions that leave no one behind *and* are performative-historical in their origination, meaning that they are not metaphysically or representationally grounded. In addition, it must be added that Barad is in principle not opposed to collectivity as a fundamental mode of articulation of societal and political reality. After all, and as her reference to Latour’s etymological derivation of the collective nature of things shows,⁶³ what Barad contests is not the collective structuration of reality, but rather how privileging collectivity and accepting the eventual loss of singularity within such superindividual

57 Barad, “Quantum Entanglements and Hauntological Relations of Inheritance,” 265.

58 Jacques Derrida, *Positions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 62.

59 Moreover, and if, as seen above, (i) for Žižek materialism is “the absolute *inherence* of the external obstacle which prevents thought from attaining full identity with itself” (Žižek, “Afterword: Lenin’s Choice”, 179); (ii) Barad’s understanding of ethicality “entails noncoincidence with oneself” (Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 265); and (iii) Derrida is right—as I think he is—to equate dialectical materialism with his own critique of idealism, then this may be, if not the only, then at least one of the very few points where Derrida, Barad and Žižek are aligned with one another.

60 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 37.

61 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 218.

62 This point bears a further uncanny similarity to Alain Badiou, particularly to his dictum that revolution must “impose itself on all the elements that help to bring about its existence;” Alain Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis* (London: Verso, 2010), 208.

63 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 412, FN33.

structures may bear witness to the existence of a certain “discourse power-knowledge nexus”⁶⁴ that countenances discursive constructionism over materialist objectivity.⁶⁵

To what extent, then, does Barad’s alignment with Derrida in regard to the relationship of the subject to alterity and Otherness prevent Barad from realising the expectations generated by the collectivist paradigm that lies in the background of her work? In my view, this pertains to the fact that by clinging to an incommensurable and irreducible Other, Barad cannot go all the way to collectivise the subject and to extrapolate a theory of collective-materialist subjectivity that acknowledges in the Other not only an obligor but the vector of the subject’s subjectivation, and therefore, also the conditioning element of the subject’s collective agency. Instead, for Barad, the Other cannot but remain asymptotic to the subject. The subject orbits around the Other but is never entangled by it. The subject and its Other inter-act but do not *intra-act*.⁶⁶

By contrast, and in light of the above analysis of the three forms of collectivity, a proper materialist entanglement such as those identified by Barad would extrapolate out of the subject an entity that is permeated by the Other to such an extent that it is impossible to differentiate between the subject and its/the Other. It would require that we acknowledge the interdependence of the subject and the Other and that we involve in our analysis of the subject’s becoming all entangled modes of subjectivity production that encounter, intersect and in-form one another in/as the subject. At the same time, it would acknowledge the Other as more than a vector of these subjectivation processes. Rather, it would explicitly stress the necessity of including the Other in the subject’s practices, since the subject only exists through the entanglements it experiences due to the Other’s simultaneous existence. Finally, there could be no emancipation of the subject and its/the Other from each other but, as Martin Saar puts it, “collective self-determination”⁶⁷ of the subject and its/the Other *through* each other.

64 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 412, FN33.

65 It would be easy to put the blame for Barad’s reluctance to provide an elaborate toolkit of collective practices on Derrida and on Barad’s identification with him. In this context, however, Derrida was steadfast in highlighting, for instance, the need for a deconstructionist “New International.” When drafting his *Specters of Marx*, a work Barad keeps returning to in key passages of her recent work, he likewise highlighted the programmatic aspects that this “New International” had to combat; see Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International* (London: Routledge, 1994), 81.

66 This asymmetry is undoubtedly to be ascribed to the Derridean heritage that Barad follows.

67 Martin Saar, “What Is Social Philosophy? Or: Order, Practice, Subject,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 118, no. 2 (2018): 217.

V. Outlook: Towards a Collectivist Understanding of Subjectivity

Acknowledging the subject's dependence on the Other that necessitates the subject's materialisation only *through* collective practices executed *with* the Other is what I would like to call a "collectivist understanding of subjectivity." To be honest, such a social-ontological understanding of subjectivity is nothing new; it runs like an undercurrent—even if a minor one—throughout the whole of Western philosophy, starting with Plato's notion of the multiformity of the body.⁶⁸ Undoubtedly, however, it was the critique of the integral and individualist subjectivity exulted by modernity that advanced a notion of the subject as shared, divided—or, as Marx paradigmatically put it, of a subject that is in its "individual existence at the same time a social being."⁶⁹ The series of notions that designate the subject's collectivity which are waiting to be sewn together is long, undoubtedly diverse, fragmented, and definitely not coherent. Yet all seem to correspond in one way or another to one of the three forms of the triptych of collectivity as developed here, namely, to collectivity as a methodological necessity, as ontological necessity, and as holistic and inclusive overdetermination. Immanuel Kant's "manifold," Georg W. F. Hegel's aphorism regarding the " 'I,' that is, 'We,'" ⁷⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche's "Dividuum"⁷¹ (1996), Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's notions of "disjunctive synthesis," or their understanding of subjectivity "as a collective assemblage,"⁷² and last but not least Cornelius Castoriadis's understanding of the psyche as "convoluted chaos"⁷³ (1987) have helped precipitate the understanding of collectivity as a logically necessitated (social-) ontological collectivity that opposes to separation what cannot but be thought together. In parallel, Sigmund Freud's notion of "Überdeterminierung"⁷⁴ and Louis Althusser's notion of "surdétermination"⁷⁵ paved the way for understanding collectivity as holistic and inclusive overdetermination. Ultimately, the syntactical figure of parataxis used by Jean-Francois Lyotard⁷⁶ and

68 The platonic original in *Phaedrus* reads "κατὰ σώματος μορφήν πολυειδές" see John Burnet, ed., *Platonis Opera Vol. 2: Tetralogiae III-IV* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2019), §271a.

69 Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 and The Communist Manifesto* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1988), 102. The German original reads "in seinem individuellsten Dasein zugleich Gemeinwesen." For a more detailed reading of this Marxian quote as a basis of a theory of social-ontological subjectivation, see Thomas Telios, *Das Subjekt als Gemeinwesen. Zur Konstitution kollektiver Handlungsfähigkeit* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2021).

70 Georg W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004), 110.

71 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human. A Book for Free Spirits* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2016).

72 Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

73 Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1987).

74 Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

75 Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (New York: Penguin Press, 1969).

76 Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

Theodor W. Adorno⁷⁷ (1992) as well as the figure of the asyndeton used by Catherine Malabou⁷⁸ (2012) can be considered as precursors of collectivity as methodological necessity.

Let me now briefly sketch what we win by addressing the subject as a collective that needs to include its/the Other in order to (collectively) self-determine itself. The *first* key insight of a collectivist understanding of subjectivity and at the same time an insight that also serves to undermine the theoretical foundations of identity politics, is that subjectivity is an intersectional, i.e., overdetermined, entity.⁷⁹ This carries with it two implications: first, subjectivity comprises more than one identity, which corresponds to different ways of subjectivity production; second, all of these identities encounter each other in the subject's body. In order to gain a complete picture of the identities that the subject's body discloses, all existing modes of subjectivity production need to be taken into consideration. Not only language and linguistic discourses but also semantization processes, biological delimitations and conditions, procedures of aesthetic and ethical value production, class demarcations, geographical and climatic differences, social institutions and political apparatuses must be considered, since all of these run through the allegedly indivisible individual to subjectivate it and bring it forward as a collective being-in-common (*methodological collectivity*). To do this, however, and this would be the *second* key insight of a collectivist understanding of subjectivity, we need to address these modes of production in their irreducibility and incommensurability, before moving on to scrutinize the ways in which these identities entangle themselves to effectuate the singularity of every particular subject. In this light, institutions and apparatuses, just like the "Other" and "otherness", become simultaneously acting particles and constitutive elements, the entanglement and intertwinement of which allows subjectivity to spring forward (*collectivity as ontological necessity*). This heteronomous constitution of the subject as a collective demands, however, an ultimate *third* key insight: the subject gives up the liberal chimaera of it ever reappropriating itself as a free individual. The collective subject cannot emancipate itself from being determined. Instead, what it, nevertheless, can, is to give in to its collective structuration and to its dependence on its/the Other in order to enter collective actions and "collectively self-determine"⁸⁰ itself. In doing so, the subject does not only get to reconfigure itself by acknowledging its dependence on its/the Other. More importantly, the subject gets to realize that its "collective self-determination" cannot but implicate also the "collective self-determination" of its/the Other (*collectivity as inclusive and*

77 Theodor W. Adorno, "Parataxis," in *Notes to Literature, Vol. 2*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 109–149.

78 Catherine Malabou, *Ontology of the Accident: An Essay on Destructive Plasticity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012).

79 Regarding intersectionality as a theory of subjectivation that results in an overdetermined subjectivity, see my forthcoming article "The Subject as a Collective Event: Rethinking Intersectionality as Plasticity" in the *European Journal of Women Studies*.

80 Martin Saar, "What Is Social Philosophy?" 217.

holistic overdetermination). This is, in conclusion, the contradictory, *dialectical*, promise of collectivist materialism: that only by succumbing to its heteronomous and collective structuration as a collective and only by acknowledging that the “collective self-determination” of the Other – on whom the subject structurally depends in order to be constituted—as the precondition of the subject’s own “collective self-determination”—can the subject reconcile itself and come to terms with its own way of production.

There is, undoubtedly, a lot left to be said. Yet, going back to where we started, it should now be clear why the concept of collectivity that saturates Barad’s work ensures that processuality, relationality and immanence retain their materialist character inasmuch as they prevent the subject’s thought from completing the circle of its identification with itself by collectivizing this process. Subjectivation remains an open and ongoing process, since the entanglements of the different material elements that contribute to its origination are forced to remain infinite (*processuality*). Furthermore, subjectivation as a collective process highlights how all modes of subjectivity production that are prior to the subject assemble each other in/as the subject (*relationality*). Finally, it is this preexisting social collectivity of (i) social and political institutions, (ii) the concrete social Other as a vector of subjectivation, and (iii) collective struggles embodied in the subject’s body that sets the scene for the subject’s emergence (*immanence*).

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