



The Wetnurse © Julia Fullerton Batten

THE CORPOREALITY OF CAPITALISM:

THE FEMALE BODY AS DOMINATED SITE OF (RE-)PRODUCTION

Class-Critical lessons beyond consciousness.

PROGRAM

Thursday, 20th of November

Freie Universität, Edwin-Redslob-Str. 29, 14195 Berlin

14.00

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Carmen Puchinger (Utrecht University)

PANEL 1: CAPITALISM AS (IM-)PERSONAL DOMINATION

14.30 – 16.00 TALK

Katherina Kinzel (Utrecht University)

Abstract rule and impersonal domination

COMMENT

Dorothea Gädeke (Freie Universität Berlin)

Q&A SESSION

All participants

16.30 – 18.00 TALK

Rebecca Carson (Royal College of Art)

Immanent Externalities.

Reproduction of Life in Capital

COMMENT

Lillian Cicerchia (University of Amsterdam)

Q&A SESSION

All participants

18.30

DINNER Luise Dahlem

PROGRAM

Friday, 21st of November

Freie Universität, Edwin-Redslob-Str. 29, 14195 Berlin

PANEL 2: HISTORICIZING THEORY AND LIVED
EXPERIENCE OF THE DOMINATED BODY

09.30 – 11.00 TALK

Carmen Puchinger (Utrecht University)
*Dominating Nature, Naturalizing Domination.
Towards a Critical Corporeality of Capitalism*

COMMENT

Esther Neuhaus (Freie Universität Berlin)

Q&A SESSION

All participants

11.30 – 13.00 TALK

Maria Helena Pereira Toledo Machado
(Universidade de São Paulo)
*Enslaved Wet-Nurses amid Slavery's Decline
in Southeast Brazil*

COMMENT

Elise Huchet (Utrecht University)

Q&A SESSION

All participants

13.30 – 14.30 LUNCH Eßkultur Dahlem

PANEL 3: CONTEMPORARY THEORY AND LIVED
EXPERIENCE OF THE DOMINATED BODY

15.00 – 16.30 TALK

Andrea Freeman (Southwestern Law School)
Skimmed: Breastfeeding, Race, and Injustice

COMMENT

Jenny Stupka (Utrecht University)

Q&A SESSION

All participants

17.00 – 18.30 TALK

Johanna Oksala (Loyola University Chicago)
*Ecofeminist Critiques of Capitalism and the
“Naturalization” of Women*

COMMENT

Friederike Beier (Freie Universität Berlin)

Q&A SESSION

All participants

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Carmen Puchinger (Utrecht University)

19.00

DINNER Yak Und Yeti Friedenau

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

The relationship between the body and labor in capitalist societies has been a central concern for many philosophers examining how the political economy reduces the human body to a mere tool of production. Different thinkers critique the ways in which the capitalist order exploits the body, reducing it to an instrumentalized object or a tool of labor (Marxism), while shaping profoundly the subject's self-relation and experience of their own body and self (Post-Marxism and Feminism).

While it is well-known that philosophies, ranging from Marx to Lenin and from Gramsci to Negri, have long been centered around the relation between the subject's (class-) *consciousness* and the system of capitalism, the class-conditioned *corporeal body*, let alone the *female* corporeal body (of color), has received relatively little (philosophical) attention.

This interdisciplinary workshop delves into how capitalism not only exploits the body externally but also shapes individuals' relationship with their own corporeality. It traces the historical and political adaptations of this dynamic, which manifest particularly in gender- and race-based conditionings of class structures, and examines how these modifications reshape practices like wet-nursing and breastfeeding—often and falsely regarded as timeless and natural.

In focusing on structural forms of domination *and* lived experiences, we will explore the *Corporeality of Capitalism* from various angles and discuss how female individuals experience and regulate their bodies as sites of (re-)production under exploitative conditions. In doing so, this workshop aims at expanding the (current) discussion on domination in

capitalism by revealing a deeper, historically informed and more nuanced understanding of the relations of power at play.

While such a focus demonstrates a particular awareness for the historical materiality of the body and accordingly goes beyond (mere) systemic or class-related forms of domination, it certainly cannot be considered to be independent from them. Therefore, we will explore **various aspects of the *Corporeality of Capitalism* in a structured progression**, beginning with an examination of abstract, structurally oriented forms of domination and concluding with a discussion of concrete forms of domination which specifically address the lived experiences of care laboring women.

This **structured progression is reflected in three independent, yet mutually informing panels:**

Panel One is dedicated to **Capitalism as (Im-)Personal Domination** and sheds light on the characteristic and (im-)personal forms of domination that capitalism produces structurally, and which are reflected in the concepts of *abstraction* and *immanent externalities*. **Panel Two** focuses on **Historicizing Theory and Lived Experience of the Dominated Body** and illuminates the particular dominating relation a capitalist system develops towards that which is perceived as (contemptuous) nature, introduces the corporeal body, inspired by Critical phenomenology and feminist theory, as a form of that very nature and sheds light on the lived experiences of enslaved care laboring women

by analyzing the power relations constitutive for enslaved wetnurses in Southeast Brazil.

Panel Three, finally, discusses **Contemporary Theory and Lived Experience of the Dominated Body** and critically reconstructs female lived experiences of race- and class-conditioned corporealities under exploitative conditions. We will discuss the role of racialized bodies for past and present practices of breastfeeding in the US and supplement these lived experiences with final theoretical perspectives on ecofeminist critiques of capitalism and the “Naturalization” of Women.

In examining the intersection of class-, gender-, and race-based domination through the corporeal(self-)experiences of breastfeeding and wet-nursing framed within a theory of capitalist domination, this workshop **both critiques and advances traditional Marxist and post-Marxist accounts of class**. It **brings together a wide variety of perspectives** stemming from legal, philosophical, sociological and political theoretical engagements with differently conceptualized forms of domination.

By foregrounding lived experiences, that is, by “corporealizing class”, this workshop highlights how the body itself is a site of power and struggle, rather than merely a passive object shaped by ideological forces.

In gathering various insights on race- and gender-based conditions of class, this workshop aims to provide **new insights into the embodied dimensions of social inequality** across different historical and social contexts.

NOTES ON OUR RESEARCH PROJECT & OCCURING COSTS

Travel and accommodation costs for speakers (2nd class train or economy class air travel & up to 3 nights of accommodation) will be covered by the NWO (Dutch Research Council) funded VIDI project *Theorizing Freedom from Below*. Hosted by FU Berlin (Germany) and partly located at Utrecht University (Netherlands), it seeks to engage in a reflexive, critical study of republican theories of freedom. Freedom is the opposite of slavery and domination – or so the republican tradition of political thought argues. Yet, theories of republican freedom rarely engage with actual slavery. Rather, they focus largely on specifying the status of free citizens while slavery serves as a metaphor for the condition that is to be avoided. The project explores how theorizing freedom as non-domination changes when the focus is shifted from the lived experience of freedom to the lived experience of slavery and domination – and the resistance against it.