

help collate Benjamin's writings. Schoen wrote to Adorno that he felt 'separated from [Benjamin's texts] by an abyss, out of which we try to climb today only with endless efforts, a struggle which will, I suppose hang over us for the rest of our lives.' Upon receiving Schoen's letter Adorno reported to Gershom Scholem that Schoen had declined, he suspected, because they hadn't chosen an East German publisher for Benjamin's works.

The theory of radio is another point of discord between Adorno and Schoen and we can piece together the outlines of a riposte to Adorno's unrelenting pessimism vis-a-vis music's technological mediation. Radio, for Adorno, marks a final stage in the capitalist corruption of musical culture whereby the intensity of the musical statement is lost to the acoustic conditions of small domestic spaces and to its integration into quotidian time. Authoritarianism pervades where programming standardises experience into a schedule and where voices are disembodied. To broadcast symphonic works is to atomise them, especially for the new listener lacking musical education or context. Musical colour and texture are lost by mechanical reproduction and this, in turn, makes music's culinary consumption all the easier.

In contrast, Schoen adopts the expediency of the programmer and so, operating in an altogether different theoretical register, retains radio as a site of possibility. Schoen's argument aligns with Adorno's insofar as he holds that the remediation of earlier forms for radio, whether opera or theatre music, can't simply entail their

reproduction. This would 'disable' the listener lacking visual cues or a sense of wider context. Radio must, therefore, strive for a form 'that is essentially original and its own.' But the constitution of a new listening subject will demand a new pedagogy too, and this will involve careful selection of works and historical explication, demonstrations of how light forms are derived from high art, and so on.

Music in industrial society can become more than mere adornment, Schoen holds, but only if a social need for it can be construed. I have already mentioned the use of parlour games, sing-a-longs and quizzes and, in this light, we should discern these Brechtian gestures bending radio away from uni-directional transmission as attempts to interrupt audience passivity. But Schoen also insists that one needs to recognise the social situation whereby radio is consumed by the worker exhausted at the end of his shift: low standards are imposed on him which he must be equipped to resist.

Friedrich Kittler once characterised the emergence of radio networks as a result of efforts to retain control over mass communication against the nearly two hundred thousand demobilised German radio operators who kept their equipment after World War I and put it to 'anarchistic abuse.' With Schoen we encounter something like a continuity of this abuse of a technology and, given Dolbear and Leslie's presentation of his life, we confront a thought arrested by the terrors of war and its aftermath.

Paul Rekret

Tourists of the world, unite!

Hiroki Azuma, *Philosophy of the Tourist* (Falmouth: Urbanomic, 2022). Translated by John D. Person. 256pp., £25.00 pb., 978 1 91510 300 0

In *The Case against Travel*, Agnes Callard writes that tourism turns us into the worst version of ourselves. Far away from 'home' – any metropolis in the Global North – the tourist does silly things nobody wants to hear about; writing postcards or taking photos of animals. Taking her own experience at a falcon hospital in Abu Dhabi as an example, she writes:

I took a photo with a falcon on my arm. I have no in-

terest in falconry or falcons, and a generalized dislike of encounters with nonhuman animals. But the falcon hospital was one of the answers to the question, 'What does one do in Abu Dhabi?' So I went.

She found the trip 'dehumanizing'. Back home, her life contained 'zero falconry' just as before. If the birds were not transformative, they taught her something about tourism: 'we already know what we will be like when we

return.’ Tourism ‘prevents us from feeling the presence of those we have travelled such great distances to be near.’ In short, tourism is an experience of total alienation.

Callard is not alone in loathing tourism. Everyone hates tourists: they exploit economic disparity, culturally appropriate, turn cities into Airbnbs and pollute the planet. Recently, a tourist carved his girlfriend’s initials into the 2,000-year-old Colosseum. ‘Tourists, go home!’ graffiti is found in most tourist towns. In the Mediterranean, tourist hot spots are often focal points of the refugee crisis. Last summer, a fishing boat in Greece packed with migrants sank just a few miles from tourists sunbathing.

Not an easy terrain for Japanese cultural critic Hiroki Azuma to launch his *Philosophy of the Tourist*. Azuma’s book is an unashamed love letter to the tourist. Why the tourist? The tourist is a hybrid Other: unlike the villager or the nomad, the tourist belongs to one community but sometimes visits others. The tourist is the flâneur of our time: an indifferent, potentially happy consumer-subject who traverses the local and the global. For Azuma, no radical political vision of the twenty-first century can ignore the tourist. Together with the falcons, the tourist embarks on a journey towards multispecies solidarity.

The founder of *Genron*, Tokyo’s forum for critical theory, Azuma also runs a ‘dark tourism’ company that organises trips to Chernobyl (they published a *Chernobyl Dark Tourism Guide*). Azuma became controversial for envisioning Fukushima as ‘a ‘mecca’ for dark tourism, on the model of Hiroshima and Auschwitz’. He defends this shady project from the perspective of the tourist: to know the ‘original’ Fukushima – and otherwise uneventful prefecture – one has to see the ‘derivative’ one: an accident site contaminated by radiation.

Azuma’s style is effortless: Disney and Dubai meet Derrida and Deleuze. Although the prose is lucid, the structure is messy. Azuma takes his readers on a wild ride from eighteenth-century philosophy, *The Brothers Karamazov*, network theory, manga, Chernobyl, *Neuromancer*, Hegel, Kojève and Lacan to terrorism. Azuma himself admits that the book is unpolished. The original appeared at the height of a tourism boom in the 2010s before COVID-19 briefly stopped leisure trips. However, in his preface to the English edition, Azuma proclaims the resurrection of the tourist.

The book is divided into two parts, ‘Philosophy of

the tourist’ and ‘Philosophy of the family (an introduction)’. The first chapter ‘Tourism’ sketches some goals: first, to build a framework to think anew about globalism; second, to think about people in terms of contingency; third, to develop a form of philosophical discourse that transcends the serious/frivolous distinction. If we want to understand the world, we have to explore it as tourists: to visit random places on a whim to see people we don’t need to see. That makes the tourist an unpredictable subject open to chance encounters:

For the tourist, everything at their destination is a commodity and an exhibit that is the object of their neutral, passive – that is to say, contingent – gaze. The tourist gaze is none other than a gaze that views the entire world as an arcade or shopping mall.

The tourist’s interest is purely consumptive and without direction. Like the flâneur, the tourist is *drifting*: they view the world with a ‘chance gaze’. Sometimes, and this is crucial, tourists see things that locals don’t want them to see. Therefore, the tourist deconstructs Callard’s simplistic antagonism between real and false experience. This, for Azuma, is a valuable ‘misdelivery’. However, tourists are not the reasonable subject of philosophers. These frivolous drifters are in fact the enemy of twentieth-century philosophy in its entirety:

Tourists are the masses. They are labourers and they are consumers. The tourist is a private being and does not take on any public role. Tourists are anonymous, and they do not deliberate with locals at their destination. They do not participate in the history of their destination either, nor in its politics. Tourists simply use money. They ignore national boundaries as they fly across the surface of the planet. They don’t make friends or enemies.

We should not read Azuma too literally here – he is a provocateur. There is no moral signalling in *Philosophy of the Tourist*. Of course, you can only be a tourist if you happen to hold certain passports and have enough money to travel. And you don’t become a political agent just by using money or taking a flight. However, what Azuma is interested in is a novel form of subjectivity. The tourist teaches us that there is no self to which we can come home. Azuma deliberately creates friction to carve out an ambivalent subject in-between the familiar and the uncanny.

One of the key ideas to understand the tourist is the postal metaphor of misdelivery – a transformative

potentiality of contingent communication. For Azuma, drawing on Derrida, misdelivery is one of the few principles that support solidarity with the Other. Like a letter reaching the wrong destination, the American tourist in Abu Dhabi has some misfired communication with the falcons. And this misdelivery is all that matters. Even if we fail to build solidarity with falcons, we have to keep on trying – the very failure of solidarity creates an effect ‘that makes it seem as if it exists’. Therefore, we must actively expose ourselves to misdelivery: we have to become tourists.

A critical reading of Kojève is at the heart of the second chapter ‘Politics and Its Outside.’ Here, Azuma expands the philosophy of the tourist into a radical alternative to post-Enlightenment political theory. Azuma’s vision relies on Kojève’s concept of the End of History – itself the product of the philosopher’s touristic trips to Japan in the 1950s. Taking hundreds of photos of zen gardens, Kojève proclaimed that history has ended. All that remains are derivative simulacra and empty rituals. ‘In other words’, Azuma asks, ‘is not the world itself becoming a theme park?’

Azuma retraces the first appearance of dark tourism to Voltaire’s *Candide* (1759) which lets the protagonist travel the world to realise its shortcomings. Another precursor is Kant’s *Perpetual Peace* (1795) which grounds universal peace in tourism. The Kantian tourist neither represents their civil society nor the foreign policy of their states. Tourists are ‘guided only by their own interests and by the commercial spirit of travel agencies’. And yet, they ‘are contributing to peace independently of the state system’. Once again, we have to take Azuma with a pinch of salt: he does not say that booking a holiday creates world peace.

However, Azuma’s tourist provides an alternative circuit to becoming a global citizen. Unlike Hegel’s maturing from family member to citizen, everyone is always already a *potential* tourist – even people who never leave their countries. In that sense, tourists are a political force beyond politics. Therefore, tourism should be the right even of members of ‘rogue states’ like Russia. Azuma insists that the principle of perpetual peace erodes if we ban Russian tourists. This is of course a problematic demand. Do some tourists not also support their rogue government? And is the tourist really an apolitical agent? These issues become more severe when it comes

to the relation between the refugee and the tourist. However, with Azuma we have to expose ourselves to these misdeliveries too.



Azuma sharply criticises Kojève’s vision of a world after history. His posthumanism differs from both Kojève’s animalisation and Arendt’s *animal laborans*. Having neither friends nor states, the tourist is not an animal but an ambiguous hybrid: ‘invited to consume like animals while being human, and simultaneously forced to speak about politics like humans while being animals’. The tourist is both a face and a number. Following Masachi Ōsawa, Azuma detects a similar ‘split’ between the national and the global. These two conflicting orders make up our ‘stratified world’ (nisō kōzō). Drawing on 1970s Japanese manga, Azuma describes reality as ‘an amorphous monster that is neither organism nor machine, with countless independent ‘faces’’. We live in a two-layered world: our human layer (thought) is disconnected while our animal layer (desire) is connected – to capital.

Azuma finds the seeds of a radical politics of the tourist in libertarianism and the ‘multitude’. Azuma’s criticism of Hardt and Negri’s *Empire* is one of the pearls

of the book. He convincingly shows why their concept of multitude is ultimately mystical. For Azuma, Hardt and Negri's 'guerilla solidarity' has no content beyond faith. In short, their multitude relies on negative theology. But how can the multitude attain sovereignty *in reality*?

This question guides the fourth chapter, 'Toward a Postal Multitude'. If *Empire* proposed a self-circulating monism, the philosophy of the tourist draws on a multi-layered, stratified system. A billion tourists dispatched around the world, who 'indulge in consumption without regard for any ideology', are a *postal* multitude. Their mob mobility creates countless situations of misdelivery. The fact that tourists not interested in art still visit the Louvre is a misdelivery 'linked to a type of enlightenment'. Even if they don't *understand* the painting, there is communication – a condition for postal solidarity. This solidarity is unintentional and accidental:

Where the multitude go to demonstrations, the tourist goes on junkets. Where the former builds solidarity without communication, the latter communicates without solidarity... Although the tourist doesn't deliberately build solidarity, they do exchange words with people they happen to meet. Whereas demonstrations always have an enemy, tours have no enemies.

The tourist is an immature subject in a network generated by chance. A crowd of tourists is nothing more than 'customers purchasing gas from the same utility company, or passengers riding on the same bus'. And yet, for Azuma, it is precisely this random association of individuals that makes up society. To illustrate the ways in which individuals are linked through clusters, Azuma delves into network theory. The tourist is a transformative node in the network of human society; if a stranger 'rewires' a closed set of connections, 'that new encounter (short cut) is precisely what all of a sudden makes the world small'. The tourist shifts from one scale to the other, traversing the national and the global.

The unfinished second part of the book is an attempt to apply the philosophy of the tourist. However, large parts of it are unrelated to tourism. Readers who expect some concrete guidelines of the politics of the tourist will be disappointed. The fifth chapter, 'The Family', de-

scribes postal solitary as *familial* – not in the sense of the bourgeois, nuclear family but in the way in which pets can become our family. Family resemblances (Wittgenstein) give a vague sense of cohesion to this 'accidental' family. We don't really know why a dog's face can look similar to his owner but we call it a *face* regardless. If Callard felt dehumanised by the falcons, Azuma dreams of multispecies solidarity.

Misdeliveries between birds and humans build a family. Azuma's philosophy of the family turns Heidegger on his head; it starts not with death but from the contingency of birth, or what Derrida called *dissemination*:

Dissemination refers to the discharge of sperm. The massive numbers of sperms create our contingent nature. A new philosophy born out of the relativity of birth and the contingency of the family, a philosophy that could be counterposed to Heideggerian philosophy born out of the absoluteness of death and the necessity of fate...

A child is born like a letter sent by mistake. Once the letter is there, its sender becomes irrelevant.

Drawing on Lacanian subject theory, the sixth chapter, 'The Uncanny', tries to develop a new view on the information society – maybe too far a stretch. Exploring notions of the uncanny in sci-fi, Azuma explores cyberspace as another touristic landscape. Tourists decipher the world as if it is a code. While the tourist shortcuts the network, the 'database animal' is estranged by the internet. For both subjects, reality is *another* world of simulacra and misdeliveries.

The book closes with an exploration of terrorism in Dostoevsky; key themes are the killing of the father and the Tsar. Azuma finds forerunners of the tourist in Dostoevsky's protagonists: the terrorist, the sadist and the *Underground Man*, all 'impotent subjects surrounded by children'. Azuma's speculations in 'Dostoevsky's Final Subject' are refreshing but only vaguely related to tourism.

Philosophy of the Tourist is a thought experiment. The tourist can teach us that the human did not yet disappear: it has a hundred faces now and moves around the world.

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