# The Subversion of the Racial Surveillance Apparatus in Aras Ören's *Bitte Nix Polizei*: Badiou, Hegel, and The Limits of Vulgar Materialism

By

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## Abstract

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The Subversion of the Racial Surveillance Apparatus in Aras Ören's *Bitte Nix Polizei*: Badiou, Hegel, and The Limits of Vulgar Materialism

Thesis directed by Professor Jillian Heydt-Stevenson

Turkish German novelist Aras Ören's *Bitte Nix Polizei* is a novel that discusses the "Critical Race" problems of immigration and clandestine labor, but does so in a way that standard Postcolonial Theory models of the colonialist gaze and "mimicry" fail to fully explain. I argue that because Ören openly identified himself as a Marxist, a return to the technical and often misrepresented details of Kant and German Idealism is necessary to understand why in the novel material conditions are always a disruptive source of revolutionary potential, rather than inert and static conditions of production. To argue in favor of the revolutionary potential of material conditions is also to salvage the protagonist Ali's subjectivity, which critics have often dismissed as a mere metaphorical motif for the "real modes of production." I shall ultimately argue that Badiou's theory of sets rigorously demonstrates the shortcomings of any attempt to organize ethnic groups according to some common feature or property. Whereas Frege's propositional calculus emphasizes the extensions of ideal concepts, Badiou shows that membership as such is irreducible to any predicate, species, or substance. Political structuration is therefore nothing more than a contingent act, a decision by an entity in power to *assert* its control, a thesis already reached in Hegel's *Logic.*

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## Note on Citations

I have decided to work mainly with Teoman Sipahigil's excellent English translation of *Bitte Nix Polizei* in order to make citations from the text accessible without presuming any fluency in German. When necessary, I have provided the corresponding German citation. In such cases, I provide the page numbers for both texts in respective order.

I have also provided a series of tables and graphs to give some intuitive aid for grasping the more abstract notions of Frege's and Chomsky's work. I am greatly indebted to the work of Aleksy Molczanow, Richard Cobb-Stevens, Gregory Currie, Geoffroy Horrocks, Mary McGee Wood, and John Lyons for the content of these graphs.

> Every consistent dogmatist must necessarily be a fatalist. He entirely rejects the self-sufficiency of the I and treats the I merely as the *product* of things (Fichte, *First Introduction to the Wissenschaftslehre* 16, my emphasis)

## Prologue

While theorists and literary critics all agree that "race" doesn't exist, critics actually tend to use a variety of conflicting theoretical frameworks to prove this point. I argue that it is worth examining the technical details of these conflicting models in order to prove my own thesis that Turkish German novelist Aras Ören's *Bitte Nix Polizei* shows that "race" is neither a stereotypical image, nor a common trait, nor a logical predicate, but an *effect* of a political arrangement. My decision to shift the emphasis back onto material conditions and away from language as such is of course influenced by Marxist theory but I argue that when one neglects Kant and German Idealism one also risks obscuring the true significance of Marxism. In addition, I argue that Badiou's contemporary employment of set theory provides the theoretical resources for explicitly stating how Marx's position differs radically from either deconstructivist accounts of *différance* or humanist accounts of linguistic use. *Bitte Nix Polizei*, for example, presents the story of a Turkish "illegal immigrant" in Germany who lives in constant fear of the policing systems meant to track down clandestine workers of his "racial type." Yet the novel really just proves that a racial type is neither a stereotypical image through which members can be intuitively grasped nor a logical predicate denoting some common trait or property by which all members can be grouped. Instead, the discrepancy between "illegal immigrant" and police is a formal discrepancy, one which Badiou's system is uniquely fit for addressing through its

theory of inclusions and exclusions. Yet my employment of Badiou is of secondary importance given that in many ways he just revitalizes Kant and Hegel by showing the subtle flaws of post-Kantian theories. I shall argue that it is worth briefly examining the technical details of the post-Kantian theses of Fregean logicism (and its rival tradition of Chomskyan cognitive theory) in order to show that they harbor intuitive prejudices that fail to adequately describe the counter-intuitive truths of set theory. My critique of these trends is as much ethical as technical: political materialism will replace cognitive language-use in order to prove only far more radically that "race" in *Bitte Nix Polizei* doesn't exist.

## I.

*Bitte Nix Polizei*'s themes of clandestine labor, illegal immigration, policing systems, and stereotyping all inevitably force one to address the Critical Theory of Race, yet I agree with David Theo Goldberg's recent assessment that race cannot be relegated solely to a single subfield of Sociology (6). Whereas a few decades ago it might have been more widely accepted to argue that racial politics are a marginal concern at best even for sociologists, Goldberg has noted that one can *only* address race through highly interdisciplinary means (6). While I accept this assessment, I argue that in addition to interdisciplinary one must also question the foundations of all theory. For example, set theoretical questions of membership, logical questions of predication, and cognitive questions of computation, though seemingly unrelated and abstract, are all absolutely necessary for any critique of how racial identities can function without truly existing, the central problem Goldberg highlights. Contrary to expectation, for example, the technical details over the counter-intuitive character of sets have profound political implications. In fact, they provide precisely the theoretical resources for treating the element of race just as it functions in *Bitte Nix Polizei*. Therefore, I will briefly focus on Meditation 3 of

*Being and Event*: Badiou traces the historical development of the theory of sets from Cantor to Frege to Zermelo and Fraenkel by showing how the main obstacle in this development was intuitive prejudices (40-3). Cantor originally believed that he could analogously "transfer" the "power of intuition to totalize its objects" to sets as such (39). That is, Cantor originally did "distinguish between 'objects' and 'groups of objects'" and therefore believed that the elements of a set are analogous to objects that are included in groups of objects. Frege claimed that Cantor believed that "number originates only by abstraction from objects . . . in the external world" (27). Paradoxically, however, the void set is multiple, unique, and empty, meaning that a set theoretical "multiple" is not a *collection* of objects in the empirical, intuitive sense. In addition, truths like "[t]here are as many prime numbers as numbers" disrupt intuitive prejudices about part-whole relations and containment (*Logic of Worlds* 10 and 11). The contained members of a set are not anything like an empirical collection of entities grouped together by intuition.

Badiou cites Frege's logicist theory as the second step in this development, given that Frege overcame the dichotomy of "objects and intuition" in favor of "properties and their extension" (*Being and Event* 42). This second development is important because even though it is less intuitively-prejudiced than Cantor's model, it still fails to overcome the tendency to group sets according to a common trait or property. Frege's reasons for doing so lay in his attempt to show that logic is actually more primordial than arithmetic by showing that arithmetical judgments are actually purely logical judgments in disguise. He did so by trying to prove that the very being of numbers is that they are extensions of concepts. In Fregean terminology, an extension is a special kind of "value range" and a concept is a special kind of "function" (Dummett xxiv). For example, the concept "To not be identical with itself" seems like an absurdity because no empirical object fits this criteria; the only thing that does fit the criteria of

not being identical with itself is the number zero (Currie 49). Therefore, the number zero is the logical extension of the concept, or the value range of this function. This proved both that numbers "exist" and that mathematical reasoning is really logical reasoning, given that numbers are always logical extensions of concepts. By this logic, Frege developed a sophisticated theory of quantifiers and variables that revolutionized logic beyond any development since Aristotle: consider, for example, the following expression: $x^4=16$ (Molczanow 19). As Molczanow noted, whereas it is not difficult to see that the solution for x has an absolute value of 2, Frege would argue that the expression at this stage still lacks a sense (*Sinn*) because the variable x merely indicates an absence and provides a challenge to find a solution (19). By "sense," Frege meant the elements that directly affect the truth or falsity of an expression, as opposed to elements that merely "color" the expression without affecting its truth value (the latter he called *Beleuchtung* or mere "illumination") (Dummett 2). For example, substituting "but" for "and" certainly changes the tone or "coloring" of the expression but not the *Sinn* because at a purely logical level "but" and "and" have the same meaning and specify the same truth conditions (2). To return to Molczanow's example, Frege would argue that $x^4=16$ lacks a *Sinn* because while x remains unsolved this expression doesn't assert anything yet. This is why Frege and Russell both reserved special symbols for assertion, given that assertion really is a logical *operation*. This incompleteness is clearer when reformulated as a function f(x) in which the variable is really just the challenge to find an acceptable argument by which the function can yield an output (Cobb-Stevens 63). The solution "2" is therefore an object that falls under the concept "$4^{th}$ root of 16" in much the same way as "0" was the object that fell under the concept "to be not identical with itself." Frege therefore noted that this operation could be extended beyond numbers to logical predication of empirical and material objects. For example, if one argues that "All men are

mortal," this is equally true for the judgments "Frege is mortal" and "Chomsky is mortal." This can just be reformulated into a function in which "is mortal" is the constant part and "x" is the variable for which either Frege or Chomsky can be the input. I have borrowed the following table from Richard Cobb-Stevens' explanation of Frege's function-argument model (63):

[1]

| **Mathematical Function Notation** | **Logical Predication Function(s) Notation** |
|---|---|
| 2 x $\mathbf{a}^3$ **+ a**= f(**a**) | If **x** is man then **x** is mortal |
| 2 x $\mathbf{1}^3$ **+ 1**= 3 | If **Russell** is a man then **Russell** is mortal |
| 2 x $\mathbf{2}^3$ **+ 2**= 18 | If **Frege** is a man then **Frege** is mortal |
| 2 x $\mathbf{4}^3$ **+ 4**= 132 | If **Chomsky** is a man then **Chomsky** is mortal |

Cobb-Stevens used this graph to show that Frege noticed the following interesting ontological implications regarding functions. Functions are not "things" because they are inherently incomplete. The variable (a) within the function is also not a "thing" because it indicates an absence within the function. It is a signal to find an acceptable "argument" by which the function might yield an output. Cobb-Stevens notes that this means it doesn't make sense to think of predication as holding any level of "completeness" prior to this operation by which exactly one input will yield exactly one output (62-3). Frege's function-based propositional calculus theory undermined the deepest foundations of Kant's own syllogistic logic. For example, he revealed that Kant's distinction between categorical and hypothetical judgments (a distinction between simple judgments of predication such as "Socrates is mortal" and complex judgments of implication such as "If it is raining then the ground is wet") was, in fact, not a distinction at all. This is because seemingly simple categorical judgments are really hypothetical judgments in

disguise. Even a simple statement of predication like "All men are mortal" truly means "If x is a man then x is mortal" (Currie 20). Frege abandoned natural language in favor of a "pure language" of quantifiers and variables in order to better express the true logical form of such statements (18). Frege argued that a sentence that has not yet been "bound" by "quantifiers" that would specify its truth conditions is "open" but is "closed" by the process of quantification (Cobb-Stevens 58). Proper quantification notation also helped reveal that seemingly simple syllogisms such as "All men are mortal" in fact involved multiple functions that were related to one another on a multi-dimensional plane: so, "All men are mortal" really means "if f(x) then g(x)" or that x falls under both functions (the concept "man" and the concept "mortal"), each of them linked to the other by a "hypothetical" (If-Then) marker (Currie 22). Therefore, the "sense" of the judgment was really linked to the hypothetical *relation* between the two judgments: for example, the judgment "If $x^2=4$ then $x^4=16$" actually has its sense in the hypothetical relation as such rather than in its variables which, once again, merely indicate an absence. Even if only "one" expression is present, such as in the following quadratic equation, the sense still lies in a hypothetical (if-then) *relation*: $x^2 - 4x + 3 = 0$ really means that this is true *if* x=1 or x=3 (Molczanow 22). Thus, Frege distinguished "concept" and "object" by showing that concepts were the "constant" part of the equation and "objects" were the variable part (22).

[2]

| **Concept(s)** | **Object** | **Functional Generalization** | **Sense by Relation** |
|---|---|---|---|
| $4^{th}$ Root of 16 | 2 | f(x) | If $x^2=4$ then $x^4=16$ |
| Man, Mortal | Socrates | Man(Socrates); Mortal(Socrates)<br>If f(x) then g(x) | If Socrates is a man,<br>then Socrates is mortal |

Badiou notes the political implications of this line of reasoning. If we understand sets to be the extensions of concepts, we accept both an inherent unity and we accept that a specific trait can intelligibly order such sets. Though Frege of course did not directly intend this to be extended to stereotyping, it is easy to see how racial stereotyping usually proceeds through just this logic. For example, in Faulkner's *Light in August* the public expresses great frustration when they accuse Joe Christmas of being a "black" criminal even though he lacks any of the stereotypical features they'd like to identify in a simple intuitive glance: "He don't look any more like a n*gger than I do. But it must have been the n*gger blood in him" (349). They therefore tacitly argue that *some* stereotypical trait or property, even if it is his unseen "blood," must provide the conceptual basis for including Joe Christmas within the second-class "race." This line of reasoning that "extensions have their being in the concept" provides the basis for arguing that all members of a group must have some stereotypical conceptual property in common.

The other problem with this theory was that Frege *didn't* think that extensions were really collections of objects (Currie 52). He didn't think that the extension of the concept was simply the sum of objects falling under a concept because he also didn't think that numbers were abstractions from empirical collections of things. That is, one might intuitively think that the number 3 is simply an abstraction from an empirical collection of 3 objects (Frege 27). Frege argued that an extension has its being in the concept itself; in contrast, for a modern set theoretician elements have their being in membership (Cochiarella 9). Because Badiou emphasizes membership alone, the "One" is merely the effect of a formal operation (such as counting). For Badiou, structuration (the "count as one" plus a meta-structural representation that confirms that the count as one is exhaustive) is the merely secondary effect of a "formal

operation" such as counting for which a One enjoys a "fictive being" that is "maintained solely by the structural retroaction in which it is considered" (90). When I say that the One is the effect of a structuring act, I mean that the One neither precedes this act nor subsists in abstraction from the act (such as through being the extension of an ideal concept.) Politically speaking, order only exists if *somebody* decides to posit it. Badiou therefore is similar to Kant here because he argues that a pure multiple "in itself" is radically "unthinkable" and any intelligible "presentation" is secondary and therefore unstable. Whereas we'd normally think that the consistent multiplicity of an ordered counted series is the only meaning of "many," Badiou shows that this kind of consistent multiplicity (i.e., the counted multiplicity in the series from 1 to 2 to 3 to 4 etc.) is an artificial, *structured* multiplicity. This is radically different from the kind of unstructured, unintelligible multiplicity that a pure multiple has.

Badiou rejects Frege's notation and adopts the Zermelo-Fraenkel system notation instead, because, unlike Frege's thesis of properties and their extension, this system has only one lexical relation: inclusion (*Being and Event* 44). That is, there are no predicate-based rules for how the elements of a set are included; they are *simply* included. Badiou notes therefore that radical movements should *not* be understood according to common traits or properties that unite their members (and certainly not racial or ethnic marks or imagery that would unite them). In addition, there's no such *unity* to this set if by that one means a definitively closed-off and substantial unity immune to the threat of revolution. Instead, sets are structured in such a way that there is always a discrepancy between what is formally recognized as "belonging" and what nonetheless remains included. The power set axiom reveals that the subsets of a given multiple are necessarily larger than the multiple itself; that is, with post-Cantorian set theory's notion of transinfinite numbers one is able to speak meaningfully of multiple levels of infinity but in a very

precise sense instead of relying on the archaic definition of infinity as that for which every number counted will have a larger number counted after it (*Being and Event* 84 and Suppes 56). Therefore, this discrepancy between inclusion and belonging is a structural necessity. The political significance of this fact is that any statist regime that tries to conclusively eliminate any disruptive or unwanted elements in the social body through "conclusively" structuring the social body will only ever maintain the *illusion* of succeeding at this. In the novel *Bitte Nix Polizei*, the undocumented Turkish immigrant Ali Itir is so disruptive to the system precisely because it *lacks* any clear criteria by which to track him down as he navigates the dark side of Berlin.

Therefore Ali disrupts the immigration/race-police's efforts because his activity is never seen, heard, or experienced by them at all. In order to explain this, I argue that we'll need a theoretical model *different* from the standard Postcolonial Theory model that emphasizes stereotypical imagery, if only just to deconstruct it. For example, Homi K. Bhabha's highly influential theory of "mimicry" is *not* really applicable to Ali's work in the novel. Bhabha theorized that when a colonized "Other" conforms to the imposed colonial culture he or she uses this acceptance as a means of disruption: to repeat the imposed culture is in fact to repeat "with difference," or to undermine the very foundations of the cultural code through an excessive or ridiculous parody ("The Other Question" 67). By this logic, the "image" that was meant to serve as an oppressive stereotype can indirectly become the very means of subverting the colonialist gaze. Yet in *Bitte Nix Polizei*, Ali eludes the "gaze" through operating outside the reach of the police's line of sight altogether, as I shall explain in greater detail. He doesn't "repeat" back the stereotype with an excessive "difference" that would undermine it so much as he materially embodies an excessive element within the social body that exceeds the formal account of the social body's structure. His material embodiment of excess within the social body is not even

primarily imagistic, as one's intuitive prejudices of race typically lead one to think. Instead, the image is only ever secondary and derivative. Also, while images uphold the illusion of a common trait or property uniting all members of a "group," pure membership in itself poses absolutely no possibility for such a uniting trait. Rationality, carried to its most fundamental basis, appears as *irrationality.*

Furthermore, *Bitte Nix Polizei* isn't a novel about empirical experience because, while Ali struggles himself to form some concrete image of who the immigration police are, his attempts fail: "Ali was trying to make concrete in his imagination what was being said [about the police], struggling to create an enemy who might be responsible . . . But try as he might, he could not catch even a glimpse of this enemy" (31). Even when he tries very hard to form an image of his "enemy," Ali can only ever at best form fragments of images that lack genuine anthropomorphic features: "Every time he heard the word 'state,' there appeared before his eyes . . . clothes, talk, demeanor [that] were nothing like his own" (31). The only thing Ali understands in this half-formed image is that it is something "seemingly created solely to torment human beings" (31). As I have argued to great length, "racial identity" is neither an image nor a trait/property. Instead, all he knows about the immigration police is that they want to remove him from the social body. The state also fail to consistently agree upon what image or property defines the "illegal workers" they seek; all they understand about Ali and his fellow "illegal workers" is that they want to remove them from the social body. In the final scene, when the public fails to recognize the man in the police sketch, the police are forced to admit that "despite all investigating efforts, his identity has not been established" (129). They don't know if the image they've sketched is in accord with the alleged criminal's true face. In fact, they aren't entirely

sure what properties he had; all they really know is that he was an “alien” element in the social body which had to be removed.

Because the novel downplays the capacity of imagery to reveal the truth in either of these cases, I argue that a stereotypical image is only ever secondary to material conditions. At first, this may sound like the traditional Marxist theory that ideology is only ever secondary to material conditions. According to this theory, an ideology of bourgeois “freedom,” for example, isn’t an eternally valid concept so much as capitalist “freedom” is really just a distortion of capitalist material conditions; freedom for the capitalist really just means the ability of the “rich white men” who own the means of production to trade on the market in order to generate profit. However, this dichotomy of material conditions and illusory ideology, if improperly understood, has contributed to critics’ tendency to downplay Ali Itir’s subjectivity in *Bitte Nix Polizei* by seeing him more as a metaphorical motif for the “real modes of production” than as a revolutionary and disruptive character in his own right. This “vulgar materialist” logic of reducing ideological motifs of race etc. to brute material conditions really stems from *misunderstanding* the German Idealist tradition that enabled Marxist Theory to take off in the first place. In actuality, this dichotomy of ideological illusion and real modes of production is a reformulation of the traditional Kantian division between phenomenal experience and the inaccessible thing in itself. One could easily argue that brute material conditions are the substantial entities *behind* ideological illusions of race, such that race only ever gestures metaphorically toward the real modes of production. However, the true German Idealist stance is to show that the real material conditions are themselves inconclusive, conflicting, and incomplete rather than absolutely substantial facts to be unearthed “just as they are.” Whereas a mainstream reading of Kant would be that one proceeds from incomplete phenomenal fragments to a

complete and true "thing in itself," for Hegel, Fichte, and Schelling there isn't any such dualism so much as one proceeds through perspectival movement within a *single* inconsistent structure. As Žižek has noted in *For They Know Not What They Do*, Hegel preserves the gap Kant reserved for the thing in itself by simply redoubling it back into the structure of a Mobius Strip (the mathematical object which, even though it only has one surface, requires a pause in order to transition from one phase of viewing it to the next) (219). Mainstream readings of Hegel as the theorist of "thesis, antithesis, and synthesis" by which a third notion unites the first two are deeply misleading. Hegel doesn't at all promote a mystical movement by which contradictions magically generate their own synthesis. All he shows is that abstract notions never escape the instability of material movement. Applied to *Bitte Nix Polizei*, this means that Ali is not an alien element *exterior* to a complete, consistent, and substantial social body; instead, the social body itself can only ever achieve substantial closure through the ideological act of "official structuring." This lack of closure in the social body is as much a material as it is a logical problem.

This idea that logical problems eventually turn out to be material problems mirrors the historical development of Analytic thought itself, for which Badiou's work is the logical outcome. Whereas Frege originally found the inspiration to develop his predicate calculus in order to refute Psychologism (the idea that all logical operations must be reduced to psychological acts of the brain, and nothing more) by shifting the emphasis from the material brain to the non-material "Third Realm" of mathematical idealities, Chomsky would eventually reverse this problematic by arguing that his theory's key features were precisely evolutionary features of the *brain* (Burge 15 and *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* 26). The discrepancies between these two approaches continue to provide fodder for the competing grammatical

theories of Fregean Categorial Grammar and Chomskyan Constituency Structure Grammar (McGee Wood 5). Although Frege's original intent was to *replace* natural language with a logical language of quantifiers and variables, contemporary grammarians like Mary McGee Wood employ Fregean functional notation *directly* to natural language in the following ways: [3]

| **Fregean Categorial Grammar Functions** | **Example** |
|---|---|
| Intransitive verb= function from n to ∑:<br>n x ∑/n = ∑ | Jessica cried<br>Cried x ∑/Jessica= ∑ |
| Adjective= function from name to name: n\n | Poor Jessica |

According to this model, there are only two fundamental elements in natural language: names (nouns) and sentences/truth values (n and ∑, respectively). Any non-noun within the sentence is therefore not so much an element as it is a *function* that takes one from the name-element to the sentence. Using the mathematical principle of fractional cancellation, n and its derived n (function) will mutually cancel each other out and leave the ∑ sign as the indicator that this is indeed a grammatical sentence (note that "n" designates both nouns and their derived forms such as verbs, adjectives etc.) (Lyons 229-31).

[4]

| **Fractional Cancellation** |
|---|
| A x B/A = B<br>(Multiplying a fraction by its denominator will isolate the numerator) |
| 4 x ¾ = 3 (4 and 4 cancel out) |

| |
|---|
| n x ∑/n = ∑ |
| Cried x ∑/Jessica= ∑ (grammatical sentence) |
| Jessica (noun) and cried (verbal function from noun to ∑) cancel out, leaving ∑; "Jessica cried" is, of course, a grammatical sentence |

Mary McGee Wood notes that this Fregean model of course directly challenges Chomskyan constituency-structure/transformational grammars in the following fundamental ways: whereas Chomskyan grammars focus on the "analytic patterns by which a sentence might be segmented," Fregean Categorial Grammars focus on the "constructive patterns" by which "semantic linkages hold a sentence together" (McGee Wood 1). Given this tendency *away* from segmentation, Categorial Grammars provide no split between syntactic rules and semantic rules, given that every syntactic rule is inherently semantic because the "syntactic behavior" of any lexical item is *directly* embodied in its "lexical category specification" (3). Therefore, there's no need for additional rules such as movement and deletion rules (relegated to the supplementary "transformational" sphere) (3-4). All necessary syntactic information is contained in the lexical entry itself because lexical entries conform to the function-argument model through which one moves from elements to sentences (n to ∑) (5). This is, surprisingly, Saussurian in principle: Saussure noted that in language there are no positive terms, only oppositions. Similarly, a categorical grammar's entries are only really defined through how they combine with other entries to form grammatical sentences (5). Therefore, syntactic or transformational rules "beyond" this calculus are unnecessary. So whereas Chomsky's early model would hold that at the syntactic base, Phrase Structure Rules (such as N → T N) are structurally valid "skeletal forms" until filled in by some particular lexical input (such as N → Boy), for a Fregean

Categorial Grammar there are no such “skeletal forms” that subsist in abstraction from their lexical inputs (Horrocks 27-9).

[5]

| **Syntactic Component** | **Example** |
|---|---|
| A. Syntactic Base: | |
| 1) Phrase Structure Rules | NP → T N |
| 2) Lexical Inputs | N → Boy |
| Deep Structure | The boy put **what** in his bag |
| B. Transformational Rules | Wh-Movement |
| Surface Structure | **What** did the boy put in his bag? |

Of course, this chart provides a fairly simplified glimpse at Chomsky’s early theory of syntax; the later developments of Government-Binding Theory would further complicate this chart by placing X Bar above D-Structure, Control Theory and Theta Theory outside D-Structure at another level, and Bounding Theory outside Movement Rules, to name a few adjustments (Cook and Newson 90). The many, many technical differences between Frege’s Categorial Grammar and Chomsky’s Transformational Grammar are already well-documented and are not exactly the concern of this essay. Comparative Grammar as such is not my problem. I only bring this up in order to focus on the theme of psychological contingency. The ideal of reducing cognition to a computeristic model has political implications because it fits the idea that “outsiders” and “transgressors” can be ideally fit under specific traits that unite them. But to argue that material conditions are a disruptive element *irreducible* to computeristic organization is to preserve the revolutionary potential of material conditions any Marxist thinker would emphasize.

Surprisingly, and perhaps even against Chomsky's own intentions, his emphasis on the materiality of psychological embodiment indirectly accomplishes this. Structurally valid skeletal forms imply the psychological embodiment of a thinker conditioned by evolutionary contingencies, a thinker who intuitively enacts his or her hardwired cognitive faculties. This is exactly why Chomsky argues that the "principles" of his universal grammar (i.e.; X-Bar Theory, Theta Theory, Case Theory, Control Theory etc.) are evolutionary features rather than learned contents (*Some Concepts of the Theory of Government and Binding* 6). In fact, Chomsky's universal grammar principles are exactly *not* the same as mathematical or logical principles, as Frege would likely try to argue. As Cook and Newson note, the "locality principle" of natural language grammar is not necessarily found in mathematical or logical reasoning but it certainly is present in the following three examples, each of them in a different language:

[6]

| **Language** | **Example** |
|---|---|
| English | **Has** he read the book?<br><br>(Not: Read he has the book?) |
| German | **Hat** er das buch gelesen? |
| French | **A**-t-il lu le livre? |

In all three cases, it is the auxiliary that moves to the front and not the past participle because the latter would have to move a greater distance within the sentence, thus violating the universal locality principle. Yet these principles are not a constraint or limit on our freedom but its very enabling condition. Chomsky opens *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* by noting the peculiar fact that any competent speaker of a language can both understand and generate a theoretically

infinite number of new statements; therefore, language use is inherently "creative," yet not completely random (6). Just as John Lyons noted that even though $2^n$= 2, 4, 8, 16 may generate an infinitely long sequence of numbers, this series is not completely random and in fact one *can* provide a "structural description" of this sequence's underlying logic (*Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* 32 and Lyons 146). This is completely analogous to the "structural description" Chomsky claims can be attributed to the equally infinite number of new but not unstructured sentences any competent speaker can generate (*Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* 32). For Frege, on the other hand, there is no need to emphasize cognitive faculties as such because the mathematical functions of Third Realm autonomously generate truth values which a particular thinker can objectively grasp merely through the mysterious "power of thinking" (Cobb-Stevens 1-10). Frege's ideal of a logical calculus drained of psychological contingency and intuitive prejudice is therefore perfectly realized in this computeristic model, which is why it is no coincidence that many early models for Artificial Intelligence and computation *did* in fact employ this theoretical model; Mary McGee Wood, a computer scientist herself, argues that it in fact provides promising resources for *continued* development in computation (McGee Wood 1-3).

What does any of this have to do with racial identity politics and "illegal immigration" policing? As I have repeatedly emphasized, one usually assumes that racial identity politics is a matter of some common trait, property, or image etc. by which individuals are "computeristically" grouped into the racial category into which they "objectively" fit. To employ pseudo-Fregean notation, if some stereotypical facial feature is assumed to be shared by "all Koreans," one would likely formalize this as: "If x is Asian then x has y facial feature etc." Though populist discourse on "defending one's heritage" from immigrants and "outsiders" rarely, if *ever*, explicitly employs such sophisticated notation, it certainly employs the same

underlying intuitive prejudice. This idealist calculus of "racial essence," by which some common trait can serve as the mathematical "function" from targeted individuals to objectively valid "truth values," is an ideal at best. It is actually *representational*, to borrow Badiou's technical use of that term. In other words, it is not an objectively valid truth operation so much as it is the contingent *action* of an entity in power. The problem of "targeting individuals" is the central problem of either approach but there are incredible technical differences between the two models. Whereas the computeristic model of grouping items according to a common trait appears to be an "objectively true operation," Badiou's understanding of statist "representation" is that it's a contingent action, a form of *work* by the entity in power. Precisely because a "multiple" exceeds and precedes any formal concept or property, a powerful entity's official representation can only ever occur belatedly through the conscious decision to *assert* that one's control is exhaustive and that no excessive remainder lies outside reach. In this sense, the entity in power can only ever *posit* its substantial closure through an official count as one.

This is strangely reminiscent of Fichte's idea that theory is inherently practical because the I only ever exists through positing itself. Thus, theory is not an eternally valid (computeristic) function so much as it only ever occurs through practice because there is no theoretical I that precedes the practical I's positing act (Fichte 21). Though Fichte largely intended this theory to be a critique of Kant's "dogmatism" (or Kant's failure to grasp the "freedom" of the I through privileging the objective validity of the "thing in itself" more than the autonomy of the I), I argue that this idea that notions only ever exist through being *posited* is inherent even in Kant's, and certainly in Hegel's work. Because German Idealism is really all about the radical contingency of an *act* of positing, German Idealism is actually the exact opposite of the Fregean computeristic rationalism I have described at length. My argument will probably come as a surprise to readers

familiar with how Hegel is usually described as a computeristic thinker obsessed with grouping everything into a conceptual unity. For example, Christopher Norris claims that in Hegel's system "difference is [always] annulled" by his "making sure in advance that consciousness will have the dialectical resources to incorporate any residue" that might resist absorption back into the unity of some higher concept (145). Norris claims that Hegel's intent was to reconstruct the entire history of thought by showing how each "baser" concept from an earlier stage in the history naturally progressed, as if computeristically and mechanistically, into a higher concept (146). However, I argue that close attention to Hegel's dialectic of predication in both the "Quality" section and the "Judgment of Reflection" section of his *Logic* will prove that Hegel held the exact *opposite* view. In fact, the conclusions Badiou reached nearly two centuries later are in a certain sense already present in Hegel's work.

Because I will devote Section II of this essay to showing how the category of "illegal Turkish immigrant" in *Bitte Nix Polizei* is not a substance, a predicate, or a species, I will briefly examine Hegel's treatment of all three of these categories in his *Logic*. Of course, Julie Maybee has noted that for many serious logicians the very term "Hegel's *Logic*" is an oxymoron, given that Hegel's *Logic* seems to proceed by completely random paths through unrelated series of half-logical notions (xiii). This view is so wrong because much of what was so revolutionary in Frege's work nearly a century later is already present, and *undermined*, in Hegel's *Logic*. It is well-known that the *Logic* opens with the completely empty pseudo-notion of "Being" (124). Because pure Being as such lacks either limits or qualifications, it is pre-predicative and is therefore the exact same as "Nothing" (126). The difference between Being and Nothing, given this lack of predicative determinacy, is therefore only ever an intended difference (Hegel of course exploits the play on words in German between "my" (*mein*) and "intending" (*meinen*) to

show that at this pre-predicative stage the difference is not objective; it's merely "mine") (126). Yet by the time the dialectic of *Logic* reaches a properly predicative level of sophistication in the "Quality" section, one finds that qualitative predication ironically repeats this founding gesture of "intending" what is merely "my" opinion: that is, even after establishing the logical resources for "qualitative predication," objective truth is still not fully freed from the arbitrary act of its being *posited.* Hegel's reasoning here is incredibly convoluted but it is worth examining the details of the movement. Basically, Hegel argues that establishing the limits of a "something" dialectically implies the "other" because that something only ever has determinations through its own "limit." But by its own definition, a limit is something that borders on alterity and therefore one's own limit is *shared* by the "other" (135). The dialectical impasse between something and the other, given their shared limit, therefore simply repeats the endless back and forth movement between "Being" and "Nothing" that characterized the book's opening section on "Becoming" because "Becoming" is also nothing more than an endless back and forth movement (136). He called this deadlock "Spurious Infinity" because Hegel knew that true infinity was something radically different from an endless repetition of the same thing in linear succession. Instead, "Genuine Infinity" for Hegel meant "Being for itself" or how an "infinite" multiplicity of contents can cohere through "qualitative connection" with each other (139). For example, my thought processes can entertain an infinite number of different thoughts, but they are all still qualitatively related to each other by being "my" thoughts. Spurious infinity was therefore really "spurious" because it lacked qualitative connections among its infinite series; it was still in the "pre-qualitative" section of the *Logic*. For Hegel to equate the infinite with the quality seems to imply the same kind of computeristic idealism of the predicate that is found in Frege but Hegel only entertains this notion to "deconstruct" it.

Basically, Hegel uses the example of "something" and its "other" to show that even though they appear to be opposites they actually are qualitatively equivalent; that is, they both entertain the same *kind* of connection with each other by participating in the same movement at the limit (Maybee 71). This first kind of "connection" is merely "communal" at this stage because this mere "grouping" has not yet become active "sorting" according to the predicate. Later, when they will be actively "sorted" according to an abstract predicate, this "communal" connection will become a properly "common" connection of a shared predicate. At this stage, Hegel is able to argue that the "ideality" is prior to "reality" because the "many" particular items are qualitatively related to each other only if the ideal quality uniting them is "one" (*Logic* 141-2). Thus, even though the "many" items exclude one another (Repulsion), they are all united actively by the "one" quality. Hegel notes therefore that the ideal "one" quality doesn't just "group" the many items together into a set; it actively "sorts" them according to a specific trait or property by which they belong together. At this stage that Hegel introduces the idea that the One *posits* the many. "Attraction" is the term for this "determined sameness" of the many (143). This idea that an ideal "predicate" can serve as the "function" for grouping a wide range of many items into a set of like items sounds a lot like Frege's conclusions nearly a century later. So why did Hegel not end the *Logic* with this conclusion? Notice that Hegel ends this section with the argument that the One actively *posits* the qualitative connections of the many. This is strangely similar to Badiou's thesis that statist representation is always a contingent act by the entity in power to set limits on the "many" under its control. Thus, predication is not an objective truth that can subsist without the contingent, almost idiotic, act of the One state. This also shows us that the One only ever emerges artificially from the many. The unstructured multiplicity as such precedes the dictating act of the One to arrange them according to a property.

Hegel would return to predication in the much later sections of "Judgment of Existence" and "Judgment of Reflection" sections of the *Logic* (originally in the third volume of the *Science of Logic* on the "Notion.") Hegel presents these two sections to entertain all the contradictions involved in traditional subject-predicate relations. The "Judgment of Existence" opens with the commonsense idea that in logical acts of predication, it is the subject that is essential and substantial while the predicate is merely an abstract universal quality to which the subject is indifferent (*For They Know Not What They Do* 117). Žižek's own example of "the rose is red" certainly fits the idea that the "rose" itself is indifferent to color; a rose could be red or it could be white but either way it is a rose. The color is "abstract" but the rose itself is the concrete substance. Hegel uses this movement to parody Kant's Table of Judgments by presenting this first judgment as a "Positive" Judgment. This idea that the color is abstract and therefore accidental is followed, however, by the "Negative Judgment" of taking this idea to its limit: if the "rose is not red," then by that logic it still must be some other particular color (117). Yet to designate a particular color (i.e.; white) poses logical problems for the first attempt to posit the subject as completely indifferent to its predicate. The last-ditch effort to preserve that original thesis ends with the "Infinite Judgment" of the rose; instead of engaging in the problems of accidental predicates (such as color), one merely presents a true but senseless tautology: "the rose is a rose" (118). Therefore, one ends by affirming *only* the substance without any true predicate.

Hegel uses this senseless tautology to end the dialectic of the "Judgment of Existence" in order to transition to the dialectic of the "Judgment of Reflection." In typical Hegelian fashion, he reverses the priorities of the previous section. Now it is no longer the subject that is substantial and indifferent to its predicate. Instead, the predicate is what is really substantial and

is merely "reflected" into particular items that bear it. The movement will once again parody Kant's Table of Judgments by taking us from smaller to ever larger classes of items: from the Singular Judgment "This man is mortal," one proceeds to the Particular Judgment "Some men are mortal," and ends with the Universal Judgment "All men are mortal" (*For They Know Not What They Do* 119 and *Logic* 239-40). By this logic, the predicate subsumes ever larger numbers of particular items under itself in quite the same "computeristic" fashion that a pseudo-Fregean thinker might argue. This is indeed how public discourse on race typically proceeds, though obviously not at all at the same level of technical rigor: to be an "Asian" or "Turkish" minority within a social body that strives to track down "aberrant" elements is really to entertain this same relation to the predicate: the racial predicate is a fully abstract quality that the public misrecognizes as being more substantial than its members, the only "true" substance. In a certain sense, ethnic cleansing movements really take aim at the abstract predicate more than its particular members; it is the predicate itself that one seeks to destroy and the wide range of items "bearing it" are only seen as secondary manifestations of the quality itself.

Of course, Hegel only entertains these conclusions about the "substantiality of the predicate" in order to gesture forward to the dialectic of the "Judgment of Necessity" and the "Judgment of the Notion." I will only briefly synopsize these sections: the Judgment of Necessity deconstructs the dialectic of the predicate because the ending argument "All men are mortal" is not really a universal predication: one can simply change that to "Man is mortal" (*For They Know Not What They Do* 120). The difference is that the latter doesn't entertain a relation between subject and predicate: it designates the notional content of a *species*. Man, as a species, is by its own definition "mortal." In setting the limits of the species, he will go on to further parody Kant's Table of Judgments by following this simply Categorical Judgment "The species

Man is, by definition, mortal" with a Hypothetical Judgment (an If-Then Judgment). Defining the limits of a species through its own notional content both fails and gives way to an attempt to understand one species through its relation with a different species: "If there are women, then there must also be men" (120). This judgment's lack of clarity gives way to the Disjunctive Judgment (Either-Or judgment) in which one can only clarify the species of "Man" through arguing "x is *either* a man or a woman" (121). The final dialectic of this section, the "Judgment of the Notion" follows from this failure. What this final movement proves is just that "notion" is not the same as "predicate," nor even the same as "species." Instead, the dialectic of the notion does nothing more than posit contingency *as such*. Beyond the idiocy of a contingent act of positing, one cannot rely on substance, predicate, or species (the three respective categories of the preceding dialectics, respectively) to find "truth." This is largely equivalent to Badiou's realization that beyond a contingent act of the state's *positing* its official count as one, there is neither substance, nor predicate, nor species to be found within the social body.

II.

*Bitte Nix Polizei*'s inclusion of the themes of immigration, race, labor, violence, and criminal "justice" has made it difficult to situate within a specific theoretical framework. Certainly, biographical details regarding Ören's espousal of what Moray McGowan calls an "essentially Marxist perspective" typically led critics to reduce surface issues of race, immigration, and gender back to basic questions of materialist economics (297). McGowan goes as far as to claim that for Ören even the "literal physical impact of migrant labor on the body" functions as an ideological motif for the properly economic phenomena of "alienation and class struggle," therefore reducing even the physical scars of labor back to their political significance as indicators of a capitalist economic system (297). Therefore, McGowan shares the convictions of

Susan Anderson, Susan Berman, and Leslie Adelson that ideological issues of race and immigration in the text are ultimately undermined by the novel's portrayal of a common or shared "economic struggle" in which both the working-class German Gramke family and the undocumented Turkish laborer Ali Itir are equally implicated (Anderson 144, Berman 230, McGowan 297, Adelson 191). Though the novel itself provides numerous examples of precisely this "vulgar materialist" logic of reducing surface motifs back to their brute economic basis, I argue that that this theoretical technique has been responsible for the widespread tendency for critics to devalue Ali's subjectivity, treating him more as an epiphenomenal metaphorical motif for the "real modes of production" than as a site of positive, disruptive potential in an all too fragile surveillance system (Adelson 182, Marven 199, and Chaochuti 159). Indeed, Ali's desperate attempt to find steady work that would elevate him to the status of a "true person" in the German economic system while frantically hiding from the surveillance system established to hunt down undocumented laborers of his "racial type" is a story that eerily parallels the working class German girl Brigitte's story of trying to elevate herself to economic autonomy through a prostitution career equally plagued by anxieties of being monitored by the state and police, despite these two characters' superficial "racial" and national differences (32 and 93). Their disastrous encounter at the novel's climax, in which their mutual failure for communication leads to the notorious rape scene that would ultimately cost Ali his life, is therefore all the more tragic precisely because there is an uncanny sense that they really share an all too common path that is merely obscured by a tragic perspectival conflict between the two at the moment of their accidental meeting (102-5). While Anderson cites Ali's lack of fluency of the German language and Chaochuti cites the protagonist's role as a stereotyped Other prone to public suspicion as the factors behind this crisis of communication, I argue that what Ali and Brigitte hold in common

(through their inability to communicate) is not merely a shared "class consciousness" of the same material base but their shared *disruption* of the meta-structural representational system of the policing apparatus (148 and 157). Ali's disruption of the racial surveillance apparatus that fails to properly grasp his identity even when the police eventually recover his dead body (or at least what we assume to be his body) is a circumvention of the state's meta-structural grasp that presents more than just accounting problems for them. His exemplification of Badiou's thesis that inclusion exceeds formally recognized belonging ties into Badiou's warning that such supernumerary sites pose more than just "accounting problems" for the state. They are the sites where revolutionary potential develops. Badiou carefully qualifies this thesis, however, by warning against the tendency of identity politics to adopt the intuitive prejudice of emphasizing (racial) traits or objective markers (or even Frege's logical thesis of "properties and their extension") by instead adopting the Zermelo-Fraenkel formal system's sole lexical relation of inclusion (*Being and Event* 40 and 44). Thus, the illusoriness of racial identity is undermined through the utter incompetence of the racial surveillance system to expunge such sites precisely *because* they include as "racially" and nationally disparate figures as Ali and Brigitte. To be more precise, the subversive elements in the social body *can't* be grouped together through a single shared "racial" trait etc. It's for exactly this reason that they pose such a revolutionary threat to the forces that try to suppress them.

Within the body of critical literature on *Bitte Nix Polizei*, most critics have tended to reduce surface questions of subjectivity to their brute materialist base. This move has often been phrased as an ethical matter of recognizing the common economic struggle of such seemingly disparate groups as the working class German Gramke family and the undocumented Turkish "guest workers" like Ali. He notes the biographical detail that Ören's work "embeds labor

migration . . . within a wider pattern of European working-class experience, but sees this migration also as a direct consequence of the 'huge, bleeding wound' of European imperialism" (297). Berman similarly emphasizes that the common struggle presented in Ören's work "promotes building bridges between different cultural groups by emphasizing their shared socioeconomic struggles," while Anderson notes that the novel is about both Germans and Turks in their common negotiation of multicultural coexistence within what are really the *same* economic struggles (230 and 144). Adelson, however, uses this logic of common economic struggle to warn against the tendency to see Ali as a true character, arguing instead that his role as a "phantom character" merely serves as a "strategic nexus where imaginative effects of migration only appear to congeal into something resembling a person who suffers so sincerely" (191). The insubstantial phantom character therefore merely serves the metaphorical function of "manifest[ing] as a specter of capitalism, which haunts a national history and a globalized economy" (191). Thus, by this logic "both German and Turk . . . are display dummies" for which the identification of substantial personhood would be merely a naïve mistake (191). Certainly, the pragmatic function of enabling large-scale concerns of economic conditions to be addressed through intrinsically empty metaphorical figures would seem to be precisely the "dialectical" movement of revealing every individual to already be a universal, as the opening "Sense Certainty" section of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* demonstrated through its universalizing dissolution of the illusory particularity of the "here," the "now," and the "I" (63). Such critical evaluations therefore tacitly argue that Ali allows the reader to move "dialectically" from one troubled individual hiding from racial surveillance apparatuses to his being raised to the notion of embodying a general sociological reality of common economic struggle and that his value as a pseudo-character has nothing more to offer. However, such a reductive absorption of the

troubled individual into a universal economic situation is at odds both with the content of the novel and with Hegel's own presentation of the dialectic of self-consciousness. Indeed, the first appearance of self-consciousness in the "Truth which Conscious Certainty of Self Realises Consciousness In Itself" section of *Phenomenology of Spirit* is obviously presented as a brute individual absorbed in solipsistic desire and base consumption; this notional version of "Self Consciousness" is of course contradicted when it encounters a second self-consciousness who *also* desires (103-9). Both desire because neither is an inert object to be consumed. The Slave-Master dialectic stages their mutual struggle for recognition. The "Unhappy Consciousness" section that concludes the Self-Consciousness module ironically repeats this founding movement by simply inverting it; the Unhappy Consciousness wishes to completely objectify itself and allow its illusory subjectivity to be expunged through ascetic mortifications of the flesh and through surrendering its freedom to authority (130). What both movements fail to recognize is that for Hegel subjectivity is never an aberrant element to be dialectically reincorporated into the reductive unity of an organic whole. As Žižek has repeatedly noted, the slave-master dialectic doesn't end with the magical generation of a new positivity out of nowhere because the slave merely accomplishes a purely perspectival shift with regard to negativity; whereas the "fear of death" initially strikes the slave as the purely foreign threat of absolute negativity, the slave eventually comes to recognize the very core of its own subjectivity in this negativity (*Less than Nothing* 198). Thus, dialectic never ends with the innocuous establishment of a reductive objective whole but instead merely establishes a reconciliation "*with* negativity" (*The Ticklish Subject* 109, my emphasis). This is why the "Absolute Knowing" section that concludes *Phenomenology of Spirit* is *not* the pseudo-mystical absorption of all alterity into an absolutely exhaustive whole, as many a caricature of Hegel would hold (Deleuze 40 and Derrida 7). Instead,

the “Absolute Knowing” section is nothing more than the overcoming of the picture thinking of the preceding Religion section and its positing of the Absolute as some exterior, objective thing (*Phänomenologie des Geistes* 422). The final section therefore simply formalizes negativity as a minimal element obstructing Fichte’s simplistic (at least by Hegel’s account) “I=I” formula (425). Derrida’s accusation in *Glas* that Hegel’s “Absolute Knowing” (*savoir absolu*) is just another Western attempt at “full presence” incompatible with “archi-écriture,” “writing,” or “text” is therefore far too hasty in its overlooking of that section’s emphasis on time as the ultimate disrupter by irreducible negativity of any reductive formula of self-identity (7, my translation). In much the same way, to argue that Ali’s subjectivity is only a metaphor for the “real modes of production” is to ignore his radical potential for action against discrimination. Because Ören’s stance is openly a “Marxist” one, I argue that one *must* do justice to Ali’s subjective disruption within the social body.

As I noted, examples of the very reductive materialism I critique can indeed be found within the novel itself; however, I argue that such examples are only ever invoked as ironic devices. Though the text makes ceaseless references to “work” and “money” and links the social problems of the Gramke family’s alcoholism, cigarette-addiction, and base television consumption to the realities of Bruno Gramke’s chronic unemployment, even these references don’t follow the reductive materialist logic critics often ascribe to them (3-5). For example, Brigitte cleverly uses brute materialism to deconstruct her parent’s naïve idealization of her older sister, who is not the compliant working woman engaged to a respectable man they imagine but is instead a prostitute whose apparent fiancé is a pimp (14). Brigitte accomplishes this by showing that having a sufficient amount of money is what truly elevates her sister to such fortune, such that her need to maintain illusory social appearances is truly a trivial pseudo-

concern. Brigitte understands that she too can merely satisfy the simple material condition of obtaining a sufficient amount of money and let that override superficial social concerns of conforming to the ideal role of bourgeois married woman into which her parents pressure her (14). However, Brigitte's pursuit of economic autonomy is not an end in itself but is instead a path for her desire to break from her parent's constricting expectations in order to affirm her own will: "I don't want to be like them, like anyone" ("Ich will nicht so werden wie die, wie keiner von ihnen") (14).

Ali makes a similar vulgar materialist observation about the reductive power of money. When he is granted even rather unstable work by the "Meister," he is ecstatic at having *any* work whatsoever (95-6). Ali therefore seems to affirm that superficial social concerns about the poor conditions and low quality of what work he obtains are merely ideological motifs undermined by the brute reality of obtaining money from the factory (*Die Fabrik*) (95-6). However, the very same chapter ends with Ali's loitering in the clothing store while fantasizing about purchasing the fine suit that would prove to the world that he was truly a subject worthy of recognition: "Ali Itir, they'll all say, is one huge personality. Just look at the suit he wears!" ("Ali Itir, werden sie sagen, ist eine Persönlichkeit, wer so einen Anzug trägt, hat es zu etwas gebracht") (109, 97). Ali's fantasies in the clothing store mainly focus on speculating about how his roommates will react (108). Indeed, he spends the majority of the novel "envious of" his relative Ibrahim and his wife Sultan because they had "regular jobs" and freedom while Ali merely searched for what little temporary, clandestine work he could obtain from the "Meister" (24). His living situation was further complicated by his desire to seduce Sultan, always "swaying her big butt," who appears in his erotic dreams: "Sultan with her big butt had appeared in [his dreams]. She approached him, her breasts bouncing on her belly ridged with fat . . . moaning, 'Come give me

a kiss'" (27). In addition to the economic vulgar materialist reading, one could make an equally "vulgar" materialist argument that Ali's motives for finding work are driven by his base desires to seduce his relative's wife.

While it is clear that neither Ali nor Brigitte is willing to surrender their subjective ambitions to the brute economic realities that oppress them, I argue that their subjective role in the text presents additional problems for the meta-structural surveillance systems each of them must circumvent. Throughout the novel, paranoid fantasies of the police plague Ali Itir's ambitions as a working "illegal immigrant" and Brigitte's ambitions as a prostitute. Ali even buys into paranoid myths that the immigration police have specially-trained dogs capable of sniffing out Turks, as if a "racial essence" really were capable of being submitted to such clear-cut search procedures (32). The text consistently portrays both the immigration police and even the capitalist workplace managers as mysteriously exterior, distant, and meta-structural figures in precisely the sense that Rancière, Badiou, or even Deleuze and Guattari would hold. Rancière famously theorized that negative "policing" is the antithesis of true politics, which happens only when they who shouldn't speak begin to organize and speak out (May 5). Similarly, Badiou argues that the state gives a meta-structural *representation* that is exterior to a primary presentation; the state is *merely* representational or outside the situation proper (*Being and Event* 98). Even Deleuze and Guattari's radically immanent ontology of intensive differences-in-themselves and the plane of consistency (*plan de consistence*) lacking any supplementary Structuralist dimensions still acknowledges the war machine (*la machine de guerre*) to be a violent force from the "outside" (303 and 434, my translation). In the novel, the terrible scene of the collapsed wall that injures Frau Gramke's co-workers presents the manager as a radically exterior and distant figure who merely dictates orders while lacking even the emotional empathy

to break character and assist those injured (59). In addition, the novel portrays a brutal rape scene of Frau Gramke by her boss that maximizes the sense of exteriority that the capitalist boss occupies (65). At the novel's climax, Ali is so thoroughly terrified of Brigitte's threat to turn him in to the police for "rape" that this fear is sufficient to end his life (122). Though the text is notoriously unclear about whether Ali had had been murdered, committed suicide, died by accident, or even whether the body found at the end is his, the reader is nonetheless left with the sense that his paranoid *fear* of the immigration police was sufficient in itself to put an end to his life ambitions (122).

Despite Ali's debilitating fear of the police, there is a serious gap between the immigration police's ambitions of surveillance and their actual ability to effectively execute them. Indeed, even when the police obtain what we presume to be Ali's body at the end of the novel, they admit their utter inability to identify the body except as "a Turk": "[D]espite all investigating efforts, his identity has not been established" (129). This is why they embark on a community tour to ask for help from the citizens and tacitly reveal the emptiness and vulnerability of their meta-structural location. The much-feared police of the novel are also proven to be humorously ineffective when, after Brigitte's first trip to the house of prostitution, the policeman whose path she accidentally crosses on the street is portrayed as mindlessly awaiting a sausage, seems to not care about his being in the very midst of a "transgressive" character: "A policeman waiting for his curry sausage ignored them as if he had heard nothing of said" (105, 94). This discrepancy between an abstract racial or "criminal" category that serves as the criteria of their search procedures and their actual encounter with "hard evidence" indicates a broader problem with racial identity politics. Even though Brigitte and Herr Gramke make

inflammatory comments about Turkish immigrants, these statements are always extremely vague generalizations made in the absence of the "Other." For example, when Brigitte sees the inscription "*Fa-fa- şiz-me*" on the street, she immediately assumes it is Turkish just because she doesn't understand it (72). She immediately assumes that "Other" and "Turk" are synonymous terms. At a bar, Bruno Gramke also makes very vague comments about Turks. He blames Turkish workers for his unemployment; he falls into vulgar materialism by claiming that they don't know anything except how "sweet" the pay is: "die wußten nur, daß die Mark süß ist" (79). Of course, such extremely vague remarks betray the untenably abstract character of any racial generalizations and it is precisely this untenable abstraction that inhibits the racial surveillance system from adequately executing its own ambitions. At this point I once again find a link to Hegel and the way he changed Kant's famous "conditions of possibility" into "conditions of *impossibility*" (*For They Know Not What They Do* 110). Whereas we'd normally think that an abstract category like "Turkish immigrant" is a condition of possibility for identifying members of the group (i.e., if we understand the concept, we can identify who "fits" it), abstract categories actually work in the opposite way. Their role is merely negative; no particular member of the "group" can ever really live up to the abstract criteria of the category/stereotype. I argue that German Idealism helps explicate this: Kant's transcendental "conditions of possibility" (i.e., space and time are the conditions of sensible givenness, while pure concepts like "substance" and "cause" are the conditions of rational comprehension etc.) are reversed in Hegel: all the Notion does is show why its instances *fail* to live up to their own notion (Kant 98 and 104 and *For They Know Not What They Do* 110). Likewise, the predicate *lacks* any relation to its members. This is why Brigitte's and Bruno's comments about the Turks only make sense when there are no Turks present to hear or challenge them.

The grand paradox of racial surveillance is that even though it thrives on extremely vague abstractions, it is nonetheless dependent upon a certain representational system. As David Theo Goldberg has noted, Critical Race Theory must somehow come to terms with the way that "race" obtains its intelligibility through representation rather than naturalization (4-8). Whereas we'd normally think that we understand ethnic groups (even our own) simply through being "naturalized" into them, Goldberg notes that even understanding one's own "ethnic group" is an act of representation. An ethnicity never simply *is*; it must always be represented somehow. Goldberg is careful to note that while race's representational function does not negate its material implications, representational systems certainly do materialize in varying degrees of autonomy in relation to one another because they are always structured in power relations (4-8). I argue that in *Bitte Nix Polizei* the representational matrix underlying the very conditions of "racial identification" are primarily legislative and therefore primarily political. Therefore, the representational matrix is not even primarily a system of intuitive images so much as it is a system of formal inclusions and exclusions, such that stereotypical images of the "Other" are only ever secondary. This may initially sound like a contradiction to speak of representation *without* images; by this I mean that the representation occurs at the political level of officially including and officially excluding members. As I've already noted, such an act *can't* be reduced to any common property, trait, or image, although it is still an artificial act of representation rather than a pre-given, natural fact.

The radical secondarity of images also explains the failure of the police to intuitively grasp Ali. Even from his first appearance in the novel, he understands that his status as an "illegal person" in German society arises from an absolutely arbitrary legal system of identification. His realization that an official "stamp" (*Stempel*) on his papers designates him as

illegal, and nothing more, leads him to look forward to simply getting a different stamp on his record that designates him as "legal," even if he must do so fraudulently (25). Ali envies Sultan because he realizes that the only difference between them is that her papers are "in order": "Can he at least do better whatever it is she does? Is he any less hardy than they are? No, of course not, but well, he's been stamped illegal once; his papers aren't in order" (24). Indeed, his belief that he can simply work his way out of his predicament is fueled by his understanding that his being an "illegal person" lacks any Metaphysical guarantee beyond human consensus. Indeed he notes himself, "In the end, wasn't it merely a stamp? . . . The power of one stamp lasted until there was another" (24). I argue that the precedence of legislative stamps of inclusion and exclusion reveals race's true basis to be even less substantial or intuitively accessible than any physical trait or "look" that one might naively take to be race's basis. That is, Ali realizes that his racialization as an "outsider" to the system is purely formal, as Badiou's system would hold. Even after Ali is forced on the run from police after the rape scene, he realizes that although the police have an intuitive and imagistic description of his physical features, the lack of official public records on him still render him virtually non-existent to the state: "He existed officially in birth records, but he was non-existent here, and according to the statements made to the police, [his] clothes, color of hair, height, weight and so forth were on record, yet a fugitive whose identity was unknown" (123). Significantly, his "identity is, ironically, unknown" *despite* the fact that all of his predicative properties were known. A clear description of clothes, hair color, height, weight etc. is not enough to supplement his escape from the formal records on illegal persons. Thus, his exodus from the purely formal system of official records makes him effectively non-existent or invisible *despite* the fact that the police had fairly clear physical descriptions of his "Haarfarbe und Kleidung" (hair color and clothing) to go on (111, my translation). The representational

system Goldberg cites as race's enabling condition is therefore not really a system of static images, as one's intuitive prejudices about "race" would lead one to think, because it is instead a series of formal rules.

Thus, *Bitte Nix Polizei* calls into question the tendency for the Postcolonial Theory tradition to deconstruct race on intuitive grounds. Homi K. Bhabha, for example, cleverly exposes the Freudian "fetish" character of race by citing its illusory attempt to arrest the disavowed originary "difference" inherent to the postcolonial situation's signifying location in "Third Space" ("The Other Question" 75). Bhabha therefore warns against the temptation to imagine coherent cultural essences that could be faithfully restored in their entirety if only the perspectival distance "between" cultures could be traversed by choosing instead to *radicalize* this differential and anti-representational "between" as the very signifying condition of Postcolonial discourse ("Articulating the Archaic" 127). Therefore, although Bhabha only ever engages the intuitive illusions of racial imagery in order to deconstruct them, he nonetheless privileges fetishistic intuition over legislative operations solely concerned with inclusions and exclusions. However, in *Bitte nix Polizei* Ali's frantic attempts to escape the racial surveillance system are built neither on the "racializing" gaze of the Other nor on the fetish character that such a gaze would sustain. Instead, in the novel racialization is a political phenomenon that largely eludes or operates independently of consciousness altogether. As I noted, the police only confine Ali's body to objectifying consciousness at the end of the novel but this act is not the fetishistic gaze of which Bhabha speaks (123). One can detect none of the exoticism or manipulation of the "colonialist gaze" here, such as Edward Said would theorize (198). All they can establish is that the body belongs to an "outsider," a statement that contains formal rather than intuitive meaning.

A cursory reading of *Bitte Nix Polizei* would seem to present a radically cynical ending with Ali's meaningless and perhaps accidental death and Brigitte's grief over her own responsibility as she hears word from the police who are not even sure that they have found the right man (123). Thus, in Badiou's terms *Bitte Nix Polizei* would seem to be a story that lacks a "truth event," a story that never breaks out of the oppressive capitalist modes of production and never fully disrupts the racially discriminatory surveillance structures. Brigitte also seems to never emancipate herself from her parents' expectations and their lower-class lifestyle, even as she dreams of her escape. From her first appearance in the novel, whenever Brigitte dreams of starting a new way of life she imagines the same life as her parents with "different furnishings" (19 and Anderson 148). At the end of the novel, Brigitte just climbs onto the back of Achim's motorcycle and rides away; it would be hard to argue that Achim is any different from her low-class parents (123). Thus, it would seem that the brute material realities of the text's world are insurmountable facts that Brigitte and Ali can only ever fantasize about overcoming, and even then the act of fantasy entertains merely *superficial* differences.

However, the text never actually asserts that Ali died. Although one never is sure if the recovered body is his, he does return later in Ören's *Berlin Savignyplatz* to "haunt" the literary landscape once more. At the very end of *Bitte Nix Polizei*, the police tour the community parading a doll and a ridiculous caricature of Ali around which can't help but strike the reader as inaccurate depictions of Ali (128-30). When Achim assures Brigitte not to worry anymore because the man in the drawing was no longer any threat, it would be very difficult to take this reference to Ali seriously either (129). Yet, assuming that Ali had in fact survived his apparent death at the end of the novel, the discrepancies between his caricature and the real Ali require further explanation. Of course, the Existentialist tradition from Kierkegaard to Sartre has

staunchly refused any such objective reductivism as an example of "bad faith" that obscures the existential predicament of a subject who is ultimately "nothing" (108 and 135). While Badiou and Lacan seem to reach the same conclusion about barred subjectivity or the void, there are profound technical differences that have serious implications for the case of Ali in *Bitte Nix Polizei*. For one, Badiou's formulation of the "nothing" is linked to the void set as always included but always disruptive because of its fundamental opposition to any illusorily secure "count as one" (*Being and Event* 67). Thus, Ali's absolute disappearance from the radar of the immigration police after his officially recognized "death" is not at all a simple absence but a disruptive site of positive, productive potential precisely *because* of its escape from the reductive structures of the count as one and its persistence as a void or gap in the structure. At the end of the novel, the police flaunt caricatures of Ali in order to fulfill their meta-structural duty of assuring the public that "multiplicity is not corrupted by the void" (*Infinite Thought* 169). At this moment, the tension between meta-structural representation and its disavowed site of revolutionary potential is greatest because here the image lacks a subject and the subject lacks an image, proving that the only thing that can join the two is the immigration police and their decision to *assert* their control.

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