

and female power and most of the prominent female politicians are often associated with these characters as Mary Beard shows, they are Medusas, Clytaemnestres, Lizistrates etc. But not only women politicians in power are exposed to attacks. Marta Verginella (2019) in her preface to the Slovenian edition of *Women and Power* by mentioning Greta Thunberg and Carola Rousseff, two women who raise their voice not only for themselves but also for others, reminds us how they were immediately attacked *ad hominem* and labelled as problematic, insane, furious etc. – not because of what they did, but that they as women dare to speak and act in public.

At the end, it is important to again mention that Mary Beard's *Woman and Power* is subtitled *Manifesto*. *Woman and Power* is not a small essay, a booklet on women's public voice and their struggles, but a manifesto in the full sense of the word. The manifesto is a public statement of beliefs, aims and policies and is actually a written word in a public space. The book can also be read in the domestic sphere in the shelter of the home on the couch, but the only place of the manifesto is in the public square where it can also be heard and where a word becomes an act.

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Sara Ahmed: *What's the Use? On the Uses of Use*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2019.

What's the Use? is designated as the third and final part of Sara Ahmed's trilogy concerning "following words" (p. 3) – tracing their intellectual and social history, stories of how words and ideas have been put to use. The first one, *The Promise of Happiness* (2010), focuses on tracing happiness as an idea or even as an obligation (to be happy) that is accompanied by socially shaped expectations concerning what brings happiness. These expectations also serve as demands to be met in order to be happy. The

second one, *Willful Subjects* (2014), focuses on wilfulness as a designation of those who do not “will” in the right way – in the way that is expected from them; of those who stray from the already-made, well-trodden social paths. The conclusion of both works (2010; 2014) may be summarised as: “Happiness follows for those who will right” (2014, p. 4). In the last part of her trilogy, Sara Ahmed adds another crucial dimension to the analysis of the quite complex socio-political dynamics of social exclusion and marginalisation, and the ways in which the world-as-it-is stays as-it-is, namely, the use of *use* and its accompanying designations, especially the interplay and the conditions of being designated as *useful* or *useless*.

In the first chapter “Using Things”, she focuses on the everyday life of *use*: “how objects can be caught at different moments of use” (p. 65) – of being *in use*, *out of use*, *used*, *unused*, *overused*, *used up*, *usable/unusable*, concluding by highlighting the power of classification in terms of designating objects and agents by assigning them the above-mentioned use-related qualities. In *What’s the Use?*, S. Ahmed expands the repertoire of a critical gaze – previously mostly focused on race (2012), gender and sexuality (2010; 2014; 2017), while other dimensions were undoubtedly present at least in-between the lines – to include disability and class. By discussing *intended functionality* or *forness*, approached as a description of “what something is for” (2019, p. 21), she also deepens her previous discussions of the relations between objects and orientations: “Orientation involves direction toward objects that affect what we do, and how we inhabit space. We move toward and away from objects depending on how we are moved by them” (2006, p. 28). Intended functionality also accounts for how objects (spaces) – the social as instituted (Bourdieu, 2020, p. 26) – also contain an orientation towards agents by being shaped in a way that enables spaces to be used by *some* rather than all agents. By their shape, spaces reach towards particular groups of agents and are being reached for by them: it is this simultaneousness or, better, the lack of it, which reveals *forness* not only as a function of an object, but also for whom an object is to be useful.

In order to reveal *use as an inheritance*, Ahmed follows the paths of intellectual use of use by Darwin and Lamarck. She traces their steps and tracks, left in the field of social sciences – as evident in the works of Herbert Spencer – which were at the time attempting to constitute themselves as a legitimate scientific discipline of sociology by adopting and following the steps of natural sciences (Durkheim & Fauconnet, 1903/2014), Ahmed discusses: 1) law of use and disuse: “what is used will be strengthened in proportion to time spent”; and 2) natural selection: “the effects of repeated use will be inherited by future generation” (p. 85). According to

S. Ahmed and her discussion of the blacksmith's arm – a story of the laws of exercise and natural selection, of inheritance of what one is capable of being useful to, a story of a blacksmith's son following his father's path by inheriting his stronger arms (pp. 85–102) – is not only a demand to be useful unequally distributed on the basis of race and class (some are freed from the obligation to be useful), but also contains a particular temporality of spreading across generations. When the use is what one inherits, it is a “prediction” and a “command” (p. 90) to be useful *for something* rather than other that it is inherited. It is a partiality of an existence, a particular forness extracted from all the possibilities of what one could be (p. 21). As S. Ahmed discusses in the following chapters on *use as a technique* and on *use and the university*, the education system is one of the clearest examples of a directive mechanism, tending to put that inheritance to use.

In Chapters 3 and 4, Ahmed shows how intended functionality is not the only principle guiding the usage either of an object or an agent. Namely, alongside intended functionality that is evident and generally clear, for example via explicit instructions or proclamations, there is also an additional part of functionality, one that stays silent or hidden, but which nonetheless results in a particular *usage* and the effects that stem from it. It is, as Bourdieu (1998, p. 113) analyses in relation to the economy of symbolic goods, this “double consciousness” of an institution or of a field whose entire logic rests “on the taboo of rendering /the truth/ explicit”. By referring to the use as an inheritance and use as a technique, and applying it to the analysis of the monitorial schools for working class children in England in the early 19th century under the guidance of Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster, S. Ahmed makes visible the gap and the tension between the “official” truth of the field of education – usefulness, and its repressed truth, reproduction.

At the beginning, the analysis of education and use refers to the monitorial schools, enveloped with fears of “the danger of education” – of engendering insubordination rather than passive subordination to one's social destiny that is achieved by limiting agents' aspirations – but further chapters aim to show how education and reproduction are entangled in the context of university. Despite S. Ahmed's claim in Chapter 4: “/a/ccounting for use and the university is thus a way of bringing the arguments of each of my three preceding chapters together” (p. 144), the leap from the monitorial schools of the 19th century to the founding of University College London (UCL) in 1826, and to the modern university – analysed from the perspective of diversity, of complaint and of queer use – seems to provide us with an idea of quite a linear continuation as if the educational field is destined solely for its reproductive role, disregarding

its ambivalent role in providing resources, possibilities and opportunities to reach further than one is destined for; its role, after all, to *enable* queer use at the same time as *disabling* it.

In her analysis of university, S. Ahmed shows how the use of use, when intertwined with usages of other (class-based, race-based etc.) ideas, such as intended functionality or *forness* – what one is for, thus, what one should aim and aspire to – results in what she names “institutional mechanics” (p. 151) that are supported by “institutional reluctance” (p. 149) and “nonperformativity” (p. 153). This conglomerate of “what usually happens still happens” (p. 152), of an “institutional as usual” (p. 163), serves as a barrier, a wall, to any attempts of (attempting a) change, a wall that is usually visible only to the misfits who attempt to *queer* the use, the usual, and the usual use (see the *Conclusion* for queer use). In her discussion on misfits and queer use, on “how things can be used in ways other than for which they were intended or by those other than for whom they were intended” (p. 199), S. Ahmed focuses on queer(-ing) agents, putting aside that institutions provide grounds not only for their own reproduction, but also for their own transformation.

In her trilogy, S. Ahmed follows the words and ideas of *happiness* (2010), *wilfulness* (2014) and *use* (2019). By tracing the idea of use along the lines of – to remain with her use of the path metaphor (p. 40) – its well-trodden paths, she trails the ways in which use as an idea and as an everyday life practice shape institutions, brick by brick, and the everyday life of social agents, wall by wall – but also arm by arm, by a supportive, change-enacting “army of arms” (2017, p. 84). Expressed differently, she trails the paths that were used before by, for example, M. Douglas on how institutions think (1986), and Bourdieu’s analyses (for example 1996; 2018), but which are in dire need of being used more, especially nowadays when the educational field (still) seems to be failing to live up to its official truth, meritocracy. Yet, failing to enact meritocracy is not the only thing it does.

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