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What Is the “New”?

## What Is the “New”?

PETAR BOJANIĆ, FRANCESCA DE VECCHI E SNEŽANA VESNIĆ

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### **Abstract**

This paper introduces the 89th issue of *Rivista di Estetica*, which focuses on the theme of “novelty” and its many forms: the innovative, the unclassified, the unexpected, the unrecognizable. The issue explores the possibilities of the “new” — its creation, production, or discovery — as well as what resists reflection because it does not yet exist or eludes any clear formulation. How does the “new” manifest itself? What is its relation to change? When does transformation become “novelty”? What defines the “new” in the arts, and how can we develop a phenomenology of ontological novelty?

### **Termini di indicizzazione**

**Keywords:** new, invention, phenomenological novelty**Parole chiave:** novità, invenzione, novità fenomenologica

### **Testo integrale**

## 1. Protocol

- <sup>1</sup> “Newness,” the “new,” and “novelty” — three expressions of the same disturbance — each mark a different moment in the unfolding of rupture. “Newness” gestures toward the indeterminate threshold, the becoming of something not yet stabilized. “The new” names that which emerges as distinct, already set apart from the old. “Novelty,” finally, is the inscription of that rupture into the social: a process of circulation, recognition,



and contestation. These are not merely semantic variations but ontological operations that destabilize continuity and unsettle inherited forms. To speak of the new, then, is already to invoke a paradox – one that philosophy must both shelter and resist. It is precisely this paradoxical status of the new, as that which calls for philosophy while remaining structurally incompatible with its conceptual apparatus, that we now turn to examine.

2 Our initial wager is that there is such an *entity* as *the new*. Not only that: “We should make the new!”<sup>1</sup> Yet, our intention is not to treat the new as a static ontological entity or merely a phenomenological phenomenon that appears. Rather, we are interested in reconstructing the *conditions of its production*. How is the new made? Who makes it, and how is it recognized as new? What protocols must be invented in order for the new to be legible, transmissible, and eventually exhausted?

3 The new, we argue, cannot be retrofitted into the old. It is not an extension, a refinement, or a mutation. It is, rather, a *cut* – an incision into time, form, and sense. The new is that which disjoins itself from what precedes it. It resists subsumption. It refuses genealogy. It does not merely add itself to the archive of the present, but troubles its borders and logic of continuity. It stands in relation to the now only insofar as it refuses to be “now:” it is always what is not yet, what is barely about to arrive, what exceeds every horizon of anticipation.

4 We propose two theses:

5 First, the new is not an invention of the isolated subject, nor does it arise out of individual genius or divine inspiration. The production of novelty is a *collective act*, one that occurs within and through a group which serves simultaneously as the *generator* and the *editor* of the new. The group fabricates novelty not only by inventing it, but by recognizing it, naming it, disseminating it, stabilizing it. Against Simondon, who conceptualizes the group as a system of resistance to transformation, and the individual as the privileged vector of change, we reverse the asymmetry: it is the group that enables rupture, by constituting the symbolic space in which the new can appear, be inscribed, and begin to operate.<sup>2</sup> Invention, in this sense, is not the property of an originary subject but the effect of collective acts of recognition and semantic labor.<sup>3</sup> Only when the group positions an act as novel – through repetition, reinforcement, and projection – does the act enter the social as the new.

6 Second, the emergence of novelty is never innocent. It is neither smooth nor pacific. The production of the new is inherently *violent*. In the lineage of Marx<sup>4</sup> and Schumpeter, we maintain that novelty does not evolve gradually from the old, but is wrested from it, extracted through struggle, disruption, and erasure.<sup>5</sup> Schumpeter’s formulation of *creative destruction* has been domesticated by innovation discourse, but in its original framing it describes a process of annihilation – the violent clearing of the old to make room for the new. The new is not a renovation; it is a cancellation. Such violence is not merely metaphorical or economic. It is architectural, institutional, and epistemological. In architecture, for instance, Tafuri has shown that the very notion of avant-garde novelty often conceals violent acts of ideological displacement.<sup>6</sup> The architectural project does not resolve contradiction – it materializes it. Likewise, Peter Eisenman’s work demonstrates how architectural novelty often proceeds through *formal aggression*: the deliberate undoing of function and signification in order to make visible the instability of architectural language itself.<sup>7</sup> These gestures expose novelty not as progress but as interruption – as that which cuts, not that which follows.

7 Jacques Derrida, in his reflection on invention, reminds us that “invention must be authorized by a law that it itself must invent.”<sup>8</sup> Invention, then, is always paradoxical: it requires a recognition that cannot preexist it. The group that fabricates the new must also invent the protocol by which it recognizes that fabrication as legitimate. In this



sense, novelty is never given. It is not natural. It is always a *constructed contingency*, one whose recognition depends on social technologies of inscription, naming, and differentiation.

8 Our concern, therefore, is not with the new as such, but with the *protocols of newness* – with the ways in which groups fabricate the appearance of novelty, authorize its passage, and incorporate it into the structures of sense. To think the new ontologically is to think the group not as the site of resistance, but as the unstable agent of rupture, memory, and futurity. Having outlined the social protocols through which the new is fabricated, recognized, and contested, we must now turn to the linguistic and philosophical dimension in which the *new* first becomes legible as a problem. If the group produces the new, it is language – and particularly the philosophical idiom – that both initiates and obstructs its appearance. Here the Latin triad *novus, nova, novum* is not a grammatical formality, but a conceptual site in which the paradox of novelty becomes pronounced. Each utterance of the *novum* carries within it a double movement: it names what is yet to be recognized, and it encodes the impossibility of fully recognizing it within already existing regimes of meaning. This is where philosophy begins – not as the doctrine of the known, but as the linguistic apparatus attuned to paradox, rupture, and what exceeds the order of the given. And thus, we must linger on the paradoxical logic of *novum*, not as an etymological curiosity, but as the very condition of philosophical necessity.

## 2. Innovation

9 *Novus, nova, novum* is the nominative of the three gender forms in Latin, and when we use it in one of the following sentences, it will simultaneously be problematic and paradoxical, which is what necessarily ‘initiates philosophy’, as the linguistic protocol that deals with problems and paradoxes. Specifically, the problematic and paradoxical appearance of the new: philosophy (or true philosophy, *la vraie philosophie*<sup>9</sup>) protects the appearance of the new while obstructing it. It will, therefore, be important to mention paradoxical moments that initiate the very need for philosophy.

10 First, what is new today is the use of the word ‘innovation(s)’.<sup>10</sup> Although innovation *a priori* includes invention, innovation, in contrast to invention, also implicitly or explicitly assumes collective work. There is no innovation without the group (the existence of a group is the condition of innovation), which includes collective description, discussion and critique, exchange of social acts and cooperation.<sup>11</sup> Innovation in Humanities and Social Sciences is an insistence on producing a collective project. Or put differently, innovation is a project: without a project and theory of the project, we cannot understand the future nor is there a future. Without a project, there is no Europe or European crisis, our marriage crisis, or our institute’s crisis – crisis is always a crisis of project. Further, innovation is an alternative understanding of discipline. Discipline is not some kind of coercion, but rather collective learning or ‘learning together’. Thus, ‘interdisciplinary’ means philosophers must learn with non-philosophers; they need to ‘discipline’ and ‘stabilize’ knowledge with all others, not with those to whom they already belong. Finally, innovation in Humanities and Social Sciences presents a construction of a new entity or agent – ‘We’ or ‘we-mode’ – capable of producing so-called ‘innovative acts’<sup>12</sup> (that is, strictly engaged acts). Such an entity brings (social) change, constructs or manufactures events – the event, change, and the new are always synonymous – which in turn change individuals as members of this new, ‘innovative agent’. The group produces events that hold it together and continuously alter the structure of its groupness.<sup>13</sup>



11 It would be easy to further justify today’s pervasive use of the word or protocol ‘innovation’, in all spheres of human activity;<sup>14</sup> as would substantive differentiation from the word ‘invention’, which, as we mentioned, always only follows and only partially determines ‘innovation’. Derrida writes about the deep theological embeddedness of the word ‘invention’: the word implies that something has taken or is taking place “for the first time,” that it has come from some future (*a-venir*), that it is sudden and completely unannounced, and that it cannot be programmed or recognized or accepted (whence in the first place our ability to accept something entirely new?), that it always refers to something impossible. This entire matrix of meaning disappears when we speak and seek to understand what is ‘innovation’. Finding something new in the old or with or within that which exists, foremost implies insisting on the present, the ‘now’, followed by a clear resistance and critique of what preceded it. Paradoxically, this resistance to the old confirms that the old lives on, transformed and deformed in(to) the new.<sup>15</sup> This change, opposed to degradation and corruption of an order (a statute, *statut*), can only be conducted by a much more complicated intellectual agent. In today’s social ontology and social epistemology, there has never been less consensus about the existence or inexistence of a group’s *cogito*, the various dimensions of the group or team as an actor, problems of collective responsibility, inclusivity of all individuals in participation (of, for example, writing a collective project, and then its collective execution) in seeking something new.<sup>16</sup>

### 3. Phenomenology of ontological novelty: whole-parts relationships and emergence

12 A phenomenology of the new is classically a phenomenology of ontological novelty, that is, the experiencing of the existence of something new in our lifeworld. In the *Third Logical Investigation* (III LI), devoted to *On the theory of wholes and parts* (1901), Edmund Husserl provides fruitful tools for understanding how ontological novelty arises. The problem from which Husserl begins, as far back as the *Philosophy of Arithmetic* (1891), is how to account for the ontological novelty of things such as melodies, rows of trees, flocks of birds, which we experience immediately as new kinds of things with respect to the existing entities or individuals that make them up – respectively: single musical notes, trees and birds.

13 In the *Philosophy of Arithmetic*, Husserl (1891, Ch.11: §7 *Figural Moments*) starts again from the classical philosophical problem of the one and the many that Plato addressed in the *Theaetetus*. Let us consider the letters of a syllable: is the syllable a new object or simply the sum of its letters? Plato answers that it is a new object, constituted not only by the sum of its elements, but also by the order in which these elements are put together: by the form that constitutes precisely the unity of the syllable. Husserl is struck by the fact that there are pluralities of objects that immediately give themselves to our visual perception as unitary configurations. They offer themselves to our experience as a quality that we grasp immediately and in priority to the perception of the individual objects of the whole. A flock of birds, a line of soldiers, a row of trees, a flock of sheep, a pile of apples, and so on, are all pluralities of objects that we experience as unitary wholes. We do not grasp one bird and then another bird and so on, or one apple and then another, and another, realizing only at the end of this process that it is a unified whole. No, we grasp at once and at a single glance, the flock of birds as a whole consisting of the birds flying together and the pile of



apples as a whole consisting of the stacked apples – the same, of course, applies to a row of soldiers, trees, a flock of sheep. Indeed, in all these cases the multiplicities of individuals are held together by a relationship of contiguity that organizes the plurality of individuals, gives them a form, and makes them structured wholes irreducible to the mere sum of individuals. Drawing on concepts from *Gestalt* psychology, Husserl speaks in this regard of “quasi-qualitative moments,” “unitary moments,” and “figural moments,” and thus points out the global and overall form that characterizes these multiplicities. The concept of “figural moment” expresses precisely the relation that makes a plurality of individuals a unity that offers itself to our perception as a whole, irreducible to the mere sum of its parts. In fact, the flock of birds, the avenue of trees, etc., are precisely wholes irreducible to their sum, because as wholes they have properties that individuals (birds, trees, etc.) alone do not have. They immediately give themselves to our visual perception as a whole, as “higher order objects” we might even say (Meinong 1904): as a single object founded on multiple objects.

14 In the *Third Logical Investigation*, Husserl develops a theory of the relations between wholes and parts that allows us to better understand how wholes, which from an ontological point of view are qualitatively irreducible to the mere sum of their parts, constitute an ontological novelty – the row of trees, the melody, the flock of birds, etc., with respect to the individual trees, notes, and birds, etc. Husserl focuses here on the relationships of ontological independence and non-independence among parts and distinguishes between two kinds of wholes: *wholes of a first kind* whose parts are non-independent and *wholes of a second kind* whose parts are independent.

15 According to Husserl, in wholes of the first kind, the parts cannot exist separately or independently of each other. They need by their nature to be integrated into a whole and “interpenetrate” each other. Wholes of the first kind are “pregnant wholes.” They are, so to speak, unavoidable wholes whose parts are necessarily bound to be parts of those wholes: wholes whose existence is inevitable with respect to the very nature of their parts. For their nature requires that the parts only ever give themselves in reciprocal connection to one another, because those parts could have no alternative existence outside their being parts of wholes. These types of wholes, therefore, can never, by the nature of their parts, be ontological novelties. Examples of parts that are “destined to be parts” are color and extension, which are parts of any physical-material object as a whole (Husserl 1901, IIII: §7; De Vecchi 2022: 52, 75-78).

16 The wholes of the second kind, on the other hand, are *emergent structures* (Conni 2005). Here, “the parts are ‘external to each other’, but they determine real forms of connection” (Husserl, 1901, IIII, §21). In this second kind of wholes, we are faced with objects that exist independently, but can find themselves, again according to their nature, connected with others and thus become parts of wholes. Therefore, they may constitute *wholes that are things of a new kind*. It is these types of wholes, in which objects that exist independently in themselves find themselves existing “relatively non-independently” (Husserl 1901, IIIRL, §13) and being bound to one another, that are the protagonists of our lifeworld. These wholes are qualitatively more complex type of whole: in them, there is not only the basic, bottom-up, foundational level of the parts that constitute the whole, but there is at the same time an *emergent*, top-down level of the whole that defines the very mode of being of the parts as parts of that whole. Being part of a whole of a second kind in fact increases the *individuation of the parts*: from a single musical note, the same note becomes now one of the notes that in its connection with others constitutes the melody proper to Beethoven’s *Ode to Joy*. Similarly, an individuation increase also occurs in the case of the swallow which, together with other swallows, makes up this flock of swallows now migrating south, and of the linden tree, which is part of the *Unter den Linden* avenue in Berlin: in both cases, the swallow and



the linden tree are individuated by their belonging to their wholes, respectively that flock of swallows and that avenue of linden trees in Berlin. But in an even more interesting way for our everyday lifeworld, an individuation increase also takes place in the case of persons as parts of social wholes: indeed, as a simple human person, I am identified and enriched in content as part of several “social wholes,” such as my family, the university in which I work and the Italian state: I am now a person who is also, and more precisely, a mother, a philosophy professor, and an Italian citizen (De Vecchi 2022).

17 More generally, a phenomenology of the new, and of wholes that are ontological novelties, is not only a phenomenology that accounts for wholes that are experienced as “higher order objects” (Meinong 1904), as in the cases we have mentioned so far – the flock with respect to individual birds, the melody with respect to individual notes, and the state with respect to individual citizens. Indeed, there is a phenomenology of the new concerning the experience of things in general, in the sense that most of the things that are the object of our experience in the lifeworld – whether higher order objects or not – are wholes of the second kind, that is, wholes consisting of parts that may exist independently of the parts connection with which they are found to constitute a certain whole and wholes that exercise an individuating action against their parts.

18 The general idea we are suggesting is that the things we experience in the lifeworld, to varying degrees of complexity, have the emergent structure of second-kind wholes: it is precisely the relationship of independence of the parts and their individuation by the whole that characterize second-kind wholes and offer a broad and effective tool for understanding the phenomenon of ontological novelty. New parts modify their wholes, which retroact on their parts in individuating them. To different degrees and depending on the relevance of the part to the existence of the whole, every modification of a part modifies the whole, every new part impacts on the whole in creating a new whole, and every modified and new whole exercises an individuating retroaction on its parts that renews the being of the parts.

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19 A phenomenology of ontological novelty is developed in three of the papers published in the present issue, and specifically in terms of emergent structures and wholes-parts relationships. These are the papers by Erica Onnis, Daniele De Santis and Francesca Forlè. The Onnis paper inquires into the topic of ontological novelty from the perspective of emergentist analytic metaphysics, while the De Santis and Forlè papers explicitly adopt the phenomenological perspective and analyze ontological novelty in terms of wholes-parts relationships. In all three, ontological novelty is essentially qualitative, just as Husserl had already remarked with regard to the “figural moments” – as we saw above. Let us very briefly highlight the argumentative lines of the papers.

20 Onnis’ paper on “New Capacities and New Qualities. Two Different but Complementary Forms of Ontological Novelty” focuses on how “a genuinely new phenomenon can appear [...] when spontaneously emerging from more elementary components” and leans towards a “qualitative interpretation” of ontological novelty. She claims that ontological “novelty corresponds to the appearance of new qualities – i.e., properties that do not seem essentially or merely causal” (Onnis 2025). Moreover, Onnis points out that most of artifacts and entities we deal with in our everyday life are perceived by us as *new in virtue of their emergent qualities* that individuate them as new types of things or new tokens of pre-existing types. For instance, “in what sense is a coat, a telephone, an everyday object, new? It is not always so because it performs new functions. Most coats warm us, but it is often their *design* that makes them different and new from each other. This applies, after all, to most artefacts. In short, there is a



considerable part of the universe in which *qualitative* properties [...] *define* [...] the *novelty* of existing entities” (Onnis 2025, emphasis added).

21 The paper by De Santis, “‘Etwas Neues’, or What it Means to be an ‘Individual Idea’” focuses on the experience of “something new” (*etwas neues*) with regard to those entities that are human persons. He works on Edith Stein’s “account of a person’s qualitative individuality as something *ontologically new*,” with respect to the general type of person. De Santis highlights “how such ontologically individual novelty is understood by Stein with the aid of two concepts: that of *individual idea* and the *Gestalt*.” These concepts, we think, can be efficaciously grasped as second-kind wholes that retro-act on their parts in individuating them. De Santis’ main claim is that, according to Stein, every person is an *individual idea* because each person not only exemplifies the universal-type person (just as each glass or mountain exemplifies the glass and mountain universal type, respectively), but also, in exemplifying it, each person realizes/embodies something new that makes the person unique. In other words, each person is the embodiment of a universal that is essentially individual: their personality. This is why “‘human personality’ is described as a “whole” that qualitatively permeates its every part: it is “a unity of qualitative uniqueness” that “shapes itself [*gestaltet sich*] into mind, body, and spirit” (De Santis 2025, quoting Stein 2010).

22 Finally, Forlè’s paper, “Becoming New in Old Age. Bodily Experience and Personal Flourishing” examines the bodily dimension of the person and analyses “how one’s body feels in old age and what valences the new experiences of one’s body have for the older person.” She argues that, “despite the fact that the older person’s body often undergoes a physical decline, one’s possible personal flourishing in old age does not exclude the bodily dimension, but can reverberate positively in it, giving room to bright new experiences of one’s embodied personal life.” This may happen because the human person has the structure of a whole of the second kind that not only is constituted by its parts, but qualitatively retroacts on its parts. Therefore, the person as a whole and its “personal flourishing can positively reverberate on the lived body, mitigating one’s sense of biological and vital decline and allowing new experiences of one’s embodied personal life” (Forlè 2025). Again, ontological novelty reveals itself to be a qualitative figure emerging from the relationship between whole and parts: a relationship that not only constitutes the whole but at the same time individuates and renews its parts.

23 The first three contributions to this issue – by Giorgio Armato, Natalie Depraz, and Daniel Smith – each takes up the problem of novelty from a distinct but convergent perspective, together delineating a conceptual space where transformation and surprise are not merely effects of change, but active structures of emergence. These papers map three interlocking dimensions of the new: its *formal structure* (Armato), its *lived and collective force* (Depraz), and its *ontological grounding* (Smith). In doing so, they exemplify the theme of this issue by showing how novelty, transformation, and surprise function not as isolated moments but as deeply intertwined modalities of emergence. Expanding this inquiry through the lens of Badiou’s evental ontology, Giorgio Armato shows that the new does not emerge through gradual evolution, but through a radical rupture – *an irruption* – that forces a reconfiguration of the existing situation. Novelty arises when a truth without prior place is named, and the subject, rather than initiating this break, responds to the event as a local operator of fidelity. For Armato, the subject is structurally outside the event but necessary for its unfolding, translating the event into a new procedure of thought and relation. His account underscores the ontological and topological stakes of Badiou’s thinking, positioning novelty as the demand for a reorganization of meaning rather than the mere appearance of the unprecedented. Complementing Armato’s ontological framing, Natalie Depraz, in “The Transformative Virtue of Surprise in Politics,” develops a phenomenological account of surprise as a




bottom-up force of political transformation. Drawing on Deleuze, Patočka, and Benjamin, she conceives surprise not as rupture alone, but as a generative process through which a new “we” emerges from within civil society. Exemplified in practices like Yugoslav self-management and Nuit Debout, political novelty appears through spontaneous solidarities and modes of self-governance that escape institutional control. For Depraz, political life unfolds through this ongoing exposure to the unpredictable, where “we feel more alive, because more aware of our vulnerability” (Depraz 2025). Surprise thus sustains political becoming, confronting the present with unrealized potential. Carrying this philosophical trajectory further, Daniel Smith, in “*What is the ‘New’?*,” explores Deleuze’s central philosophical concern with the production of the new, arguing that novelty must be understood not as a variant of change or transformation, but as a fundamental ontological condition grounded in difference itself. Tracing a trajectory from classical logic through Kant’s transcendental philosophy to post-Kantian critiques, Smith shows how Deleuze – via Maimon – shifts the focus from the conditions of possible experience to the genetic and differential conditions of real experience. Against representational or resemblance-based models of thought, Smith emphasizes Deleuze’s demand for a transcendental empiricism where difference relates to difference through itself, making *the emergence of novelty* a primary expression of Being.

24 Taken together, these three contributions reveal that novelty is not merely the occurrence of something unforeseen or unprecedented – it is the articulation of emergence itself, unfolding across structural, experiential, and ontological registers. Armato shows how the new interrupts and reorders a world through fidelity to an event without precedent; Depraz anchors novelty in the lived force of political surprise, where transformation arises from within the social fabric; and Smith locates the new at the heart of Being, as difference that actualizes itself without resemblance. Together, these perspectives converge to show that the new is neither derivative nor accidental – it is a generative force that cuts through representation, disrupts continuity, and demands new modalities of thought, relation, and subjectivity.

25 The second cluster of contributions – by Davide Dal Sasso, Ludger Schwarte, and Paul Guyer – collectively interrogates the nature of *novelty in the arts*, foregrounding how artistic innovation resists reduction to mere stylistic variation, market-driven originality, or technological experimentation. Across these papers, novelty is revealed as a philosophically complex and historically situated process, deeply entwined with questions of *materiality, genre, and aesthetic intelligibility*. These papers reconceive artistic novelty not as mere innovation, but as a transformative process unfolding within the tensions between form and freedom, rupture and continuity, theory and practice – foregrounding the material and temporal conditions through which art disrupts, reconfigures, and sustains meaning.

26 Developing this line of critique, Davide Dal Sasso’s essay revisits the myth of dematerialization in contemporary art, arguing that it reflects a deeper philosophical fetishization – not of the material object, as in modernism, but of immaterial thought. Inspired by theories of fetishism and intuitive dualism, Dal Sasso shows how novelty in art has come to be identified not with experimental material practices, but with intellectual intention. This shift, he argues, disguises a subtler form of fetishism that distances art from its material conditions while still embedding it in commodity logic. His critique challenges the dominant view that dematerialization marks a liberatory movement, revealing instead how it *reinscribes* art in idealized abstraction and disembodied value.

 Pushing further into the question of rupture, Ludger Schwarte, in “*What’s So Special about Artistic Novelty?*,” defines artistic novelty as a radical break with established

genres and perceptual norms. Distinguishing it from design, improvisation, or technological invention, Schwarte insists that true artistic creation invents new rules – or suspends rule-based thinking entirely. Engaging with the work of Adorno, Lyotard, and Kant, he argues that artistic novelty opens aesthetic experience to the radically new, reconfiguring our sense of meaning, autonomy, and the future. As Schwarte puts it, “art differs from other forms of professional creativity... by the absence of adequacy requirements” (Schwarte 2025), enabling it to transcend established frameworks and reach toward the incommensurable. This pursuit of the radically new, he suggests, demands not only technical skill but also a confrontation with failure, rule-negation, and the unknown.

28 From another point of view, Paul Guyer critiques the pursuit of novelty in architecture, claiming that its aesthetic value often fades over time. For Guyer, engaging the thought of Kant and Ruskin, true architectural novelty lies in its ability to sustain reflection and aesthetic pleasure through a “free play” of ideas. He argues that lasting innovation emerges not from shock or stylistic breaks, but from transforming how we engage with space, matter, and meaning. Novelty, then, is not a break with tradition but a dialectical renewal of its intelligibility – where past and present coalesce into new, meaningful forms. As a thinker of political aesthetics notes, “the inscription in a meaning already given... is from the start excluded” (Guyer 2025), suggesting that the most transformative novelty resists easy classification and invites a reconsideration of what meaning itself entails.

29 These three essays demonstrate that artistic novelty is not a matter of stylistic rupture or aesthetic shock, but a philosophically charged reconfiguration of form, materiality, and meaning. Dal Sasso exposes the disavowed material ground beneath intellectual fetishism; Schwarte locates invention in the suspension of perceptual norms; and Guyer frames novelty as a temporally unfolding condition of reflective engagement. Collectively, they reclaim the new as a critical force that transforms the very conditions of aesthetic experience, thought, and visibility

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## Note

1 “*Il faut faire du nouveau*”. This is a paraphrasing of a famous cry mentioned by André Lalande (1929: 16).

2 See Simondon (2005), particularly his analysis of the group as a “system of tensions” that mediates collective individuation by maintaining internal consistency. We argue against this tendency, suggesting instead that the group does not mediate novelty – it institutes it.

3 Hannah Arendt’s distinction between fabrication and political action is helpful here. In *The Human Condition* (1958), she argues that political action brings the new into the world, but only when made visible through speech and recognition by others. Our view intensifies this condition of recognition, locating novelty not in the act alone but in its reception.

4 “Violence (*Gewalt*) is the midwife (*Geburtshelfer*) of every old society pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power (*Potenz*)” (Marx, Engels 1975-2005: 739).

5 The now sanitized notion of “innovation” was originally conceived as a destructive force: “creative destruction” refers to capitalism’s capacity to continuously dissolve existing structures to make way for new ones, not as progress but as permanent disruption (Schumpeter 1942).

6 Tafuri’s work undermines the myth of progressive architectural modernism, showing that even the most radical formal ruptures often function ideologically to manage crisis and reproduce hegemonic orders (Tafuri 1976).

7 Peter Eisenman’s *House VI* (1975) is exemplary here: it fragments conventional spatial syntax to make visible the arbitrariness of architectural codes. See Eisenman (2007), where he describes the architectural project as a site of strategic rupture.

8 Invention is for Derrida both a juridical and a poetic act – it must be declared new, yet that declaration can only be made through the very structure it displaces (Derrida 2007).

9 Descartes did indeed reference this in his letter to Marin Mersenne dated 20 November 1629. “*Et si quelqu'un avait bien expliqué quelles sont les idées simples... je dare à espérer une langue universelle... et ce... qui dépend de la vraie philosophie ; car il est impossible autrement de*



*dénombrer toutes les pensées des hommes...”.*

(If someone had clearly explained which simple ideas ... compose all human thoughts, and this were received by everyone, I would dare hope for a universal language... and this depends on the *true philosophy*; for otherwise it is impossible to enumerate all the thoughts of men...) (Descartes 1908-1910: 39).

10 By contrast, forty years ago, in “Invention de l’autre” (Derrida 1987: 5-55), Derrida cites the importance of the word ‘invention’ for his time (as opposed to “create, imagine, produce, institute” [*créer, imaginer, produire, instituer*]), citing the books that contained it in their title (Derrida 1987: 29). The ‘innovation’ protocol does not belong to modern philosophy, although we find it insufficiently elaborated paradoxes. Kant was himself an innovator, as was Schelling, who claimed that a philosopher can be original and possesses the capacity to create new (“any philosophy calling itself new must be a step towards a new form” [*einen neuen Schritt in der Form*]), but neither recognized or elaborated the idea of ‘innovation’. In *Anthropology* (translated by Michel Foucault), Kant differentiates only *inventer* (*erfinden*) and *decouvrir* (*entdecken*). The latter refers to something that already exists, such as America prior to Columbus (Derrida 1987: 33, quoting Kant 1964).

11 We insist on cooperation being in opposition to the protocol of collaboration, following Eloi Laurent. In *L’impasse collaborative. Pour une véritable économie de la coopération*, Laurent defines collaboration as an association constructed for the sake of usefulness and efficiency. “Cooperation, on the other hand, is a process of sharing and elaboration of collective knowledge” (*La coopération, en revanche, c’est un processus de partage et d’élaboration des connaissances communes*) (Laurent 2018).

12 Derrida uses the phrase “the act of invention” (*l’act d’invention*) (Derrida 1987: 41).

13 In a different context and with significant terminological corrections and reconstructions of Derrida’s ‘messianism’, it would be possible to compare the ending of Derrida’s text regarding how the invented other (*l’autre*) actually invents us (*nous*) (Derrida 1987: 54), with the self-constituting collective activity of a group, which thus also maintains itself and changes everything around itself.

14 Derrida mentions Bergson at one point in his text: “Invention is the essential path of the human spirit, distinguishing man from animal” (*L’invention est la démarche essentielle de l’esprit humain, celle qui distingue l’homme de l’animal*) (Derrida 1987: 51).

15 The legal use of ‘innovation’ assumes an old obligation presently transformed such that it was taken over by a new debtor. Derrida introduces the notion of ‘statut’, which could replace what is old and which he connects with the institution: “the statute... is essentially institutional” (*le statut... il est essentiellement institutionnel*) (Derrida 1987: 32). “We see the paradox sharpening: all invention must mock the statute, but there can be no invention without it” (*On voit donc s’aiguïser le paradoxe: toute invention devrait se moquer du statut, mais il n’y a pas d’invention sans statut*) (*ibidem*).

16 Despite Derrida’s unwitting, careless equating, the project is not synonymous with program. “Everywhere we see the knowledge and research project is foremost a program of invention” (*Partout le projet de savoir et de recherche est d’abord une programmation des inventions*). And later “[...] we dream of reinventing the invention beyond program matrices. For, is a programmed invention still an invention?” (“... nous rêvons de réinventer l’invention au-delà des matrices à programme. Car une invention programmée, est-ce encore une invention?”) (Derrida 1987: 34-35). We insist on the project inherently containing uncertainty and ignorance.

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**Autori**

**Petar Bojanić**

-  **IDREF** : <https://idref.fr/108015122>



- **ORCID** : <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9324-2209>



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