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Introduction

THOMAS TELIOS

University of St. Gallen

In *Eclipse of Reason* (1947), Max Horkheimer provides a fundamental analysis of the ambivalences of the Western concept of reason and showcases paradigmatically what a dialectical understanding of reason could look like. Whereas reason cannot be abandoned altogether or declared obsolete, at the same time it manifests itself in forms that are difficult to qualify as promoting emancipation which initially was reason's primary promise. As Horkheimer concludes his study, 'if by enlightenment and intellectual progress we mean the freeing of man from superstitious belief in evil forces, in demons and fairies, in blind fate – in short, the emancipation from fear – then denunciation of what is currently called reason is the greatest service we can render' (Horkheimer 1947: 126). The two prefaces to the English (1947) and German edition (1967) respectively are indicative of the interrelated goals to which Horkheimer aspires through his dialectical critique of reason. While the English preface underlines the theoretical gains, the German preface highlights the practical ramifications. What led Horkheimer to declare the need to denounce reason was its instrumentalisation under 'the weight of the overwhelming machinery of social power and that of the atomized masses' (ibid.: 126). The latter 'mutilates' reason and prevents it from its original route, i.e. a 'progress toward utopia' (ibid.: 126) where reason – and *mutatis mutandis* philosophy – 'can function as a corrective of history' (ibid.: 126) through the recognition of the factors that distort it.

This special issue 'Eclipse of Common Sense' proposes an analogous treatment of the concept of common sense. The denunciation of what currently is demagogically presented as common sense and instrumentally implemented as common-sense policy is also the greatest service that we can render to restore common sense. Notwithstanding, 'denouncing' common sense does not mean to ignore or reject it. Nor does 'restoring' common sense mean to unconditionally accept or apply it. However, denouncing and restoring common sense does mean to revisit its rich intellectual history and reconsider its theoretical strengths and lacunae to reflect its political ramifications – advantageous as well as disadvantageous – and, last but not least, examine whether it can be recalibrated as a robust political concept. This is the complex task that the contributions to this special issue collectively undertake. To do justice to this task, they fulfil the following three interrelated functions: they scrutinise the conceptual foundations and premises as well as practical and political derivations of common sense (analytical function); they explore its ambivalent normative character (evaluative function); and they suggest inherent ways out of this impasse (critical function).

The issue commences with an all-encompassing interview with Sophia Rosenfeld whose *Common Sense. A Political History* (2014) still remains the most comprehensive account of the political valences of common sense. The interview starts with a political comment on the inauspicious political actuality that has befallen the concept of common sense under the second Trump administration. It then investigates the constitutive elements of common sense, namely,

how to understand the 'sense' in common sense and what makes common sense 'common'. At the same time, it interrogates whether common sense can function not just as any political principle but as a vector of democratisation and whether it can even be considered as unravelling utopian ripple effects. Finally, it suggests a performative understanding of the concept of common sense where 'common sense (co-) defines both its contextualisation as well as its conceptualisation' (intra 22). As such, the ambivalences characterising common sense, such as the fact that it has been invoked to legitimise both backward-looking and forward-looking politics, or has been equally instrumentalised to excuse both exclusive and inclusive practices, show that there is nothing inherently political or apolitical nor progressive or conservative in the concept of common sense. Rather, as Rosenfeld puts it, 'it is all about the *content* it is given and the *social uses* it is put to' (intra 22).

The following contributions build upon and concretise – both historically and conceptually – these insights. However, the ambivalence pertaining to the political ramifications of common sense permeates all of them and serves as the red thread of this volume.

Thomas Telios' contribution revolves around Cicero's conceptualisation of *sensus communis*. The article leans on recent studies that – inspired from critical theory intersubjectivity, gender and queer theory performativity, Foucauldian power-analytics and Gramscian hegemony critique – draw attention to a series of social elements (such as power, the body, a processual and social-constructivist understanding of identity, the role of social differences therein, questions concerning the need for communal belonging, race problematics etc.) that have long lain hidden and undisclosed in Cicero's theory of rhetoric and political philosophy. Telios' entry point is the reconstruction of what he terms Cicero's theory of 'collective subjectivity'. Building on that, *sensus communis* is to be understood as a vector of subjectivation that is the point of condensation of everyday life micro-practices, political logics, social structures, institutions, dispositions or inclinations and ethical customs. As such, *sensus communis* does not just provide a compass that the subject needs to orient itself and to enter into dialogue with the community surrounding it. Rather, this rhetorical conceptualisation of *sensus communis* results in a vector that both fashions the subject according to its surrounding community and at the same time bestows upon the subject the means for its collective self-fashioning.

Alice Simionato's exploration of Neo-Confucian common sense is not just a warning of the dangers of universalising particular concepts of common sense but also a token of *JSPP*'s commitment to bringing – broadly conceived – Western and East Asian thought into dialogue with one another. Simionato's novelty lies in reconceiving the philosophy of knowledge of prominent Neo-Confucian thinkers – the Cheng brothers (Cheng Yi and Cheng Hao) and Wang Yangming – from the lens of a philosophy of common sense. Through the careful and respectful methodological approximation of core Neo-Confucian concepts like 'coherence' (*li*), 'mind' (*xin*), and 'nature' (*xing*), Simionato succeeds in supplementing the Western understandings of common sense with a set of concrete theoretical and practical elements that underline the importance of addressing the embedded use of the concept. The political crux that Simionato underlines is that universalising common sense disallows the flourishing of cross-cultural understanding just as it bars the possibility of self-reflection on one's own conditions of theorisation and thinking. Contrarily, a cross-cultural fertilisation of our own thinking results not only in opening us to the Other but, ultimately, also to ourselves.

The next contribution, Andrew Norris' 'Common Sense as Aspiration', is an audacious attempt to scrutinise the forward-looking or even utopian character of common sense. As he shows, leaning primarily on Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant and Stanley Cavell, the

rather conservative loyalty to the importance of common sense as an invariable component of a cohesive society comes hand in hand with a projection of this common sense – that is yet to come – into the future. The latter ascribes revolutionisation to the temporal structure of common sense. In doing so, change, transformation and progress are disclosed not as semantic connotations of common sense but as possibilities inherent in the ongoing process of outlining what brings and holds us together. As Norris puts it, 'if we say that it is common sense to acknowledge what we have done to our world, we call for a change in that world, and in ourselves. Such change is the deepest aspiration of common sense: not to describe what is, but to move towards what might be' (intra 63). In this light, Rousseau's appeal to the common person's common sense that Norris uses as epigraph for his article does not perform an archival function in relation to what has brought us together. Rather, it informs a debate over what can and should keep us together in the future.

After Cicero, forerunners of Neo-Confucianism and figureheads of modern philosophy, the next framework that is explored to testify about common sense is American Pragmatism, where deciphering common sense has been an intergenerational endeavour from William James to John Dewey via Charles Sanders Peirce. However, Matteo Santarelli is correct to lean on Dewey's understanding of common sense since it is in Dewey that we are confronted with an elaborate and systematic theory of common sense as both an epistemological and political programme. Santarelli's innovativeness does not exhaust itself in summarising Dewey's ensnarement of common sense and science or in reiterating that for Dewey common sense is not to be a priori assumed but to be seen as a 'model of thinking, acting, and living' (intra 70). Rather, the originality of his contribution lies in complementing Dewey's pragmatist understanding of common sense with Clifford Geertz's culturalist and – most interestingly – with Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's decolonial-ontological critiques of what – according to Western concepts – can be and has been established as common sense. As Santarelli argues, instead of rejecting common sense as Western or imperial, a synthetic reading of Dewey, Geertz and Viveiros de Castro should suffice to demonstrate that common sense can be interpreted to accommodate 'different common-sense attitudes and assumptions' that 'are directly or indirectly influenced by different sciences, philosophies, and cosmologies' (intra 77).

Henrike Bloemen's feminist-Gramscian approach regarding the possibilities of emancipatory practice within the constraints of (late-) capitalist hegemony tackles a further coryphe among the common sense literature, namely Antonio Gramsci's dualistic/dialectic conceptualisation of common sense as both a 'good' version/form of common sense, or what Gramsci calls *buon senso*, and a 'bad' version/form of common sense, or what Gramsci calls *senso comune*. *Buon senso* denotes for Gramsci the reflected, coherent and emancipatory amalgam of social relations and living conditions that the subject can rely upon in order to determine itself. The feminist take on Gramsci's conceptualisation of common sense that Bloemen underlines lies not in merely 'doing common sense' but in expanding common sense to encompass care work and reproduction labour as well as memory work and narrative labour through which we become aware of the historical discontinuities posed by capitalist contradictions and ambivalences. This synthetic type of determining practices that is addressed by Bloemen under the umbrella term 'coherence work' adds a further critical analytical to register of how to understand the 'common' in common sense.

The last two contributions tackle post-World War Two theorists stemming from a period that could be seen as common sense's showdown, namely a period that, after becoming aware of the fact that the atrocities of the Holocaust and mass destruction were connected and legitimised

through an instrumentalised understanding of common sense from within totalitarian ideologies, took up the task of showing the concept's liminality and declaring it undesirable. However, as both Philipp Hogh, leaning on Theodor W. Adorno, and Itay Snir leaning on Gilles Deleuze and Jean-François Lyotard, lay bare, it is impossible to get rid of the concept of common sense altogether. In the minimal moments where people – even if only momentarily – seem to agree with and wish to help each other, Hogh discerns a glimmer of hope that recalibrates common sense to a process of becoming aware, testing and overcoming one's own opinions signalling thus an opening to the Other that can prevent them from being excluded from common sense and thus safeguard them from being obliterated. In a similar vein, Snir detects in the essentialist critiques of community that both Deleuze and Lyotard bring forward not the gravestone of togetherness, but rather the founding stone of a community of singularities based on difference.

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