

The Feeling of Thinking

Stories on Artists Reading Theory

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Abstract: The following three short stories investigate the experience of artists reading theory. They are based on interviews with artists on their reading. They are part of a broader collection of short stories on students, philosophers and artists reading theory, published as “Das Gefühl zu denken” [The Feeling of Thinking] in 2023 by Matthes & Seitz Berlin.

Dreaming of cabbage – Sandy reads Heidegger

Sandy is an artist. That means that she takes the form of things seriously. The form concerns every detail of her work: It concerns how Sandy prepares, how she starts and finishes. It concerns the material, the tools and the work space. It concerns how her body moves, how she thinks, and what she intends. And thereby it also concerns her breakfast, her clothes and when to go for a walk in the afternoon. Taking form seriously means taking life seriously. It is not about the results but about every single moment. And that is absolutely true, although every time Sandy beholds one of her finished artworks in all its conceptual and physical beauty she enters a state of childlike, jubilant joy.

Of course, form is also content: Because from all of Sandy’s forms one can infer who Sandy is and how she relates to the world. Ideally,

1 These stories were previously published in: Veronika Reichl: *Das Gefühl zu denken* © Matthes & Seitz Berlin Verlagsgesellschaft mbH.

all her forms agree with each other in some way and the compliance of all these forms becomes visible in Sandy's art. Yet in the end it is not form that Sandy is searching for. But by searching for the sound form she is also searching for a deep, fundamental thinking, a thinking that becomes possible through and indeed finds its expression by the sound form.

All the important things come to Sandy when she does the work. And she is willing to do it. Reading philosophy is part of it. For example, she often reads Deleuze or Heidegger for half an hour before starting to work artistically. It gets her into the proper mood and it sharpens her intuition. After reading, the sound form for her artworks often comes to meet her, like a friend who unexpectedly rings the bell. For this to happen, the text does not have to be connected to her art project, it just has to be a certain kind of philosophy.

At the moment Sandy is exhibiting in a gallery in Leeds. Her art work consists of sitting in the gallery at a writing desk, reading Heidegger's *Being and Time* and writing it down by hand. It is a testimony to the sheer physicality of the work and also of the physical demands of philosophy. The project seems a little selfish to her, because she is allowed to occupy herself with Heidegger for eight weeks. Copying a philosophical text by hand is a completely different practice than just reading it – it switches something else on and off. It is extremely intimate: The sentences run through her hand and thereby through her brain almost as if it were her own. Sandy often thinks of the monks in the monasteries, who devoted their whole lives to copying sacred texts and how intense and beautiful that must have been.

Right now, the form feels right: The plain, wooden writing desk, the old wooden chair, her simple, dark-blue clothes and the warm socks on her feet. As long as nobody attends, the gallery is a quiet place. In front of her desk the shop window opens the view to the outside, down a tranquil street: enough space for her thoughts to unfold. Time, too, extends before her: hour, days and weeks. Sandy opens *Being and Time* and starts where she left off yesterday. She remembers immediately what the last passages were about. She starts with the next paragraph. She reads each sentence two or three times in a low voice. With Heidegger she often understands right away, at

least roughly. When the whole sentence is present in her mind, she writes it down on the paper in front of her in calm letters. Finally, she reads her duplication once more. Right now, she reads and writes:

Why does understanding always penetrate into possibilities according to all the essential dimensions of what can be disclosed to it?

Because understanding in itself has the existential structure which we call project.

It projects the being of Da-sein upon its for-the-sake-of-which just as primordially as upon significance as the worldliness of its actual world.

The project character of understanding constitutes being-in-the-world with regard to its disclosedness of its there as the there of a potentiality of being.

Project is the existential constitution of being in the realm of factual potentiality of being. And, as thrown, Da-sein is thrown into the mode of being of projecting.

Projecting has nothing to do with being related to a plan thought out, according to which Da-sein arranges its being, but, as Da-sein, it has always already projected itself and is, as long as it is, projecting.

(Heidegger 1996, 136)

Sandy is focused on her work. After thirty minutes she suddenly recognizes a familiar feeling and thinks: *Aha! So, it is working now!* The text exercises something in her brain, it works on her and makes something fundamental happen to her. Everything about her is suddenly in motion. Every part of her is thinking. It is indeed quite physical. Heidegger feels what he is saying. His language is set up in the same way as his ideas. He allows the track of his thoughts to shape the words. Everything agrees with each other and is full of power. Sandy loves Heidegger for searching so urgently for the perfectly apt form for his thoughts. His particular concurring of form and content allows the text to pull not just Sandy's mind but also many other levels of her, some of which are very physical. It pulls them to think.

She would claim that at this moment she comes into full existence. Sometimes it touches her so deeply that she starts to cry.

While reading in this way, she is using a capacity that is not about a skill she learnt in school or anything similar. It is a fundamental capacity. Like when you run. Or when you eat when you are hungry. It is kind of an animal capacity. Using this capacity makes her – it sounds a bit cheesy or esoteric and she does not mean it that way – but that is what happens: it makes her feel the pulse of the universe.

Sandy does not read in order to understand something new or to accumulate knowledge, although of course these things are beautiful things, too. It seems to Sandy that Plato is right when he says: All knowledge is already within us, we just have to re-connect to it. Because that is exactly how it feels: As if reading re-connects her to something that has always been within her and that she still cannot reach on her own. It works best with Heidegger, Agamben, and Deleuze and Guattari.

An elderly lady in a blue coat comes into the gallery and looks around. She does not want to disturb Sandy. Sandy says hello and they start a conversation anyway. Sandy tells the lady that she thinks that art and philosophy are closely related, much more closely than one might normally think. Both are experimenting with ideas and shifting perspectives. Both re-connect the recipients to the important stuff. The lady smiles gently and nods carefully. Sandy continues: *The world needs that too, you know? The world might need other professions more urgently: doctors and farmers and computer specialists, for example – and that's why I sometimes find it difficult to simply draw a rose. And yet there are also very good reasons to draw a rose and read philosophy. You just have to remember them.*

Sandy offers the lady to try copying a bit of Hegel by hand herself. At first the lady laughs and raises her hands defensively. But then they end up sitting next to each other mumbling with concentration. After both of them have written down a long beautiful paragraph, the lady thanks Sandy and walks out into the street with bouncing steps, her copy in hand.

In the first four weeks in the gallery with Heidegger, Sandy grows calmer and calmer. It seems to her that for the first time ever she is actually going slowly enough for these texts to immerse her completely. After five weeks she starts to smell cabbage and earth in her dreams. She often walks across fields under a dim sun. The earth and the air are damp and the colors sparse. She is always wearing heavy leather boots. Sometimes there are cabbage fields, rows and rows of pale green heads as far as the eye can reach. Sometimes there is black, heavy mud, in which her boots sink in deeply. She keeps dreaming that something is written on the cabbage leaves. Often these dreams end with her understanding that it is the dead who write on the leaves. Dead men, dead women and dead children. Sometimes it is the heavy soil itself that writes on the cabbage. The soil writes its being out. As if matter was writing itself. In her dreams, Sandy is part of everything: She is walking and being walked on. She is part of the cabbage and part of the soil, part of writing and part of being written on. She is the angularity of the letters and the smoothness of the cabbage leaves. All this writing happens in German. Sandy does not speak German, she reads Heidegger in English, and yet in her dreams she hears and writes German sentences and is immersed in this German that is written on the cabbage leaves.

Even during the day in the gallery Sandy can now smell cabbage and earth as soon as she opens *Being and Time*. The gallery owner jokes that it is Heidegger's grubby lederhosen that Sandy smells, and maybe it is. It makes Sandy laugh, but it also feels uncanny. After eight days of cabbage, Sandy is fed up. She still loves Heidegger, but it is time to get off the desk, put on some colorful clothes, and lie in the sun. It is time to listen to pop music, eat gummy bears and actually draw a rose. But first she has to get through the last two weeks with Heidegger.

This story is based on an interview with artist Hester Reeve.

Authoritarian cuboids – Jan reads Deleuze and Guattari

Theory books are authoritarian objects. Closed, compressed, massive. Heidegger. Hegel. Kant. Aggressive cuboids. Written for the chilly air of early mornings, for the progress of civil society, for all the centuries that are to come. Schopenhauer. Adorno. Foucault. Classics. Lifeworks. Male stuff. Nobody can read that!

In any case, Jan cannot. The mere technical process of reading might actually be feasible. But it is impossible for him to ceremonially sit down at a table and open such a book. He imagines this moment of a festive beginning: the cell phone switched off and his teeth brushed; sitting at a blank table, the book in front of him. Then opening the book and beginning with the first sentence of the introduction: Drama of the master's approaching knowledge. The ring of the authors' names and the shape of the books are unmistakable: Jan shall start at the beginning and work through them page by page. Along the way he shall read the ten books that are necessary to fully penetrate the main one. The authority of the books dictates that. Jan cannot do it.

Jan studies fine art in Leipzig. In his seminars he is supposed to read theory all the time. No complete major works – reading them is voluntary – but lots of excerpts and essays. This stuff is almost as solemn as the masters' lifeworks, even on black and white copies. Theory is important at Jan's university. Wherever students think politically, love conceptual art and despise the model of the ingenious artist as being outdated, theory is essential. Jan belongs to this crowd, and he also understands that reading is the right thing to do. He just cannot do it. It has been like this since he was in school: When someone tells him to read something, a steel door clunks – slowly sliding – shut. Then the door is closed. It is a shame, because Jan knows that something important, something he might even enjoy, is locked behind the steel door.

In the end he manages to get a good degree without reading: Jan is a nice person and he is good at what he does, so his profs let him get away with it. After graduating, Jan carries on reading some ran-

dom stuff every now and then, mostly from magazines. But for his thirty-fifth birthday someone gives him a copy of the small *Rhizome* book by Deleuze and Guattari. It is thin and rickety, so it is just right. The next morning it slips into his backpack almost by itself. On the train it can be opened without any problems and Jan starts reading just for sport. The book bubbles away: It gently rails against the logic of the tree diagram and against everything that is clear, top-down and self-contained. It wants multiplicity and plants and animals and connections and rhizomes. Immediately Jan has hand-drawn, animated films in his mind. The book speaks a lot about Freud and some Anti-Oedipus. Jan does not understand everything, but many things seem surprising and reasonable at the same time. Deleuze and Guattari tell Jan to simply tinker with the ideas in the books. They say that he does not need to read everything, that it is nonsense to want to understand everything, trying that would be completely wrong. Ideally, Jan should rather observe whether something is growing and proliferating between him and the text: herbs or fungi or bacterial cultures or swarms of insects. One or another part of the text might interact with Jan, and maybe they become a machine together that might even produce something. The only important thing is to let something grow, to short-circuit with the texts and to become part of a happy machine. These thoughts are radically new for Jan. They shift something fundamental between Jan and the books.

In the months to follow Jan starts to buy theory books: first a few, then more. He allows titles and covers to seduce him. He particularly likes to order the thin ones with the colorful covers. The books look fantastic on his shelf. Handy, flexible cuboids that perfectly box thoughts. Smooth, white paper. Series of serial letters. Right angles everywhere. Unpretentious minimalism. Books are ideal objects. And finally, Jan can own them. All this wealth is now accessible to him, too. It is a miracle.

The books usually sit around on his shelf for some time while they and Jan get used to each other. Until one day they are at hand and can be tucked into his travel backpack just as easily as a sweater or a notebook. Jan is still unable to sit down at his table to read. That is still too solemn and at the same time too much a luxury. Jan does not have the peace of mind to spend time reading books in his hometown.

He has a project space, a teaching job, exhibitions to prepare and he has kids. But he travels a lot. While the books are in his backpack, their corners scuff in a lovely way. Other books break in the middle or get doodled in. After that they lie more relaxed in his hand. Jan likes to look into shallow things, such as one of Byung Chul Han's small volumes. It puts him in a good mood, even if Jan forgets most of it soon afterwards. Without planning to, Jan sometimes reads books like these from cover to cover, simply because the length of the book fits well with the length of the train ride. The other day he also had a lot of fun with one of the simpler Sloterdijks. The book was full of ideas that matched one of his art projects. Of course, this is male stuff: vain and self-indulgent, yet it babbles so joyfully that it sits quite well with Jan. Sometimes he reads something more complex, something like Niklas Luhmann or Quentin Meillassoux. The more substantial the texts feel, the more important it is to evade the central perspective of their authority. Never to approach them from the front, rather trickle in through a side entrance and read a few sections quickly as if it were an article in a magazine. It is even better to get stuck with a few sentences while flipping through the book, get hooked, and look from there. Sometimes Jan is then drawn into the book. It can be great to find yourself in the midst of dense complexity and conceive some thoughts there. But it can also be the wrong moment, and then Jan shoves the book back into the backpack.

Nonetheless, many books are still unreadable for Jan. Still he is hardly able to touch the central works of great thinkers. A *Thousand Plateaus* by Deleuze and Guattari is one of them. It has been sitting on his shelf for two years now and it is not getting any closer. A *Thousand Plateaus* is a block of some weight. With its bright white, freshly printed pages and the minimalist cover, it is even discernible as a classic from the outside. Awful! Jan's fingers do not want to go there. He also cannot put this book in his backpack for a while and let it tear apart in the bag. Because somehow that would feel wrong with this particular book. In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari throw the normal order overboard and ask: Why does everything have to be so compulsive, linear and authoritarian? Let us do it differently! Unfortunately, the size of this gesture gives them an insane authority of its own. The two are obviously outlaws of philosophy, and at the

same time they are two of the greatest philosophers ever, and everyone around Jan is reading this, or has read it, or at least wants to read it. But even though Jan would like to finally get to know this almost holy book, he is unable to take it off his shelf and open it. He cannot stand the anti-authoritarian authority of this book much better than the authoritarian authority of other classics.

The feet are not reaching the ground – Annett reads Susan Buck-Morss²

Annett has been reading *Hegel and Haiti* by Susan Buck-Morss for two days now. She is enjoying it a lot. She reads on the S-Bahn taking her through Berlin, during the break in the academy yard and at dinner at home, where she spills a few lentils and some salad dressing on the pages. Buck-Morss writes that Hegel knew about the successful slave rebellion in Haiti and that his reflections on the master-slave dialectic, or more precisely the dialectic of lordship and bondage³, are closely related to this event. Everyone is reading this essay right now. Annett has to read it too, regardless of whether she decides to focus on fine art or theory in her studies. But there is another reason why Annett reads *Hegel and Haiti*: she is looking for a way to read the great male European philosophers in a feminist, anti-colonial way. Perhaps this can be learned from Buck-Morss.

Annett likes the whole text, but what she enjoys most are the footnotes. Indeed, there are a lot of them – they make up more than half of the text. Annett reads each and every one. The footnotes deal with something additional, and Annett is passionately interested in this additional something. For example, one footnote relates how Europe's growing hunger for sweets fueled the sugar production and thus significantly worsened the conditions for the slaves in Haiti. An-

2 This story was not only published as part of Reichl 2023 but also (in a prior version) as part of Potsch 2020.

3 The terms Hegel employs in the German original are *Herr* (master, lord) and *Knecht* (farmhand, bondsman), so the translation *lordship and bondage* is more apt than the traditionally more common translation *master-slave-dialectic*.

other footnote explains that Hegel was surrounded by Freemasons and probably belonged to them himself. A third footnote refers to Buck-Morss herself and says that spiritually she feels closely related to Judith Butler, although at a first glance they interpret Hegel's silence on Haiti in opposite ways. All this is super interesting. Annett is also invested in all the footnotes on the titles and places of publication of the books, journals and magazines cited. Because they display a foreign context of its own at which she gets a peek.

Annett briefly researches a few of the references. She always wonders why none of her friends and colleagues seems to do that. Does nobody else care whether the texts and their sources are sound, whether you should believe them or – as surprisingly often – rather not? Do they not mind many authors citing texts arbitrarily and ignoring the context of the original quotations? As expected, in Buck-Morss every reference is viable. Buck-Morss writes about events and people and about what people have said or written. She also writes about which sources reported these events and how trustworthy these sources are and why. Buck-Morss always keeps in mind that she knows things only because someone wrote them down in a specific context. She feels an obligation to all these people. You can feel this in her writing.

The details Buck-Morss reports allow Annett to make contact. As if every detail connects some part of what was previously floating in the background of Annett's mind to specific points in a landscape. Every detail feels a step on solid ground: contact, contact, contact. Each of these contacts is a small, tangible joy. Each makes Annett breathe a little sigh of relief, yet she has no clue what it relieves her of.

Reading Buck-Morss is very different from reading Hegel, which Annett also loves. Hegel, too, makes Annett take steps, but these steps are floating. She can never be sure whether she is hitting the ground or whether she is just tapping on a cloud of meaning. Although she believes that by now she has a handle on Hegel, each of her steps still only creates the possibility of future contact, never the contact itself. Annett loves this tapping on floating meaning: it is as if a shiny space of meaning opens up in front of her. This space is stretched out by Hegel's vibrating texts, and its content goes beyond what Annett can

name at the moment. Annett may never be able to enter this room, but she loves to stand at its entrance and glance inside.

For a long time, reading Hegel felt right. By reading him, she absorbed a big chunk of the philosophical canon: her professors (those at the philosophical faculty as well as those at the art academy) liked her engaging with Hegel, and so did her theory friends. After a few months Annett began to write miniatures on Hegel's concepts. It was a semi-literary format that her theory professor at the art academy praised as theoretical prose: A game with Hegel's ideas and his language and an attempt to cut something small and sharp out of Hegel's diffuse texts. It was important to Annett not to use quotations without context, as is often done in the arts, but to refer to Hegel's theses as they might have been meant in the context of the original text. Although her texts were literary and experimental, she also tried to be philosophically thorough. Still, she was not sure that her approach was really allowed. She did not dare showing it to anyone at the philosophical faculty. Something about it seemed suspicious to her.

In the last few months, reading and writing about Hegel felt more and more wrong: Because it is stupid to look for a shiny space of meaning in such an arrogant, authoritarian egomaniac as Hegel; in a white, stately CIS man of all people. By reading him Annett gives Hegel even more influence and he has really had his share. Instead, she should dedicate the stage of her mind to minoritarian authors. In addition, Hegel's thinking is highly speculative – it is no coincidence that often he writes without any explicit references to other authors – and no footnotes. (Although this is probably mostly due to the writing habits of his time.) Hegel spins his ideas mainly from his own mind. If there emerges any contact in reading him, it is a contact to Hegel and only indirectly and strongly mediated by him a contact to the world. Furthermore, Annett suspects that by making her take floating steps Hegel allows her first and foremost to float in her own mind. And she fears that this floating in her own mind might lead mainly to privileged and egocentric thoughts. In this case, her writing might show a lack of solidarity with those who, for economic reasons, have no opportunity to float themselves. It does not help much that her friends like Annett's prose. Annett is also only partly

relieved by such clever, political women such as Susan Buck-Morrs, Judith Butler and Catherine Malabou working with Hegel. If all these great women are writing about Hegel, there is a way to read him in a meaningful, ethical and possibly even anti-colonial way. But these women write quite differently from Annett. They do not float with Hegel, instead they relate to a concrete foundation of politics in his texts that Annett can neither fully identify nor address.

Annett stops staring holes in the air and reads on. Buck-Morss talks about a *Minerva* magazine and its extensive coverage of the successful rebellion in Haiti. The journal is important because there is evidence that Hegel read it and therefore knew about the rebellion in Haiti. Reading this passage works immediately for Annett: contact, contact, contact. Annett keeps forgetting the importance of contacts, although it is crucial: in the end, abstract thinking only counts if it touches the concrete world and makes it more accessible. And yet, while Annett thinks and writes, the concrete stuff somehow disappears. She thinks of the moment when she was in Auschwitz for the first time and thought: it's really true, everything really happened! Annett was instantly ashamed of the thought. She had read a lot about the Holocaust; she had seen documentaries and had never even remotely doubted it. It appears constantly in newspapers and in the movies and in literature. It had been an immensely important fact which must always be considered. But it was not until she was standing at the barracks that she realized that in all this time she had not fully understood that it really happened to real people and in real places. As if her feet had not fully reached the ground of this reality. And although at that moment there was strong contact in Auschwitz, even then she could not be completely sure that she had absorbed the full truth of it now.

At the moment, Annett trusts Buck-Morss and the moral integrity of her writing far more than herself. This not-reaching-the-ground might be a fundamental part of Annett's thinking, and it might show up in all her writing. And because it is a fundamental part of her thinking, she will not even be able to perceive it in her own texts. What makes matters worse, is that this not-reaching-the-ground affects her thinking about the things that matter most, as shown by her experience with Auschwitz. Annett cannot go on writing like this.

Suddenly she realizes that she has written very little since her visit to Auschwitz. She was waiting for the problem to resolve itself. But there is no sight of a solution even if she writes like Buck-Morss – constantly referring to sources, constantly striving for contact with the concrete – she cannot be sure that her writing will reach the ground. And working historically like Buck-Morss is hardly what Annett is good at, or would like to do.

Annett feels lonely. Her theory friends have no problem with being in contact with the ground. This question somehow does not apply to what they are doing. For a long time it was them who gave Annett the feeling of standing on safe ground and of being embedded in joint, critical thinking. They started studying art together and discovered theory on the way. Today some of them no longer study art but philosophy, some organize theory parties, others make wild, theory-based films. None of them has a problem with Annett's interest in Hegel. In fact, they approve of Annett reading Hegel, and thereby adding him to the group's expertise, as most of them prefer to read Donna Haraway, Armen Avanesian and Paul B. Preciado.

Two days later Annett is sitting on the S-Bahn with *Hegel and Haiti* again. It is hot, her skin sticks to the seat. Buck-Morss shows that Hegel must have known about Haiti. But he deliberately did not mention Haiti in his texts – most likely for political reasons. He knew that his readers would consider it in this context anyway. Everyone was thinking about Haiti at the time, it was the elephant in Hegel's lordship-and-bondage-room that everyone knew about. But some decades later that was probably no longer the case. Hegel's thinking was received more and more independently of Haiti. It was perceived as ahistorical, purely theoretical thinking. That is how Annett read it, anyway. It had never occurred to her before reading Buck-Morss to ask for the concrete historical context. With nobody any longer knowing about the connection, the rebellion in Haiti became the ghost of the text: something which affects the text and the readers may sense, but they cannot make contact with it. Perhaps such ghostly aspects create a distance between the reader's feet and the ground of the text? Annett puts the book on her lap and thinks about ghosts of texts: There was the European discourse on freedom at

Hegel's time. Yet this theoretical discourse hardly ever mentioned the massive expansion of the slave trade taking place right then. But there was a connection. Just as Hegel never mentioned Haiti in describing the lordship-and-bondage dialectic in which in the end only the bondsman has a chance to develop an independent consciousness by fighting with the master. Today it seems clear that the discourse on freedom and the expansion of the slave trade were inextricably linked. There might be something similar taking place right now: central ideas that occupy our thinking without us naming their concrete background. Maybe partly because we think the background is clear anyway. Or maybe because we are simply not used to talking about it. This idea stays with Annett all day, and so in the evening she asks Helen and Mara and Tim, but they cannot think of anything convincing. There is the inhumanity, the exploitation of the poor around the world as well as modern slavery. But Annett and her friends name these all the time: Annett and her friends are aware of their privilege and that through their consumption and their government they are hopelessly entangled in this injustice. They are also aware that they discriminate against others all the time without wanting to. She and her friends are trying to do the right thing. They are vegans or at least vegetarians, they only fly when they have to, they are involved in political groups, they read and discuss in order to understand what to do. And yet it seems not enough. At night, under her blanket, Annett has the idea that maybe they cannot fully understand all the global suffering as part of their world. The catastrophes are widespread. Even just coping with the knowledge of so many of them is overwhelming. But at the same time, so many of these things seem to take place in a reality somehow separated from Annett's reality. She relates to them in a strangely indirect way. If this is true, she would be a reversal of Buck-Morss' Hegel: Hegel does not mention Haiti and the rebellion there, but he makes them the basis of his thinking and can thus think something new. Whereas Annett constantly refers to all the horrible political, environmental and economic developments she knows about; yet in this moment in her bed it seems to Annett as if somehow she cannot make them the basis of her considerations, as if she is not able to adapt her view on the world accordingly.

The next day, Annett is sitting under the maple tree in the academy's yard again. The weather is still hot and sultry. She has just finished *Hegel and Haiti*. She looks through the beginning of the book once more and finds a passage where Buck-Morss says that the actual subject of her essay is that there is no place in the university for research like hers. She continues: *That is the topic which concerns me here, and I am going to take a circuitous route to reach it. My apologies, but this apparent detour is the argument itself.* (Buck-Morss 2009, 23) Annett is surprised. She missed it the first time. She had firmly assumed that Buck-Morss would tackle everything directly and name everything as specifically as possible. But she claims to make one of her most important points via a detour. Annett feels stupid because she wishes she would not have to construct the argumentative logic of this detour herself. The detour is probably pretty straightforward: Presumably, Buck-Morss simply means that her research speaks for itself and that there should be a place for such research. This idea is quite convincing. But Annett is not sure whether Buck-Morss argument is that simple: To Annett it seems to be somewhat too straightforward for a detour. Annett would love Buck-Morss to spell it out word for word, so that Annett could be completely certain. Annett also realizes that another central thing is not spelt out in Buck-Morr's text either. It took her a while to find it because the ground of the text is so firm in so many passages. But Buck-Morss does not write on how the perspective on the lordship-and-bondage dialectic must change through the reconnection to Haiti. Either she does not want to determine that, or she thinks it is obvious. Probably it is obvious, but it does not feel obvious to Annett. Of course, knowing about Haiti has already changed Annett's perspective, but she feels that she is missing something and that the change needs to be more decisive. And there is more to it. Everyone keeps saying that you cannot escape Hegel: In a way, everything goes back to him, including all political thinking out there. Annett's personal landscape of thought, the theoretical landscape of the books on her shelves and in her city are directly or indirectly related to Hegel. His thinking made its way everywhere. If the perspective on Hegel must change a great deal, the perspective on all texts which Hegel infiltrated, and also all the texts which these texts infiltrated must change at least a

little bit. Changing all these perspectives might provide Annett with more contact to the ground. But she does not know how to do it. Maybe she is already doing it without knowing it. Maybe not. At the moment she does not have a clue.

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