

Lecture Ana Teixeira Pinto

Around the mid-nineteenth century what had hitherto been described as a multiplicity of physical forces, was unified under the novel concept of energy. Working in tandem with, and under the aegis of, the transition to fossil fuel consumption, this reduction of multiple forces to one single unifying concept also entailed the suggestion that turning the compressed time of fossil deposits into the accelerated time of propulsion engines was not simply an economic but a moral imperative. Mobilizing the physical world on behalf of imperial policy, Victorian physics also helped intensify already ongoing processes of racialization. The talk will survey the ways through which language worlds, or unworlds, by detailing the usages of reduction, conflation, equivocation, and allegory, in and beyond the natural sciences.

Ana Teixeira Pinto is a writer and cultural theorist based in Berlin. She is a guest professor at the Academy of Fine Arts Nuremberg (AdBK) and a theory tutor at the Dutch Art Institute. Her writings have appeared in publications such as *Third Text*, *Afterall*, *e-flux journal*, *Manifesta Journal*, and *Texte zur Kunst*. She is the editor of a forthcoming book series on the antipolitical turn to be published by Sternberg Press. Together with Kader Attia and Anselm Franke, she is organizing the conference and podcast series *The White West: Whose Universal*, taking place at HKW Berlin, and she is a member of the 2022 Berlin Biennial artistic team.

This lecture is part of the current ICI lecture series 'Reduction', which explores the critical potentials of notions and practices of 'reduction', within and across different fields and approaches. One of the most devastating charges levelled against theories, analyses, and descriptions is that of being reductive or of amounting to a full-blown reductionism. Conceptual frameworks are scolded for being impoverished and descriptions for being too sparse or flat. And conversely, to call something 'irreducible' seems to confer an immediate and indisputable dignity to it. And yet the history of science and knowledge cannot be told without acknowledging the importance of reductionist programmes; reductive paradigms have periodically revitalized the arts. What lies at the root of such different attitudes towards 'reduction'? Can one embrace forms of reduction that are not in the service of production, allowing for the possibility of a 'less' that would no longer have to amount to 'more'?

Energy and Chronopolitical Allegory

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