

A Second Reader's Review Report of Véronique Ananké Nebeská's Master's Thesis
Intersectional Analysis of the Climate Justice Movement: Austrian Visions for Climate Justice

Ananké Nebeská's thesis sets out to explore a topical issue in current activism, here specifically in the climate justice movement in Austria. The thesis investigates activists' perceptions about the movement's tacit categorizations pertaining to intersectionality. To answer her research questions on how / whether climate justice activists operate with the category of gender and other intersectional categories, Ananké conducted seven semi-structured interviews, some in person, some online. The inconsistency in the form of how interviews were conducted was caused by Covid-19 distancing policies and/or lockdown.

The student provides a detailed background on the original project that was significantly thwarted by the global pandemic as well as the student's health and personal issues. While in early 2020 Ananké envisioned a comparative project on intersectional environmentalism and ecofeminism drawing on materials collected in the Czech Republic, Austria, and among Canadian First Nations, the developing situation allowed only for a limited, Austria-centered research. This, however, does not diminish the diversity of topics and responses the student was able to collect and certainly allows for a full-fledged research and thesis. In this regard the pandemic does not seem to have negatively affected the quality of the material collected. What has, however, had an adverse impact on the quality of data explication in what is supposed to be the analytical part of the submitted thesis is, I assume, either the long time span between data collection and the writing of the thesis, or the fact that the analytical and empirical parts were written hurriedly, possibly under time stress and pressure. The descriptive listing of discussed topics rather than a critical and analytical dissection of interview partners' responses tied to said research questions is, unfortunately, the major liability and weakness of Ananké's otherwise inventive master's thesis.

The thesis is curiously uneven in the quality of its individual parts. Laudable is the sensitivity with which Ananké approaches the thesis topic in respect to (Western, white, middle class) privilege and related ethical issues arising from her positionality. What deserves a special mention is also the student's ability to employ self-reflexivity throughout the theoretical and methodological parts of the text. These parts with frequent and relevant referencing demonstrate that the student has an excellent theoretical command of feminist research methods. Equally outstanding is the explication of methodological approaches employed in the research. The trouble starts with section 4 on page 27 because this is where references stop appearing in the text whatsoever and the thesis proceeds, literally, with quite brief listings of individual topics that do implicitly pertain to climate justice and climate justice movements, but their mutual inter/relationship(s) are never explained, neither is explained the order in which they are discussed and, what is more, it is not made clear what link(s) the issues have to what is discussed in the theoretical part of the thesis in regards to climate justice, gender, intersectionality, ecofeminism etc. In other words, from page 27 on, the reader loses track of the thesis' argument and/or a "plot-line" that would guide one in their reading.

While the decision to use quotes from interviews as topical "lead-ins" into a discussed topic suggests a creative approach, the fact that the link between the quote and the content of the ensuing paragraph(s) is not, again, explicitly clarified, complicates one's orientation in the text as well as what is to be the intersectional analysis. For instance, the interviews do yield terrific material on how today's activists view the gender makeup of the movement. Alma and Paula (pg. 42) speak on the overrepresentation of women in the Austrian climate justice movement

on the one hand. On the other hand on page 43 Flitzer and Ella speak of the fact that caring (for the environment) may teach men to be more caring individuals. These are brilliant examples that the respondents more or less consciously perceive gender as a vital factor in their activism. What is lacking in the thesis, is Ananké making 1) the connection between these responses and thesis research questions and 2) providing an analysis of what such perceived observations signify for the gender dynamics of the movement. This lack is a recurrent problem in the thesis.

For example, it is established that over/feminization of a certain field means lower reputation, credibility and significance of the given discipline/activity precisely because femininity is a devalued identity in androcentrism. Second, what kind of masculinity does eco-friendly, climate justice-oriented manhood suggest? What subversion does that imply in terms of current gender norms under patriarchy and what categories of vulnerability might such representations accentuate intersectionally? It is my belief that the thesis would benefit tremendously from a more nuanced, analytical perspective.

The thesis further gives voice to the interviewees by having them describe a climate justice utopia. While I appreciate this subversive and creative approach to envisioning a more just world, again a theoretical and analytical anchoring is needed here. Utopias (and, equally, dystopias) are a major feminist (literary, cinematographic and other) genre and also one that is increasingly being used in indigenous and/or black futurism as radical strategy of self-representation. Using utopia as a tool in the thesis is a good step, but the lack of its link to a broader genealogy would make such utopias more persuasive and relevant.

In general, the thesis would benefit from a more comprehensive genealogical perspective and from giving historical credits to current climate justice predecessors, such as the Club of Rome and its report *The Limits to Growth* (especially when degrowth gets very briefly mentioned at the end of the thesis), as well as indigenous epistemologies. The relevance of the research would be enhanced, had the text provided more details on the interviews; i.e. a short bio. Equally relevant would be the historical context for the current Austrian climate justice movement. The concluding part of the thesis, again, lacks references, and summarizes interviewees' perceptions, but does not provide explicit answers to stipulated research questions. Overall, the analytical/empirical part reads, unfortunately, as a first rough draft rather than a thesis upon completion.

I suggest that besides the analytical examples pointed out above the following questions be discussed at the defense: 1) Age appeared as a vital category in the debate by the interviewees observing that older people do not participate at demonstrations. Can the student, by drawing on the hierarchies in the movement arising from one's expertise, elaborate on what happens to/with "senior" activists? 2) What gendered aspects does volunteering represent in the studied movement? How does/can volunteering function under capitalist order even in anti-capitalist climate justice movement? Is volunteering just? 3) It seemed that what was barely mentioned in the interviews were policy-oriented and legislature-oriented goals. Why does this seem to be the case?

Despite my objections, **I recommend Ananké Nebeská's thesis for defense and suggest it be graded as "good"**.

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