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Throwing away the Self: Transcendental Waste and the Constitution of the Subject

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Abstract

This article proposes "transcendental waste" as a novel conceptual framework to examine the constitutive role of exclusion in the construction of the modern subject. By synthesizing Julia Kristeva's notion of the abject, Mary Douglas's purity-danger duality, and Georges Bataille's concept of the accursed share, the study explores the mechanisms of sociocultural exclusion. Bringing these three thinkers into a shared theoretical dialogue provides a transition from viewing waste merely as a metaphysical category to understanding its active role within the consumption and disposal cycles of capitalist modernity. This conceptualization reopens the discussion on how the act of discarding functions not merely as a metabolic necessity, but as a foundational mechanism in the ongoing process of modern subjectification.

Keywords: Transcendental waste, abjection, subjectivity, Georges Bataille, Julia Kristeva.

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1. Introduction

In 2025, newborns were dumped in rubbish bags in at least three different provinces of Turkey.[1] Such incidents are not uncommon, as newspapers worldwide report similar stories in their crime sections. But this is undoubtedly an extreme case. Leaving aside the psychological, sociological, and legal aspects of the issue, the following questions should be asked: Does the comforting capacity of a rubbish dump to eliminate waste extend to the disposal of a newborn? Can a newborn be considered waste? Is the newborn's state of waste the most tangible reflection of the ritual- free essence of modern life? How do we explain the fact that in many parts of the world, people choose to dump their newborns in the rubbish when there are many ways to abandon them? This tragic phenomenon compels us to reconsider the deeper implications of discarding, moving beyond its immediate legal and psychological dimensions to raise fundamental questions about the nature of waste itself.

In contemporary scholarship, waste is predominantly analyzed through ecological, administrative, or purely sociological lenses (Scanlan, 2005; Thompson, 1979). While psychoanalytic approaches, most notably Julia Kristeva's exploration of the abject in Powers of Horror (1982), have profoundly examined the corporeal and psychological boundaries of expulsion, and cultural anthropology,such as Mary Douglas's Purity and Danger (1992), has theorized the purity-danger duality of dirt and societal taboos, there remains a theoretical gap in addressing waste specifically as a foundational, constitutive element of modern subjectification.

Furthermore, while Georges Bataille's concept of the accursed share in The Accursed Share (1991) approaches excess and expenditure, it does so primarily through the lens of general economy rather than the direct constitution of the modern self. Existing literature lacks a synthesized framework that bridges the metaphysical nature of exclusion with the consumption cycles of capitalist modernity. To fill this gap, this study proposes "transcendental waste" as a novel concept, examining the phenomenon of waste in the context of sociocultural exclusion mechanisms and the construction of transcendental subjectivity.

A distinction between waste and rubbish is necessary for the act of discarding in the context of subjectification processes. Although rubbish and waste are often used interchangeably in everyday language, a differentiation must be established beyond mere semiotics (Scanlan, 2005, pp. 14–22). Rubbish generally refers to discarded materials that are considered worthless or useless, carryinga negative connotation of low quality or lack of value. On the other hand, waste should be seen as the "other", an entity that actively disturbs the subject's relationship to theworld (cf. Kristeva, 1982). Waste is an "alien" that disrupts;it is the perpetrator of the encounter that is necessary for the self to define its own boundaries.

The central argument of this article is that there is a distinction between metabolic waste and transcendental waste. Considering waste as having a transcendental dimension makes it possible to understand its constitutive role. The concept of transcendental waste positions the actof discarding as an extension of the approach that sees the modern subject as something that actively produces and purifies itself. This speculative claim unfolds through the metaphorical meaning of waste. Therefore, the function of waste in the construction of culture will be discussed in a metaphorical context, aligning with the Bataillean premise that society can only function if its excess is periodically burned off (Bataille, 1991). Transcendental waste opens the possibility of a theoretical investigation beyond standard sociological and ontological assumptions regarding the phenomenon of the discarded newborn, which will serve as a boundary case in the final section of the article to reveal the ethical limits of modern subjectification.

2. Metabolic waste, dirty and abject

Human beings live their entire lives by leaving waste behind and ultimately become waste themselves. Far from being merely a biological byproduct, waste is a cultural phenomenon belonging to the circularity of life as a necessary exclusion. The rubbish dump, as a transitional space, provides a modern form of recognition to this blurred phenomenon, revealing a uniquely human form of identity: the waste-discarding subject. This form of subjectivity accompanies the ontological, empirical, and psychological processes that constitute the self. The fundamental act of discarding—distinguishing what belongs to the body and what must be expelled—serves asthe primary mechanism through which the human subjectestablishes its boundaries, thereby taking the first step in transforming mere biological survival into a culturallystructured existence.

To trace this subjectification process, a distinction must be made between the categories of the "dirty" (as a cultural-anthropological construct) and the "abject" (as a

[1] https://www.aile.gov.tr/basin-aciklamalari/istanbulda-bir-anne-3-gunluk-oldugu-dusunulen-bebegini-posete-koyup-cope-atti-baslikli-haber-ve-sosyal-medya-paylasimlarina-iliskin-basin-aciklamamiz/; https://www.kanal23.com/haber/elazig/cop-konteynerinde-yeni-dogmus-bebek-bulundu-qdTW4YEO; https://www.kayseriolay.com/cami-cinayetinde-cope-atilan-bebek-detayi/167765.

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psychoanalytic boundary).[2] All living things producewaste due to their nature; blood, sweat, and excrement are metabolic wastes that accompany all life as a biological necessity. However, the conceptualization of these metabolic necessities as "dirty" is an entirely cultural phenomenon. As Mary Douglas argues in *Purity and Danger*, an "order" is inherently a system of limitation and classification. Disorder symbolizes both power and danger; thus, dirt is essentially "matter out of place" (Douglas, 1992, p. 35). There is a social agreement that metabolic waste should be considered inappropriate because it threatens the ideals of order. Dirt and waste are culturally imposed attributes that establish sharp societal boundaries, codified by a symbolic system of taboos and prohibitions. Cleanliness, in Douglas's framework, is praised and associated with the sacred, while dirt is avoided—a classification that varies significantly across cultures depending on their specific rituals. As Douglas notes regarding the cultural relativity of bodily fluids: "If I can fervently drink his tears, wrote Jean Genêt, why not the so limpid drop on the end of his nose? [...] But admittedly clear, fast-running tears are the stuff of romantic poetry: They do not defile" (Douglas, 1992, p. 126).

Building upon this anthropological foundation, Julia Kristeva internalizes this boundary-making process through the psychoanalytic concept of the "abject."[3] While Douglas views waste as a threat to cultural order, Kristeva approaches it as an existential threat to the subject's own consciousness. The body must rid itself of metabolic wastes to survive, but this act of expulsion is simultaneously the way the self-defines its own limits. This tension reaches its absolute limit in the phenomenon of the corpse. According to Heidegger, the corpse signifies an ontological boundary, a transition between states of being (Heidegger, 1996, p. 221). For Kristeva, however, the corpse is not merely an ontological transition, it is the ultimate manifestation of the abject; the most extreme form of disgust that violates the boundary of vitality. The corpse represents fundamental pollution: "A decaying body, lifeless, completely turned into dejection, blurred between the inanimate and the inorganic [...] the corpse represents fundamental pollution" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 109). It is the ultimate boundary where the subject is completely annihilated: "Such wastes drop so that I might live, until, from loss to loss, nothing remains in me and my entire body falls beyond the limit—cadaver [...]It is no longer I who expel; 'I' is expelled" (Kristeva, 1982, pp.3–4). However, Kristeva's psychoanalytic framing of the "I" facing the corpse runs the risk of appearing as a universal, ahistorical subject. As Douglas's framework reminds us, the reaction to the corpse is not universally identical; itis heavily mediated by cultural and religious rituals that attempt to re-symbolize this ultimate waste. Dirtiness and abjection, therefore, are not qualities "in themselves," but meanings attached to things through an intricate combination of psychological defense mechanisms and cultural evaluations. Through these biological expulsions and cultural taboos, the "I" is continually cleansed and structurally maintained. Yet, as the level of symbolization of social processes increases within capitalist modernity, the relationship between the self and its waste undergoes a radical transformation. The temporal order, taboos, and metabolic disgust are no longer sufficient to explain the vast, ritual-free consumption and disposal cycles of the modern era. To understand how the contemporary subject is constituted not just through biological abjection or archaic taboos, but through the systemic excess of capitalism, we must move beyond metabolic waste and introduce a new theoretical category: Transcendental Waste.

3. Transcendental waste

The conceptualization of waste must move beyond mere biological necessity or archaic taboos to account for the continuous cycles of capitalist modernity. Therefore, this study proposes "transcendental waste" as a frameworkto understand how the modern subject is continuously constituted through the act of discarding. Building upon, rather than abandoning, the cultural-anthropological and psychoanalytic perspectives discussed earlier, this concept integrates the act of expulsion into the very structure of the modern self. It enables the discussion to deepen through the mediation of the subject in relation to the consumptionand disposal mechanisms of capitalist modernity.

To understand transcendental waste, one must groundit in the philosophical lineage of the modern subject. While post-

[2] Cultural elements such as religious prohibitions andsocial norms make such participation possible. Cultural anthropological studies provide countless examples. One influential example is Corbin's *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination*. Corbin reveals the history and cultural meaning of excrement. He does this by discussing the social classical meaning of excrement, the differences in practices of excreta removal, the change in the meaning of the odor of the feces, and its place in the historyof hygiene. (Corbin 1986, 60)

[3] The waste is not a primary issue for Kristeva. Nevertheless, her main subject, the experience of the abject, is relatedto waste and discarding. Waste appears as the practice by which "I" separate "myself" from. For Harrington, Kristeva's notion of practice emerges partly from a reading of Hegel and Marx. She explores practice as distinct from experienceand yet tied to social practice and revolution. It is expressedin *Revolution in Poetic Language* that the heterogeneous contradiction is maintained as an indispensable preconditionand in which, therefore, the system of representation is also rooted in social practice or even its revolutionary phase. (Harrington 1998, 142).

Cartesian philosophy, running through Locke's empiricism and Hume's skeptical account of the self, initiated the inquiry into self-consciousness, itis within Kantian philosophy that the "transcendental" (the structural conditions that make experience and subjectivity possible) takes center stage. The modern subject is not a pre-existing, static entity, but one that actively produces the necessities of its own consciousness and social reality. However, as contemporary thinker Kojin Karatani argues, the transcendental should not be confined merely to individual Kantian consciousness; rather, it operates transversally across history, culture, and social systems as a form of critique. In this transversal context, Johann Gottlieb Fichte's idealism which radicalizes Kant's transcendental ego into an active, self-positing "I", provides a crucial dialectical mechanism for understanding the transcendental nature of waste.

According to Fichte, the self-positioning of the transcendental "I" is an essential act, but this self-contextualization can only occur through an act of identity that actively distinguishes itself from the "non-I." If the self 's positing of itself is a creative performance, the positing of the "non-I" is equally creative and necessary (Fichte, 1992, pp. 66–68). From this Fichtean standpoint, the opposition between "I" and "non-I" remains purely intellectual (Hegel, 1977, p. 137), a limitation Hegel directly challenges. If we map this dialectic onto the act of discarding, waste functions precisely as this "non-I." The self becomes itself by actively expelling and negating its waste; it is a process of subjectification through purification. Hegel further radicalizes this by demonstrating that the relation between the "I" and the "non-I" is reciprocal rather than merely oppositional. The affirmation that constitutes the self is inherently a negation (Hegel, 2013, pp. 308–309). Therefore, in this dialectical framework, waste is not a passive byproduct but an active, constitutive element. The "I" relies on the discarded "other" to maintain its boundaries. As Judith Butler concisely frames this structural exclusion: "The subject is constituted through the force of exclusion and abjection, one which produces a constitutive outside to the subject, an abjected outside, which is, after all, 'inside' the subject as its own founding repudiation" (Butler, 1994, p. 3).

Although waste is generated by the subject's act of discarding, it assumes the role of a structural necessity—a "constitutive objectivity." This means that while waste is epistemologically defined and culturally classified by the subject, its existence as an excluded category becomes an objective, foundational condition for the survival of the capitalist order. At this exact point, Karatani's concept of metaphor becomes a critical tool. Karatani asks whether it is possible to distinguish between an illness and "illness as a metaphor," noting that illness exists objectively insofaras it is classified by a collective semiological system: "Quite apart from its appearance in individuals, illness may be seen to exist as the effect of a certain typological schema, a semiological system" (Karatani, 1993, p. 107).

The same epistemological mechanism applies to waste. Waste exists objectively when, and only as long as, it is classified and stands as "alien" against the prevailing order. What objectifies waste as waste is the collective systemof signification under capitalist modernity. By treating "waste as a metaphor," the modern epistemological framework effectively manages excess to sustain limitless consumption. The critical stance of this study lies in exposing this very process: Which subjective and systemicneeds of capitalist modernity does "waste as a metaphor" fulfill? Distinguishing "waste in itself " from "waste as a metaphor" reveals the hidden mechanisms by whichthe modern subject and capitalist society collaboratively rationalize the trauma of excess.

4. Waste as metaphor

In modern society, the consumer as subject is also the consumer as producer of waste. While the act of discarding metabolic waste is a transhistorical biological necessity,it is the specific consumption-disposal cycle of capitalist modernity that transforms waste into a structural, rather than incidental, condition of subjectivity, in this sense, waste becomes an integral part of capitalist modernity and the establishment of its dominion. In the sense of modern theorists of the self—such as Kant and Hegel—the subjectis the producer of necessities, of social life, of consciousness itself, and of larger moral and social knowledge. Furthermore, Marx profoundly identified the subject's alienation through the commodity it produces. However, even within these frameworks, the subject is never definedas the product or effect of the very waste it produces in and through its self-production. It may seem like a paradox to conceive of society and subjectivity as being challenged by waste while simultaneously seeing them as a function of waste. Here, the distinction between rubbish and waste, as established earlier, must be remembered. If the discarded material simply loses its identity and allows society to function seamlessly, it is merely rubbish. Waste qua waste,in a Bataillean sense, appears in the unrecoverable elementsof excess. However, the metaphorical context allows fora ground that transcends this materiality, because the metaphor provides semantic flexibility rather than mere speculation. Consequently, the transcendental dimension of this metaphorical waste cannot be reduced to individual consciousness alone; it operates across the social systems of capitalist modernity.

Throughout history, various ways of getting rid of wastehave

been practiced in an attempt to manage the tension between human settlements and their environments. The act of discarding highlights a fundamental matter of necessity versus freedom: while metabolic expulsion is a biological necessity, the ability to discard accumulated excess without ritual is framed by capitalist modernity as a form of freedom. Waste is unwanted excess, and in the context of modern hygiene, it is in a state that should not be accumulated for any reason whatsoever (cf. Corbin, 1986). Disposing of it is a biological and social obligation, and being able to dispose of it effortlessly is perceived as freedom. This fact is an indication of its paradoxical nature and philosophical depth. As already mentioned, what separates rubbish from waste is a field of meaning that includes cultural decisions. What is a waste for one may not be so for another. It is also interesting that, despite its constitutive function as a sociocultural mechanism, modern economic logic often treats waste merely as an externality, a tendency Bataille's critique of classical economics addresses directly. Regarding the cultural aspect, waste presents itself to unexpected extents. At this very point, George Bataille's thoughts on waste, which emphasize that non-productive social activities are as decisive as productive social activities in terms of the progress of culture, are mind-opening. Bataille makes it possible to look at waste from a completely different, metaphorical perspective and opens the possibility of a new debate on the transcendental concept of waste.[4]

Bataille proposes a perspective that includes aspectsof what classical economics considers to be radical externalities. He calls this "general economy" and claims that the classical economic perspective is limited based on need and necessity. Since the limited perspectiveof political economy conceives life as a rational order,it cannot see the irrational dimensions of generality: "Human life cannot in any way be limited to the closed systems assigned to it by reasonable conceptions. The immense travail of recklessness, discharge and upheaval constitutes life." (Bataille 1991, 179–80) As Duarte notes, Bataille considers Marx and Lukacs' concept of reification through the phenomenon of "throwing out of oneself" (Duarte 2015, 97). Cleansing through expulsion and removal functions as a process of subjectification that makes the transcendental conceptualization of waste a concrete, observable reality within societal structures. The ideological promise of capitalist modernity, the emergence of a more hygienically and symbolically sterile life as civilization develops, is a condition that accompanies this process of subjectification. According to Bataille, waste in the sense of expulsion is intrinsic to life. It belongs to the defective side of life that arises from necessity. For this reason, waste should be thought of not only in terms of uselessness but also in terms of dirt, curse, and death. This focus on the defective side of life reveals parallels with Douglas's later Durkheimian analyses of impurity and directly anticipates the profound influence Bataille would have on Kristeva's concept of the abject.

In his "Theory of Expenditure," Bataille states that non-productive consumption is an essential element of sociality and that communities always engage in this consumption, i.e., expenditure. Expenditure is the materialization of the surplus generated by social production and accumulation. So why do communities need non-productive consumption? According to Bataille, the main reason is that the accumulated surplus was seen as the source of social problems in almost all ancient societies. The ontological surplus, which Bataille calls the "accursed share," stems from a state of excess that will always exist: "The sun gives without ever receiving. Men were conscious of this long before astrophysics measured that ceaseless prodigality; they saw it ripen the harvests and they associated its splendour with the act of someone who gives without receiving" (Bataille 1991, 28-29). In other words, thereis inevitably a surplus, and phenomena such as sacrifice, festivity, monumentality, luxury, and eroticism that we encounter in pre-modern societies should be considered as ways of eliminating this surplus. The surplus is a threat tothe ideal order. The aggressive forces that threaten the ideal order represent the primal forces in the cosmos, and ritualis what discharges them. As Baudrillard observes, glossingBataille's general economy: "The sacred is par excellence the sphere of "La part maudite" [the accursed share] (…) sphere of a "general" economy which refutes all the axiomsof economy as it is usually understood." (Baudrillard 1991, 135) For Bataille, the accursed share is considered impurity precisely because it contradicts the principles of moderation and rationality. This logic of a constitutive, unrecoverable excess recurs across registers, from classical antiquity to modern capitalism. In Republic, the guardiansare forbidden to touch gold and silver because it is a sin topollute their own golden nature with the gold of this world.All kinds of evils have been committed because of the goldof this world. (Plato 2004, 416–17a) In an epic narrative, the powerful maxim is expressed as follows: being rich and virtuous is impossible. (Plato 1988, p. 743a-d) In The Accursed Share, Bataille presents the concept of "potlatch",which he adopted from Marcel Mauss, as a founding example that grounds his expulsion theory. (Mauss 2004, 6-9) Different historical

[4] In an unusual reading, Thomas Moynihan argues that Bataille reinterpreted the Kantian transcendental framework: where Kant linked the terrestrial-spinal axis to self-orienting rationality, for Bataille the excremental effluence of the simian anus is merely rerouted upward in the ostentatious bulbing of the sapient cranium (Moynihan, 2019, p. 131).

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realms have different ways of spending the curse. The accursed share carries the potentialof a threat to the order. It is, therefore, considered a taboo that marks the boundary of what is social.[5] The accursed portion Bataille speaks of is therefore not a mechanism forcorrecting an imbalance of wealth, but a ritual expenditureof a surplus that exceeds rational, utilitarian accounting altogether. Acts of almsgiving and sacrifice in various cultures are ways of disposing of this surplus in a tolerablemanner.

Societies have developed different cultural formsof discarding surplus. These forms also function as mechanisms by which societies define their own identities. The removal of the curse, that is, the reification of wealth as a waste, is a creative act. This creative act appears in many cultures. It draws the intimate boundaries of societies and shows the inner structure from the outside. Beyond this economic register, the curse also operates on a theological plane: the world itself can be conceived as a place of punishment, where human beings are thrown away and discarded. The world is seen as dirty and wasteful. The original sin, considered unclean, led to a great exclusion based on the distinction between the holy and the unclean, resulting in the expulsion from heaven. From this point on, both the body and the world were positioned as abominable, cursed, and worthless. Man was reduced to the status of waste. This perception continued until the early modern period. However, with modernity, the idea that the human being, the subject, and the world had regained value emerged. In modernity, despite the existence of all the things in the world that are seen as dirty and bad, the desire for a liveable life comes to the fore. When Leibniz argues, in his Theodicy (1710), that this is the best of all possible worlds despite its negativities,he offers a rationalist reconciliation that stands in direct tension with Bataille's insistence on an irreducible, non-recuperable excess. Reconciliation with the curse, in other words, simply produces a new kind of curse. The social forms of spending have given way to the individual forms of consumption that capitalist modernity provides. The absolute domination of human beings over the earth has created countless forms of consumption. (Bataille 1991, 181) Although Bataille frames the dynamic of luxury and exuberance as a feature of life and civilization in general—"the history of life on earth is mainly the effect of a wild exuberance; the dominant event is the development of luxury, the production of increasingly burdensome forms of life" (Bataille 1991, 33)—this study contends that capitalism intensifies and channels this dynamic specifically into the imperative to consume. Under these conditions, freedom is reconfigured as the freedom of consumption, and justice as the right to consume. Modernity guarantees this freedom, and this freedom—which relieves the subjectof the burden of accumulation—is also subjectivized. Through this system of re-consumption, man becomes conscious of a kind of freedom and, in this way, becomes the subject of transcendental waste. More production and more consumption mean more subjectification, because each act of consumption requires a corresponding act of discarding, and it is precisely through discarding that the subject continually reconstitutes its own boundaries. Andthe more consumption, the more waste and rubbish. The relationship between necessity and waste is thus reversed: where metabolic waste was once the unavoidable residue of biological necessity, under capitalist modernity it is consumption itself, now driven by desire rather than need, that produces waste as its constant output. In this form, the refreshment of discarding guarantees the freedom to consume. Leaving waste is an intermediate step that paves the way for re-consumption: To consume - to discard waste

- to consume again... The recurrence of waste—its perpetual re-emergence within the meaning-world of consumption, rather than any natural or automatic self-generation—feedsa desire that the modern world constantly provokes. (Lisa 2020, 22–23) A state of satisfaction, which is temporarily relieved, seems to accompany this process. The moment desire comes back into play, the relief of getting rid of the waste disappears. This is precisely where rubbish dump comes into play as a form of relationship. It is the common desire of the modern world that objectifies rubbish as a relational space.

The rubbish dump makes it possible to see a completely different dimension of capitalism. The rubbish dump is one of the forms of relationship that the subject ofcapitalism constantly reproduces—a relationship made possible precisely because rubbish, unlike waste, has been stripped of identity, allowing it to function as a common, anonymous space that any subject can enter and exit.[6] Rubbish is the

[5] For Locke, the potentially cursed share consists in having more than one can consume; the excess will decay if not consumed. But the invention of money obscures this curse,since gold and silver do not decay—making it possible to accumulate without apparent harm to others (Locke, 1980, §46, p. 28).

[6] As an example, Jane Bennett goes beyond Mary Douglas's conceptualisation of purity and dirt. She uses the conceptof "thing power" to emphasise that the materiality of garbage matters and impacts on its context. Because of its specific materiality, rubbish provokes engagements and emotions, thus shaping and interacting with the wider social matrix. (Bennett 2004: 347–72). Dürr and Winder argue that the ambiguities of cleanliness and dirt in relationto urban pollution highlight social hierarchies, power and inequalities. Waste can serve as a lens through which to examine the politics and social construction of differences and helps to understand the complex web of social

embodiment of another kind of excessthat can no longer be dealt with. Rubbish signifies what is useless. It is what we want to get rid of the responsibility for, what we will not reuse, what we throw out, and what we remove from ourselves. The modern incentive to consume both legitimizes and facilitates the subject's discarding of waste. Driven by disgust or lack of need, the subjectis free to discard waste and move on. The indispensable condition for this freedom is that the rubbish dump is already pre-established.[7] Considering Foucault's analysis of the relationship between subjectivity and power, the rubbish dump is not only an area where waste accumulates,but also a spatial manifestation of the processes by which power shapes the subject (Foucault, 1995, pp. 195–228). The rubbish dump is a form of organization that enables the exclusion of what is defined as "waste" within certain norms and reinforces this distinction. In biopolitical terms—a question that becomes most acute in the case of the discarded newborn discussed below—decision-making mechanisms on what is valuable and what is worthless, what should be preserved and what should be discarded, become operational through spaces such as the rubbish dump. At the same time, the rubbish dump can be thought of as a heterotopia of deviation, in Foucault's typology—a space, like the prison or the asylum, that appears to stand outside society's regulatory mechanisms while in fact enabling the reproduction of that very order, constantly redrawing the boundary between what is acceptable and what should be excluded (Foucault, 1986, pp. 22–27). In this sense, the garbage dump is not only a physical space but also a site where subjectivity and social value judgments are produced and made visible. Moreover, the ability of power to make certain things visible while hiding others helps render the cursed invisible. The anonymizing power of the rubbish dump makes it easy to get rid of the unwanted. It reproduces consumption. As a standby for possible waste, the rubbish dump is also a space of free-dom. It gives a subject the power to get rid of anything anytime. In terms of being full of things we consume and want to get rid of, the rubbish dump belongs to everyone because it is the repatriation of immanence. At the same time, it belongs to no one because the rubbish dump is anonymous. The transcendental relationship between human beings and waste thus becomes explicit in rubbish dumps.

5. Confronting transcendental waste: The newborn as the limit of waste

The concept of transcendental waste redefines waste as a constitutive element of subjectivity, going beyond seeingit as merely an external residue or a biological necessity. Whereas Kristeva's concept of the abject positions waste asa corporeal transgression of boundaries (Kristeva, 1982), and Douglas's purity-danger dichotomy positions waste as a threat to the cultural and symbolic order (Douglas, 1992), Bataille's idea of the accursed share, although it discusses the ritualistic destruction of social surplus, remains framed primarily within a socio-economic register rather than the formation of individual subjectivity (Bataille, 1991). Transcendental waste, by contrast, focuses on the active role of waste in the subject's self-construction, synthesizing these three registers—psychoanalytic, cultural-symbolic, and socio-economic—into a singleaccount of subjectification. The concept of transcendentalwaste should be seen as a perspective that intersects the consumption cycles of modern capitalism and the act of thesubject's demarcation of its own boundaries. This means making waste not just another category but an immanent element in the formation of the "I". This perspective allowsfor a rethinking of waste as a metaphysical category and suggests a new way of understanding the non-ritualized essence of modern life. So far, the constitutive nature of waste has been discussed in subjective and social contexts.The relationship between the act of self that is produced by discarding and the forms of governmentality that are manifested through the notion of waste has been identified. In its transcendental form, however, the existingframework ran the risk of considering waste as a contingent necessity. The obligation of overcoming this contingency becomes particularly evident when we return to the case ofthe discarded newborn.

If waste is not merely an accidental byproduct of social and economic processes but a fundamental structuring principle, then the act of discarding a newborn forcesus to confront the most unsettling dimensions of this framework. Is the newborn merely an unintended victim of contingent circumstances, or does this act reveal something intrinsic to the way modern societies regulate inclusion and exclusion?

Various ways of disposing of the newborn have appeared over the centuries. Although anthropology explains it in factual ways, in many cultures, it remains taboo. While there is currently no social consensus even on the issue of abortion, our thinking is now confronted with the phenomenon of throwing away human beings.[8] The public is also used to the news of those abandoned in religious

relationsthrough which individuals constitute their daily lives (Dürr,Winder 2016: 53-68).

[7] Although it goes beyond the limits of this article, a critical reading of waste policy is instructive here: Williams and Cole (2013) found that collecting waste at longer intervals both decreased the total amount of waste generated and increased the amount recycled.

[8] For detailed information on neonaticide and infanthomicide, see Ferrara et al. (2013) and Craig (2004).

places, parks, and hospitals. In all these places of abandonment, while the desire to give the newborn a chance to live is subtly expressed, the transformed form of survival wants to eliminate the living being just like rubbish. The prospect of a newborn surviving in a rubbish dump must be tragic for those who want to destroy their own parental identity. The newborn is not an object of desire here, just like waste. Just like ordinary waste, its survival is not preferred. Now, the question is: what distinguishes a newborn from waste? It is alive but unwanted. The one who discards it does not recognize the identity it imposes on them. It may be dirty in a merely physical sense, but in Douglas's terms it is seen as essentially dangerous—a symbolic threat to the boundary between order and disorder, rather than a literal health hazard. In this respect, the newborn has all the characteristics of waste. There is only one problem: the newborn does not fit the social recognition of waste. With its unacceptability as waste, the newborn brings a new perspective to the conceptualization of transcendental waste: while waste establishes its owner as a subject, the newborn—precisely because it is a living other rather than an inert object—creates a space of unconditional responsibility for the one who confronts it. In Levinasian terms, the newborn's face makes an ethical demand prior to any decision, and it is this demand that makes the "I" who encounters it morally responsible (Levinas, 1969). The newborn is thus included in the social order through the very mechanism of its exclusion, just as it is included as much as it is excluded in the Hegelian sense discussed above. This unplanned meeting makes the other the subject of a transcendental conceptualization of waste and a public sphere of responsibility; at the same time, it makes the newborn the property of the relations that own the rubbish, redefining its dispossession. The state, which presumably makes the transcendental relationship possible, is the owner of the newborn in the bin and even of the dysfunctional rubbish that will no longer be of any use to anyone—an ownership that should be understood in the biopolitical and legal sense established above, rather than as material possession. On the other hand, the parent is guilty against the state through their perpetration of the crime, which aims at anonymity.

The multifaceted constitutivity is one that involves the rejection of identity—of parental identity—and that involves ambiguity and anonymity. It is a multidimensional entity that makes the one who leaves it a murderer, the one who finds it responsible, the public sensitive, and the law powerful. Therefore, the transcendental dimension of waste should be seen as the ideal form since it does not deal with it through the agent. If, as in this case, the newborn did not have the chance to survive, the essential ground would have been lost; many have disappeared into the depths of the rubbish dump. However, the transcendental conception of waste has the power to make it possibleto think about non-waste states of becoming waste and constructs subjects as the agents of these states. The transcendental framework helps summarize the most effective feature of modern man: the ability to discard without ritual comes from the effective power of the rubbish dump. This modern agency makes this possible. This is a constitutive, anonymous relation that also includesan anonymous agency. Subjectivity does not entail identity,but it does entail agency. The anonymization of the crimedoes not entail a denial of agency. The condition of the rubbish dump is the recognition of an anonymous agency.This form of expulsion appears as a right deriving from the legitimacy of the discarding. Capitalist modernity hereinverts Kant's own normative logic: where Kant insists that obligation presupposes possibility (ought implies can), the rubbish dump generates a perverse normative claim in which mere possibility produces an obligation—you ought to discard because you can. Searching for the rationality ormorality of what can be done becomes irrelevant under this inverted logic. Yet for Kant himself, a command remains acommand only insofar as "you ought to because you can" (Kant 2002, §7, p. 45)—the rubbish dump's normative claimborrows the form of Kantian necessity while discarding itsactual ethical content. The order that makes discarding possible ensures the continuity of the system. The defect created by the newborn will disappear in the darkness of the rubbish dump, which grinds what it takes in.

The discarding of a newborn is a violation of the most fundamental value of human life—the right to life. From the standpoint of Kantian deontological ethics—which commands that humanity must always be treated as an endin itself, never merely as a disposable object—and within the normative framework of modern human rights discourse, this act represents an ultimate moral transgression. It is here that the inverted, instrumentalized Kantianism of the rubbish dump confronts the genuine Kantian imperative it has betrayed. The concept of transcendental waste shows how this violation reveals the role of waste as a constitutive element of subjectivity. Waste is the "other" that the subject excludes in constructing itself, but the newborn is more than this "other" as a potential subject. This reveals how even life can become "waste" in the consumption cyclesof modern capitalism and how subjectivity is deformed inthis process. The discarding of the newborn reveals how fragile and ethically problematic these boundaries are, as the subject draws its own boundaries.

6. Conclusion

This inquiry has sought to elevate the concept of waste from a mere ecological problem or a biological necessity to a foundational philosophical category: "transcendental waste." By tracing the trajectory of discarding from the

cultural classification of dirt (Douglas) to the psychoanalytic confrontation with the abject (Kristeva), and on to the societal expenditure of the accursed share (Bataille), this study has demonstrated that the modern subject actively constitutes itself through the act of exclusion. Reading waste as a metaphor rather than as a fixed property of things made it possible to show that this exclusion is not a natural given but a collective, epistemological accomplishment of capitalist modernity. Capitalist modernity, characterized by its limitless consumption cycles, has spatialized this transcendental relationship in the form of the anonymous rubbish dump. In this context, the act of discarding without ritual provides the modern subject with a synthetic sense of freedom and autonomy.

However, as the conceptualization of transcendental waste reveals, this mode of subjectification bears a profound ethical fragility. The extreme boundary case of the discarded newborn—which was examined not as the primary focus of this study, but as a disruptive mirror—reflects the darkest limits of the modern discarding mechanism. When the anonymous, objectifying logic of the rubbish dump is extended to a potential subject, the terrifying potential of capitalist modernity's exclusion mechanisms is laid bare. Ultimately, recognizing waste as a transcendental category compels us to critically reevaluate not only our relationship with the environment and excess, but the very normative boundaries by which we construct our own subjectivity and our ethical responsibility toward the "other."

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