ZDB

O INO-MINÁ-VEL

<THE UNNAMABLE>

BY
ANAMARY
BILBAO

CURATED BY NATXO CHECA
NOVEMBER 8TH 2025 TO FEBRUARY 14TH 2026
MONDAY TO SATURDAY 6PM - 10PM
GALERIA ZÉ DOS BOIS RUA DA BARROCA 59 LISBOA

“Über einen Republikanische Produktion im technische-linguistische Umfeld

betreffenden heuristischen Gesichtspunkt”

The present author does not know German. He resorted to AI to create a monster of his own: grafting onto Albert Einstein’s title—in which he *heuristically* proposed a theory to explain in quantum terms the expansion of light[1] , - a republican proposal based on the technical *milleu*. A proposal to thrash any and all attempts to impose programming on democracy coming from media coverage originating in business or government spheres. A horizontal republic where all thoughts are equal and participate through internal autonomies.

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1 The title of Einstein’s article was the now famous “Über einen die Erzeugung und Verwandlung des Lichtes betreffenden heuristischen Gesichtspunkt”, one of four he published in the journal „Annals of Physics ” in his Annus Mirabilis of 1905. It was this article that confirmed him, alongside Max Planck, as one of the pioneers of quantum theory. In May, he published a second article on “The Movement of Small Particles in a Stationary Liquid”, in June he published a third on “The Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies” (The Theory of Relativity), and finally, in September, the famous study on the relationship between mass and energy. $E = mc^2$. Tired of sending letters to the Annals, around Christmas, Einstein finally gave up licking stamps. Still unpublished, among some outbursts about his family life, was this essay in which he proposed the establishment of a radical republic in Berlin based on the stochastics of living organisms as an autonomous process of normativity. Georges Canguilhem based his 1943 work “The Normal and the Pathological” partly on this manuscript, which is now lost.

The machine does not lie. It is the results that are incredible.

This Frankenstein phrase is a conjecture based on what may have been the title of a short political article from 1905, never published and now lost, written by Albert Einstein. The German physicist, still completely unknown, had read news about the riots in Odessa in an almanac. The article he wrote, perhaps in a feverish vein, would be a response to the violence wrought by centralized power, in that case Tsarism, on what the young scientist envisioned as a free web, a radical democracy of sailors, cannons and cranks, muscles, rivets and *hurrahs*, the salt water of the Black Sea, the steps of a staircase, umbrellas and baby carriages.

Through what the philosopher Georges Canguilhem has conveyed to us, it is thought that Einstein had already anticipated the Simondonian idea of millieu technique, but expanded to living organisms. Canguilhem refers to a transhuman amalgam imagined by Einstein, consisting of genes and wills, bones, nuts and paramecidia, *chips*, steam, quantum leaps, macro and micro catastrophes, failed acts, drifts, translation and desires, grammatical quilombos, normative production, planets, flows, and resistances. In this impure amalgam, Einstein would then have projected the emergence of techno-organic affiliations of bodies, subject to their own normativity, thus endowed with an agency determined from within, with autonomy. Had it been published, this would have been the *avant-la-lettre* birth of Biopolitics.

The stochasticity thus described, based on the production of corporeal lineages, then implied political consequences for human specificity, of course, mediated on a normative plane produced by language. It is known that the young Einstein, a bourgeois and occasional Marxist, then employed in a patent office in Bern, was aware of clandestine debates in the circles of Russian revolutionary *émigrés* around Lenin, who was then residing in Geneva. During his occasional visits to the city on Lake Geneva, Einstein would have participated in discussions with some of these *émigrés*, particularly Jewish Marxists. These conversations took place at the famous *Brasserie Landol*t on the shores of the Rhône.

Perhaps it was through these encounters that the German physicist would have developed the idea of applying aspects of dialectical materialism to the processes of normative creativity within the lines of techno-organic production. In this conception, the preponderance of human agency in the material decisions of a republic open to all these agencies was radically reduced. Henceforth, the political would organize this *assemblage* of absolutely different beings, considering their relative equality and abstracting from their relative diversity. Finally, in this document, politics should be thought of as an obligation, not between humans, but between *entities-assemblages* of organisms, machines, and language.

Einstein, however, in 1905 would not be ready to include the atom in this radical republican democracy. At most, he would be willing to admit the tendency to seek balance and stability in the internal processes of organic structures studied by physics, but this would be far from corresponding exactly to normative behavior similar to a “will.” Casual readings of Spinoza in the magazine *La Science et la Vie* and the widely documented confrontation with Niels Bohr two decades later in Solvay further deepened his doubts about this ontological exclusion of particles.

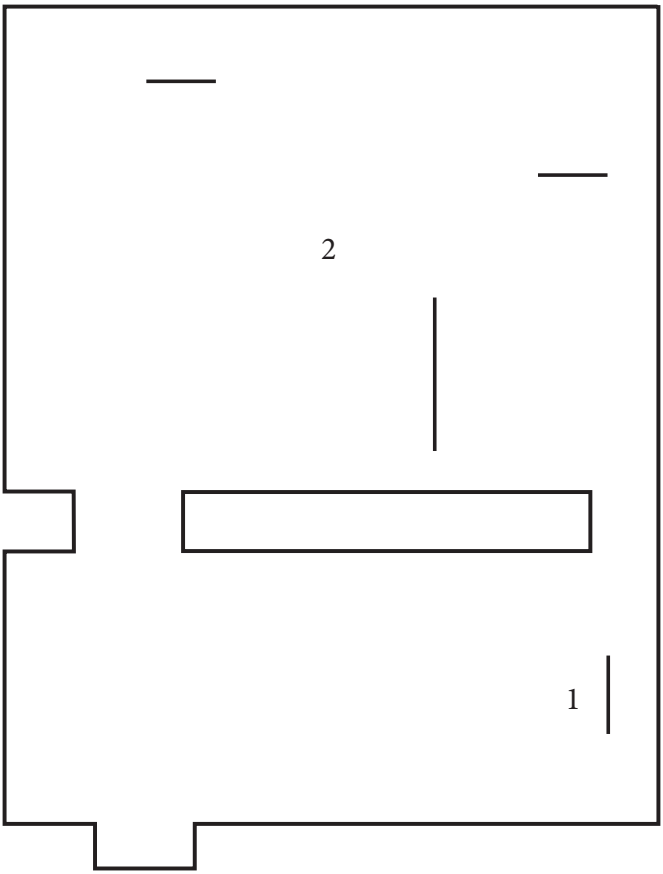
In Spinoza, Einstein discovered the idea that everything that exists, analogous to human desire, "wants" to persist (*conatus*). Bohr, through the double-slit experiment, had discovered that it is the act of laboratory observation as measurement that determines the result of an operation at the quantum level, making it indeterminate from the outset. Both readings, and to the extent that the laboratory is fundamentally a social production of the technical *milleu*, reinforced in Einstein the fantastic idea of a linguistic shift at the heart of the objectivist creed then dominant in physics; - a radical doubt that focused on the central role of information production, as opposed to that of discrete bodies, in the construction of what he referred to as the *cosmo-republic*.

Einstein's Marxist adventures were never radical in practice. Already exiled and chained to the US military-industrial complex, around 1941, on one of his trips from Princeton to New York, he met Daniel Guerin, a Frenchman linked to anarchist groups (especially Paul Goodman and Dwight McDonald) with whom Einstein maintained informal contacts. Much later, already in Paris, it was Guerin, in an accidental conversation with Canguilhem, and according to the latter, who disclosed Einstein's republican heuristics.

We have no information about Guerin's other subsequent contacts. However, his role in the group *Socialisme ou Barbarie* makes us think about a final consequence of the lost manuscript. A possible indirect influence of the then deceased German physicist on the libertarian confrontations of 1968. In fact, Cornelius Castoriadis, another member of this Marxist group and extremely influential in the *soixante-huitard* circles, developed a theory that seems to us extremely close to what we know through Canguilhem to have been sketched out by the still young Einstein on that distant Christmas of 1905.

Cornelius Castoriadis' idea of autonomy is a form of republicanism based on collective self-institution: a society is autonomous when its members know that its laws, norms, and institutions are not given by nature, by God, by tradition, by markets, or by historical necessity, but are human creations—and therefore open to reflection, debate, and transformation. Autonomy is therefore both individual (the ability to question one's own motives, desires, and beliefs) and collective (the ability of a political community to deliberate openly and reformulate its institutions). Unlike classical republicanism, which is often based on civic virtue or a fixed common good, Castoriadis insists on the permanent openness of the public space, where the common good is not predetermined but continuously constructed through democratic participation. Autonomy is not the absence of rules, but the shared and continuous ability to create our own rules—knowing that we can change them.

Gonçalo Pena



1. *No Control*, 2025
UHD video, color, sound, 3 min.
Variable dimensions.
Sound: AI software conversion of David Bowie's song *No Control* (1995)

2. *Inominável (Unnamable)*, 2025
UHD video, color, sound, 6 min.
Variable dimensions.
Sound: AI software conversion of Luciano Berio's *Sinfonia III (In ruhig fliessender Bewegung)* (1969); with additional excerpts from John Cage, *Aria* (1958); Olivier Messiaen, *On Birds I* (2008); Vladimir Kasyanov, *Drama in the Futurist's Cabaret No. 13* (1913-14); Mikhail Matyushin, *Victory over the Sun* (1913); Hugo Ball, *On DaDa!* (1916); Roxy Music, *More Than This* (1982); Edgard Varèse, *Poème électronique* (1958); Louis Armstrong, *What a Wonderful World* (1967).

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