

Editorial Statement

At the heart of that work will be a question, a problem. And we will feel, as we read, that the poet was not wed to any one outcome. ... Those poets who claustrophobically oversee or bully or dictate response prematurely advertise the deficiencies of the chosen particulars, as though without strenuous guidance the reader might not reach an intended conclusion. Such work suffers from the excision of doubt ...

— Louise Glück¹

A dialectics which is no longer “pinned” to identity provokes, if not the objection of bottomlessness, which is to be recognized by its fascist fruits, then that of the vertiginous.

— Theodor W. Adorno²

Most texts cause controversy, if they are lucky, only after their publication. This one was embroiled as soon as the call for submissions went out. Our invitation to contributors required just two criteria: it must obey a word limit, and it must be interesting to the Res Futura community. Happily, the word limit remained uncontroversial. It is the other criterion which deserves a post-mortem.

¹ Louise Glück, “Against Sincerity,” in *Proofs & Theories: Essays on Poetry* (New Jersey: The Ecco Press, 1994), 45.

² Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. Dennis Redmond (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2021), 39.

Res Futura was founded in May 2024 as a political project. Its first activity, which has remained the core of our community, was to host Q&A, a weekly lecture, discussion, and social group. "Host," as in, provide the venue and refreshments: it is the community itself which generates its own lectures on topics of its own interest. Most topics are apolitical. Overtly political lectures express no particular viewpoint; who lectures is determined by who is willing to lecture, not what the lecture is about.

It might appear that this indifference, not only to particular ideologies but even to the need to discuss politics at all, should disqualify us from being called a "political project." Why not simply describe Res Futura as a public-facing academic group, instead of making pretenses to politics?

The criticism of our call for journal submissions was of the same kind. Prospective authors, ready to make bold statements, were puzzled and frustrated by our lack of specificity. What was our party line? What political causes did we consider important? Who was the intended audience, and in what way did we mean to influence them? Should not the writing be timely in light of recent events? Our sole restriction on content, that the writing be of interest to the Res Futura community, seemed to promise only a heterogeneous batch of submissions which, collectively, had no hope of adding up to a useful political instrument. Some, after being assured that their proposed article would be of interest, preferred to contribute nothing at all, rather than be published in such a hodgepodge.

Res Futura was founded on the realization that, before such bold ideological assaults might be of use, a society must exist that is capable of wielding them. Our society, atomized and abstract, is not such a society. For the most part, civil associations are a memory, which few have the interest or capacity to revive. In Canada, many live their whole lives participating in only the most abstract commu-

nities; they see their interests reflected as one vote, or one share. A self-sufficient community, in which one's personality and capacities are concretely reflected in the structure of the whole, is hardly imaginable. And yet it is the basis of all genuinely effective politics. As our governments pass regressive laws and fund unconscionable warfare, we watch with dismay as nothing more than mass protests, letter-writing campaigns, and spectacles are erected in opposition. These methods fail to cause any meaningful change, not because they lack ideological validity or moral force, but because they are utterly uninterested in developing the capacity of protestors to organize communities which are independent from that which they protest. Absent this, they remain so many atoms, which may be easily scattered through any number of legal, economic, or directly violent means.

Res Futura, then, is a community that is learning to reflect its own interests, and to develop the capacities to support them. The fact that this requires learning is obvious in all our activities. Instinctively, listeners unhappy with current lecture material look for a source of authority, demanding changes. In fact, no authority or party line has determined the content of the lectures. Rather, the lectures reflect who is willing to lecture; anyone willing to lecture might, by doing so, alter what lectures are given. While we might have expected members to appreciate this freedom from an authoritarian party line, in fact, the more common response has been resentment, namely of the notion that one must work if one wishes to see change. Time and again, members who wished to see changes to the editorship of our online articles, or the refreshments provided, or the design of the website, and so on, were met with the unfamiliar response: "You are free to make the change, if you are willing to do the work." Some were willing, and Res Futura now reflects their vision. Some were unwilling, and Res Futura does not reflect their vision—not because it

was opposed, but simply because no one acted to bring it about.

Likewise, this issue reflects not a vision that has been imposed by the organizers, but the efforts of those who were willing to help bring it into existence. As many authors as wished to write were read; as many editors as wished to influence revisions were permitted to do so. In other words, it is neither a manifesto—a crystallization of a collective party line—nor an academic journal—a crystallization of an editorial standard. Instead, it is a crystallization of the will of *Res Futura*, which is itself nothing but the reflection of those willing to make *Res Futura* happen.

We are, of course, aware that such apparent structurelessness comes with certain perils. As the classic article reprinted in this issue contends, the illusion of structurelessness in a group often belies an implicit structure of unspoken rules and invisible alliances. Surely, we are guilty of such crimes. We who have contributed to this issue have done so on the basis of assumptions that are not always apparent to us. In the future, if all goes well, our standards will form into solid crystals, and our contributors will have titles and positions to which they ascended through formal processes. For now, our liquid form is the one that is required of us.

We are grateful to all of our regular attendees at Q&A, whose support and donations made this publication possible; and to the editors and authors who volunteered their time in reading and writing.