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The 'Imperative to Right' and the Right to Marginality

The paper takes as its point of departure Jean – Luc Nancy's essay "From Imperative to Law" (1983), which elaborates on Immanuel Kant's difference between Law and Right: Nancy defines the "imperious and unconditional" character of Right as not of this world and not conforming either to existing laws or to their forms and procedures.

In this context, the critical remark of Nancy Fraser comes to mind, who speaks of a "triumph of apoliticism" in the work of "French Derrideans". Nancy's early – 1980s philosophical project of a philosophical re – tracing the political was based on the insight that philosophy's immediate engagement with politics is necessarily subject to the ominous omnipresence of the political. The philosophical outcome of this insight, Fraser argued, amounted to a retreat from the political. Against the backdrop of this philosophical – political problem, I ask whether related insights and critiques apply to literary and theoretical strategies that are committed to making claims in the name of the marginal, excluded, and dispossessed.