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in CULTURAL THEORY

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Contents

Reviews in Cultural Theory is a journal of reviews and review essays, published twice annually. We welcome offers to review or suggestions of forthcoming books engaged with contemporary theories of culture. We also welcome suggestions for review essays and similar, lengthier variations on the review form.

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Undoing the Ties that Bind and Finding New Bonds

LILY CHO

David L. Eng. *The Feeling of Kinship: Queer Liberalism and the Racialization of Intimacy*. Duke University Press, 2010. 268 pp.

In *The Feeling of Kinship*, David Eng asks, “[w]e have moved beyond structuralist accounts of language, but have we moved beyond structuralist accounts of kinship?” (16). Not only do his investigations reveal the persistence of structuralism in how we think about family and intimate relationships, he also presents an urgent and sophisticated case for the necessity of a poststructuralist account of kinship.

As he notes, poststructuralism destabilizes the relationship between language and representation, and opens up the possibility of understanding identities as constructed. In this book, he delineates a different trajectory between language and identity: for Eng, it is identity that destabilizes language. Eng deploys the concept of queer diasporas to destabilize kinship by undoing the national and sexual ties that bind identity. In so doing, he works towards a retheorization of family and kinship that is “attentive to questions of state formation, racial taxonomies, sexual politics, and globalization” (16). Eng dismantles the structuralist account of kinship by tracking the coequality of race and sexuality in the structuring of intimacy.

As the subtitle of the book suggests, Eng uncovers the relationship between queer liberalism and the racialization of intimacy. Noting the many advances in queer politics in the global north over recent decades, Eng makes a vigorous argument for understanding this progress, and progressive visibility of queer life, in conjunction with the mechanisms through which racism and racial politics are increasingly obscured. As he notes with regard to a 2008 cover of *The Advocate* which asks “Is Gay the New Black?”, there is a sense in which the struggle for racial equality is somehow over when such questions posit gay rights as the “new” struggle. Eng shows the ways in which many of the political victories of queer activism in the last few decades have depended upon the racialization of intimacy.

Eng’s delineation of the racialization of intimacy draws from Lisa Lowe’s work on indenture and intimacy. She observes that the polarization of freedom and unfreedom

obscures the role of Asian indentured labor in the transition from a slave economy to one that relies upon ostensibly free labor. This obscuration, as Eng understands, is part of a larger forgetting of the role of racialized labor in producing the wealth that made the rise of a European bourgeoisie possible. It is this bourgeois class from which notions of intimacy based on the division of private and public spheres emerge. This intimacy has relied, he argues, upon the exploitation of racialized labor from its inception. Eng's theorization of the racialization of intimacy recalls again and again the ways in which this labor remains foundational to the very notion of the private sphere upon which some of the biggest gains of queer liberalism have been made.

This relationship between the racialization of intimacy and queer liberalism emerges with particular clarity in Eng's discussion of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision on *Lawrence v. Texas*. Reading Justice Kennedy's majority opinion for *Lawrence*, Eng notes that much of the commentary on the decision has overlooked the fact that the plaintiffs in the case were a mixed race couple. Lawrence's neighbors called the police to investigate Lawrence's home not because they suspected that consensual sodomy was taking place, but rather to report an unidentified black man on the property. For Eng, "[i]t is this enduring and unresolved history of whiteness, private property, and black racial trespass that provides the material and ideological background through which the queer liberalism of *Lawrence* emerges" (36). He asks, "[h]ow is it, then, that what begins as a story of racial trespass can end as a narrative of queer freedom?" (36). In proceeding to answer this question, Eng highlights the way in which the obscuring of racial issues underwrites the burgeoning visibility of queerness in a liberal society.

Despite the temptation to think of the victory embodied in *Lawrence* as analogous to the progress made in *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Loving v. Virginia*, Eng cautions against such moves. In so doing, he outlines what is at stake in queer liberalism as he defines it: "queer liberalism is... about failing to recognize the racial genealogy of exploitation and domination that underwrites the very inclusion of queers and queers of color in this abstract liberal polity" (45). Eng's careful reading of the relationship between *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Lawrence v. Texas* reveals the imbrication of race and sex in the construction of freedom in the United States.

Eng does not only insist upon the racialization of intimacy; he also reorients notions of familial intimacy through an incisive examination of the concept of origins. In so doing, he questions and displaces the Oedipus complex as the central organizing paradigm of kinship. In his discussion of Wong Kar Wai's film, *Happy Together*, Eng posits a wholly different story of origins, kinship and language than that of Oedipus. The film examines the attempts of two lovers from Hong Kong to "start over." As Eng brilliantly observes, the phrase "start over" in Cantonese is a colloquialism, one

uttered by one of the lovers in the film, "that translates literally as 'from the head over again'" (85). Exploring this deeply corporeal and cerebral notion of origins in relation to the incest taboo, Eng offers a poststructuralist account of kinship through the concept of starting over. Displacing the privileging of heterosexual desire as the structuring story of loss and psychic development, and refusing the Oedipal as inevitable, Eng suggests that the lovers in *Happy Together* illuminate an alternative structure of family and kinship. It is a powerful, sophisticated reading that opens up the notion of origins as a problem of the future as much as it is of the past.

Eng further examines this possibility of a different story of origins, and the necessity of displacing the Oedipal narrative, in two chapters on transnational adoption. Through a reading of Deann Borshay Liem's 2000 documentary, *First Person Plural*, Eng reveals the ways in which transnational adoption demands a poststructuralist engagement with kinship and family through the possibilities of two mothers. Looking at the ways in which race is under erasure in terms of the refusal to see racial difference (the insistence that the transnational adoptee is just the same as everyone in the adoptive family) and in terms of the outsourcing of reproductive labor, this chapter attends to transnational adoption as an increasingly important field of study through race and psychoanalysis. Eng argues for a poststructuralist reordering of psychoanalysis that accommodates the possibility of two mothers. He extends these concerns and this reading in a subsequent chapter written in collaboration with Shinhee Han on the case history of Mina, a Korean transnational adoptee. This chapter complements his previous collaboration with Han in "A Dialogue on Racial Melancholia." Eng and Han push Melanie Klein's work on splitting and idealization into the terrain of race and racialized mothers. In a creative rereading of the possibilities of Kleinian envy, they suggest that envy might function reparatively, allowing psychic space for both the Korean and the adoptive mother. It is a process that reworks the heterosexual and white presumptions girding structuralist accounts of kinship and family in such a way that those presumptions must give way.

The book closes with a consideration of the relationship between affect and language in Rea Tajiri's documentary, *History and Memory*. In his reading of Tajiri's story of a mother who has history but no memory, and a daughter who has memory but no history, Eng shows that memory works with affect in order to grant new significations to historical objects. In this way, affect is itself a form of history. Eng reveals the ways in which this affect, the feeling of kinship, responds to new forms of filial connection and social formations.

This is a brave book that demands its reader rethink the ties that bind.

Short-Circuiting the Virtuous Circle

ERIC VÁZQUEZ

Fernando Ignacio Leiva. *Latin American Neostructuralism: The Contradictions of Post-Neoliberal Development*. University of Minnesota Press, 2008. 312 pp.

Denouncing neoliberalism's manifestations has become a boom industry for left-wing academics. It has become a practice so prevalent that even fusty establishmentarians like Stanley Fish have deigned to comment on the uses and abuses of "neoliberalism" as a moniker for the predominance of the market over politics, society, and culture in the present moment. Fernando Ignacio Leiva's offers a sustained study of Latin America's successors to the Chicago Boys in order to rectify notions of neoliberalism's imputed "totalization." Emerging in the 1990s from the United Nations's Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), neoliberalism's heirs promote a "globalization with a human face" contra the morally bankrupt free-market dogmatism of their predecessors. Alternatively, these neostructuralists advance policies that seek to reinforce national democratic institutions, prompt localized participation of interested actors, reinstate development at the center of economic policy, and institute "a grand narrative about the path toward modernity that the twenty-first century offers Latin American and Caribbean societies" (xix). As promising as these claims appear to be, however, this new paradigm in economic policy is not the reversal of neo-liberalism, Leiva asserts, or even the utilization of "cold economic calculus" by the "warm hearts" of enlightened, center-left technocrats; rather, neostructuralism should be seen as neoliberalism's compliment, "as part of a tag-team" (188).

Before discussing the specifics of Leiva's argument, it is worthwhile to note his methodology. Leiva approaches this problem in a way that frames economic analysis with literary theory in order to test economic theory's procedures of making "truth claims." According to Leiva, economics lacks the methodological tools and critical self-awareness available to social sciences and literary theory; following Terry Eagleton's lead, Leiva therefore links the history of material and discursive practice for development paradigms and in effect elaborates their relationship to embedded power structures in Latin America (xxv). This fusion of approaches is generally seamless throughout, depending on Marxist conceptualizations of contradiction, and an emphasis on a trope

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of omission that runs throughout the policy documents and public comments of ECLAC researchers and by the governing administrations in Brazil and Chile. The primary examples of Leiva's claims about the effects of neostructuralism in Latin America, Brazil (2002-6) and Chile (1990-2006), are selected, in the case of the former, for the size of its economy, and, in the latter, for the congruence of forms of sovereignty and economic policy regime in the country's move from neoliberalism to neostructuralism (dictatorship/neoliberalism vs. democracy/neostructuralism). Exemplary as they are, these choices disregard other Latin American contexts where radical social fragmentation and civil war might present social, economic, and political barriers to the scope of Leiva's claims about current sway of neostructuralist ideology in Latin America. Two contexts where such obstacles are demonstrably present include parts of Central America and Mexico.

Nevertheless it is through the examples of Brazil and Chile that Leiva makes his second core argument: neostructuralism's "conceptual retreats" prevent this new paradigm from usefully apprehending the transformations in Latin American capitalism by ignoring how power relations give shape to the implementation of development policy. In so doing neostructuralism rejects the concepts and frameworks developed in the 1960s intellectual traditions of structuralism and dependency theory. Neoliberalism's upstarts rapidly abrogated the policies and legacies of these schools of thought just as, for Leiva, neostructuralism fails to recover them. Foremost in his mind is the abandonment of the core-periphery model of economic relations on the international stage. Concepts like the core-periphery model gave analysts the means to elaborate how colonial and postcolonial economies produce(d) raw materials almost exclusively to be processed in first world (core) economies, which in turn generated unevenness in the distribution and types of labor. For Leiva, this model crucially linked the origins of inequalities within the international division of labor to very development of capitalism (28). Leiva describes a second neostructuralist theoretical retreat in the paradigm's disregard for a notion of surplus and therefore questions of the distribution of wealth. In the investigations of figures such as Paul Prebisch, researchers discovered that a surplus was being extracted from Latin American economies and diverted to industrialized nations. Surpluses were also conveyed domestically to the metropolitan center, which explains why "development" and growth amplify intra-national income and asset polarization. Leiva reveals how, historically, these theoretical apparatuses empowered critical economists to derive policy that would generate development, industrialization, and more dynamic economies by replacing processed commodities imported from industrialized countries with nationally sourced, processed commodities. The policy that substituted imported goods through state-funded industrialization came into crisis during the 1970s and with that crisis came a turn to the right in the form of the neoliberalist consensus.

Identified with the ascendancy of Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, Augusto Pinochet, Deng Xiaopang and their attendant policies of privatization, deregulation, and liberalization of state policy on a global scale, neoliberalism promised to counter massive global inflationary pressure. It failed, however, to deliver on promises of growth, reduction of poverty, and social equity, instead contributing to ecological disasters, the undermining of democratic institutions, social destabilization, and widespread devaluation of labor. One of the major neoliberal transitions that occurred throughout Latin America was a turn to export-oriented economics, abandoning the dominant tendency toward import substitution industrialization (associated with the structuralist and dependency theory schools of political economy). To begin the process of linking the neostructuralist emergence with the laissez-faire policies of its neoliberal antecedents Leiva makes use of the conceptual vocabulary offered by the French Regulation School that allows for a rather elegant map of the uneven shifts between politics and economics. So, rather than read neoliberalism as a complete and sufficient economic model, as others have in the context of the Latin America Leiva's argument designates instead the export-oriented model as a regime of accumulation for which neoliberalism and neostructuralism stand as its two arms or its two modes of regulation. In so doing Leiva demonstrates how neostructuralism, for all of its rhetoric of increasing participation, legitimation and emphasis on social, institutional and cultural contributions to economic health, has nonetheless maintained essentially the same economic model as that inaugurated with such disastrous consequences by neoliberalism. Like the proponents of neoliberalism, neostructuralism's advocates insist in fact that "there is no alternative" (TINA): either policy makers and those who suffer their ramifications accept the brutal swings in the market and its switching on and off of productivity and social stability or they accept neostructuralism's chastened center-left promoting further erosion of popular sovereignty and the "commodification of everyday life."

Theoretically, neostructuralist thought criticizes the narrowness of neoliberalism's sense of growth and economic success, indicating that problems with the neoliberal model involve a failure to guarantee the distribution of globalization's benefits to all sectors of society. Leiva devotes a full chapter to the policy innovations of ECLAC, and those it influenced, articulating more responsive and less socially deleterious growth models. One such conception involved the notion of "genuine" as opposed to "spurious" competition. Under neoliberalism "comparative advantage" (read: competition) dictated massive wage reductions and a devaluation of exchange rates. Leiva indicates that while this policy spurred investment, it trapped Latin American nations in the slowest growing parts of the international economy. Neostructuralists renovated the principle of competition, defining genuine competitiveness as a total social process wherein institutions, governments, culture, and individual affects are mobilized for the purposes of a cohesive, synergistic competitiveness in the interna-

tional sphere. Conflict, historically construed between forms of worker advocacy/politics (as in unions) and management, is to be redirected to the goal of national competitiveness in the global economy (more on the political ramifications of neo-structuralist policy later).

This dichotomy between forms of competitiveness, according to Leiva, allows for the construction of a different model of growth that combines it with equity, a process described as the “virtuous circle.” Depicted as the expansive cycle propelling societies onto the “high road” to globalization, the virtuous circle delineates the mutually reinforcing steps that draw Latin American nations closer to the ever-elusive goal of modernity. Genuine, or systemic, competitiveness fostered by the strengthening of institutions, proactive labor flexibility, and technical innovation lead to improved living standards, which mollify political conflicts and generate consensus useful for the export drive within the economy and increased value added to exported commodities.

As opposed to the metaphor of “surgery” used to describe neoliberal economics in Latin America, the neostructuralist formulae insist on “holistic” approaches to growth, and yet the cures, under Leiva’s analysis, are primarily “homeopathic.” For example, the distinction between genuine, socially coordinated and affectively disposed competition and the spurious, short-term oriented comparative advantage as Leiva later demonstrates fails to actually distinguish competitive practices in the real functioning of markets because “it ignores the contradictory social and technical character of production, the labor process, and the valorization of capital itself” (112). In the case of Chile, as Leiva elaborates later, seventeen years of policy failed to convert the national economy beyond a low-processing (largely raw materials) export-orientation. The contract-free, precarious labor promoted by these policies failed to contribute to the virtuous circle, in effect “short-circuiting” its process (208). Efforts to produce labor markets better suited to the export economy circumvented precisely the beneficent cycle they were meant to institute, generating consequences comparable to those that followed from the “lost decade” in Latin America. However, the turn toward “consensus” and away from the authoritarian “coercion” of the lost decade, Leiva observes, produced a participatory society that is at the same time subordinate to the needs of transnational capital.

For today’s readers it is perhaps these political ramifications that are the most pressing and most important. The discursive appeal of neostructuralist policy is its holistic approach, with an emphasis on actors at all levels of society inflating its triumph throughout the region by marshalling progressivism and democratic rhetoric. Neo-structuralism finds in politics its widest field of application and the road along which it charts Latin America’s path to modernity (145). One of the primary vehicles to a renewed modernity is the emphasis on “participatory politics.” Here, Leiva draws

particular parallels with notions of “participation” that emerged in Cold War and counterinsurgency contexts, where the rhetoric of civil society’s participation brought municipal decentralization to places like El Salvador to address grievances, shore up support for the government, and increase community involvement (151). Governments and international agencies channeled the rhetoric of participation to bolster economic liberalization by generating skills and “appropriate attitudes” in the poor and disempowered in order to anticipate and correct potential discontent with the uncertainties and social fallout from globalization (152).

This newly generated state legitimacy through social cohesion is not directed at fostering popular sovereignty, but rather at facilitating the extraction of surplus and maintaining the status quo of the export-oriented regime of accumulation ushered in by neoliberalism. Indeed like neoliberalism, neostructuralism integrates a model of citizenship around the cost-benefit-analysis of homo economicus, with the addenda of difference, individuality, and cultural identity (157). Leveraging these postmodern matrices of citizenship for the further extraction of surplus in effect transfers responsibility for poverty reduction to the poor themselves. Leiva indicates how the poor’s cultural practices of survival and their “entrepreneurial spirit” are integrated into policy level calculations, streamlining accumulation processes, echoing George Yúdice’s arguments that culture’s function in the global age is to operate as an expedient for the alleviation of social conflict and for economic gain. The subcontracting of social services to NGOs similarly reduces accountability, channeling conflict elsewhere and “[smoothing] out those contradictions arising from the accumulation process itself” (163).

To those that would argue for neostructuralism as the democratic, grassroots alternative to neoliberalism, Leiva reminds, “[t]ime and time again, history has punctured the emancipative pretensions of a wide gamut of economic and development discourses and progressive political projects” (147). The real alternative social models, according to him, exist in the Amazonian and Bolivarian visions in Venezuela and Bolivia where embedded power structures and transnational capital face challenges from the public sphere, even as they negotiate within the confines of modified versions of capitalism. For the time being, Leiva demands a concerted analysis of how development, economic policy, and the state all interact with entrenched social power, in the context of the persistent oligarchic and illiberal nature of Latin American politics in general. Latin American Neostructuralism represents the beginning of such an intervention. Written in a moment when attempts to “postmodernize” Latin American social theory by neglecting the historical claims by the popular sphere for redistribution of land, resources, and freedoms and instead emphasizing “negotiation” and contingency lose not only analytic vigor but in effect work toward the maintenance of the status quo.

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Ruin Gazing with History's Angels

CARRIE SMITH-PREI

Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle, eds. *Ruins of Modernity*. Duke UP, 2010. 528 pp.

The impressively expansive volume *Ruins of Modernity*, published in the Politics, History and Culture series of Duke University Press, takes an innovative approach to the modern condition through ruins. The introduction sets out the theoretical, temporal and spatial parameters from which the volume's twenty-four masterful essays, written by major scholars representing a broad range of fields, view their ultimately diverse subject by interweaving the two complex terms of the volume's compact title. The ruin as an object for analysis and as a philosophical category of modernity proves to be a contradictory creature, for as the editors and the contributors show, it describes an empty structure left standing and a shell collapsed on itself, it is produced by history and is man-made and it represents the endurance and the breakdown of modern utopian thought; ruins are read in this volume for their historical traces, affective impulses and aesthetic qualities.

Co-editors Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle open their introduction with an apt reference to two ruinscapes that they identify as defining our understanding of both the ruin and of modernity today: the destruction of Berlin at the end of the Second World War and the collapse of the Twin Towers in New York on 9/11. The specter of the first ruin haunts the second; the razing of cities under falling bombs shimmers through the crumbling of high-rises at the impact of plummeting planes. Each act of "ruin gazing" by the modern subject necessarily calls upon the "vast visual archive of ruination" produced by the "iconic wreckage of the ages" (1). The ruin, as a "transhistorical iconography of decay and catastrophe," therefore, reflects the cycle of history as well as its aestheticization (1). Understood in these terms, ruins bring the past into the present and situate the gazer at an affective and emotional position across from the ruin.

The historicity, affectivity and aesthetic of the ruin guide the organization of the volume: divided into five sections, contributions examine the "future of the past" in the ruins of modernity, the political implications of ruin rhetoric, empires and imperial dreams encapsulated in ruins, ruinscapes in urban settings and the act of ruin gazing as a process of aestheticization. Each section includes an array of disciplinary perspec

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tives—architecture and art history, literary studies and film studies or archaeology and political science, to name a few pairings—as well as a diverse textual corpus. The questions each author asks of the subject pays testament to the ruin's theoretical flexibility. Contributions range in focus from the broader questions of authenticity by Andreas Huyssen to the textually bound thoughts on ruins in film by Eric Rentschler, from the historically-bound ruminations on industry ruins in Germany East and West by Kerstin Barndt to the place-specific connotations of the Nevada Test Site by Jonathan Veitch. The reader is asked to follow the ruin as it crosses disciplines, sources, historical frames and geographical spaces, all the while experiencing the ruin's affective power to inspire nostalgia, melancholia or anxiety.

What the opening images of Berlin and New York point to is the manner in which temporalities and historical realities collide in the contemporary ruin, an important theme that is repeated in variations throughout the volume. Todd Samuel Presner proposes a “spatial counterpoint” to Bloch's “simultaneity of the nonsimultaneous,” what he calls a modernist geography of the “contiguity of the noncontiguous” (203). These apply to the manner in which the volume's spatial and temporal framings work together to create a theory of modernity through the ruin. The various geographical standpoints and temporal perspectives—from New York to Berlin and India to South Africa, from German colonial Africa to Fordist Detroit to the Third Reich—come together not as comparative realities but as an overlay of noncontiguous spaces and nonsimultaneous historicities that create a contiguous and simultaneous understanding of the place and time of the modern subject.

Speaking through their contributors, Hell and Schönle ask whether we might read the ruin to identify the trace of modernity's past that simultaneously indicates its possible future, but also to discern the trajectory of modern utopian desires and anxieties imprinted on the material object (5). In one of the closing essays, Johannes von Moltke invokes Leopold von Ranke's statement on the historian's construction of the past “*wie es eigentlich gewesen*” (how it actually was), seeing it to stake a “claim to realism grounded in the indexical quality of the historical source, or trace” (399). Reading the ruin as source, then, points to a supposed truth based in historicity. In his opening essay to the volume's first section, Huyssen probes just such truths by pursuing the connection between authenticity and the ruin, suggesting that each can be considered the central topic of modernity: “Real ruins of different kinds function as screens on which modernity projects its asynchronous temporalities and its fear of and obsession with the passing of time” (19). The ruin represents the “problem of a double exposure to the past and the present,” in that the past, as decay, is imagined to persist today (20).

The trace's claim to historical truth or reality, even as an imaginary, establishes its

complex and affective relationship to the ruin gazer as a modern subject. In looking at the image of Berlin projected onto the screen of New York, the ruin gazer experiences anxiety about seeing the present as past. But when this gaze is turned toward the future, it enacts what Hell terms “scopic reinventions” that “represent scenarios of identity—that is, scenarios in which the ruin gazer in the present imagines another ruin gazer like himself looking at the ruins in the future” (176). All societies past and present, the ruin seems to say, will eventually also be found as a trace inscribed onto a future ruin, a thought that soothes the ruin gazer's mortal anxiety. Ruins, therefore, represent the utopian vision of their collective creators. Whether the ruin takes on a “restorative social function,” as Schönle points out, or represents the “shadow of democratic progress” as Russell Berman claims, the ruin is created through human agency (97, 107). Even those ruins left behind by catastrophic events of nature—the Lisbon earthquake or hurricane Katrina—are the result of human desire; human sin (God's avenge) is always a political sin (environmental damage). Understood as such, the ruin contains a utopian impulse, for as Amir Eshel points out, ruins allow the ruin gazer to “experience hope” (135). Ruins “haunt us not only because of their past but also because they allow us to project onto them our wishes, desires and hopes for the future: to see them as a space that is still in becoming rather than a site that merely marks what was” (147). The ruin embodies the trace of history while also telling a story of the collective desires of the now.

Finally, the images of Berlin and New York invoke the aestheticization of modernity's utopian desires. Both Rentschler and von Moltke examine the spatial organization of the representation of the ruin as either horizontal (the expanse of ruin's empty spaces) or vertical (the sky-high piles of collapsed buildings), corresponding well to the Berlin/New York ruinscape, but also to the outward and upward spatial metaphors of modernity (410-11; 418-19). Such a “ruin aesthetic engages the viewer in the space and time of a melancholic *mise-en-scène* that suspends historicity” (411). This corresponds to the editors' warning at the outset of the volume that references Arendt's reading of Benjamin's angel of history: the “aestheticization of ruins is unavoidable” (1). The angel stares wide-eyed at the ruined wreckage of the past while being propelled toward an uncertain future. The beauty of both the past's wreckage and the angel's fear spark feelings of melancholy in the viewer that allow the modern subject to ignore the ruin's claim to historical authenticity, or rather, to forgo any lessons drawn from the past.

If the ruin is “one of the master tropes of modern reflexivity” in that it represents the “reflexivity of a culture that interrogates its own becoming,” then it is perhaps no surprise that *Ruins of Modernity* itself engages this reflexivity to enact its own becoming (6-7). The volume's ruminations on ruins can be read also as ruminations on thinking and writing about modernity. Helmut Puff writes of the ruin that as a

figure of thought it carries with it its own history: “Layers of usage over time have sedimented into its current configuration” (254). The reader of *Ruins of Modernity* ultimately engages in an excavation of the ruin, uncovering it from its historical, affective and aesthetic layers of usage, revealing how modernity is an operation always in progress. The excavation is enlightening, rewarding, and—despite the text’s daunting size—thoroughly enjoyable.

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Reassembling Democracy in the Parliament of Things

J A I M E Y A R D

Bruce Braun and Sarah J. Whatmore, eds. *Political Matter: Technoscience, Democracy and Public Life*. University of Minnesota Press, 2010. 328 pp.

The ambitious task of this volume, edited by geographers Bruce Braun and Sarah Whatmore, is to bring science and technology studies and political theory into more direct dialogue with each other in order to compose a “more fully materialist theory of politics” (x). The contributors attempt to reposition the sciences and technologies that affect our everyday lives as more-than-human *things* that force thought and catalyze political events: as the very matters that gather and mobilize political life. The Virgin Mary, GMOs, oak pollen, dead rats, X-ray crystallography, plastic bags, household thermostats, the “abortion pill” and disaster preparedness systems (among others) have all been gathered together alongside their academic spokespersons. Emerging from a workshop at the University of Oxford in 2006, the volume asks us to take up this (re-)materialization of politics as an imperative task. Alongside previous writings in political ecology and science and technology studies (Latour 2004; Law 2004), the authors in the volume assert that technoscientific things are always-already productive entities, vital contributors and actants in collective life, and not solely external objects for political manipulation and control.

The project of the volume and work that may stem from it is that of tracing the process of matter(s) becoming political, and identifying the beings that stand to benefit and lose from particular outcomes. The essence and importance of this agenda is perhaps best summarized with a long quote from Karen Barad, a participant in the Oxford workshop not included in the volume. She conveys the central thrust in prose that channels the wistfulness of Carl Sagan with the poetic play of Gertrude Stein:

Matter is produced and productive, generated and generative. Matter is agentic, not a fixed essence or property of things. Mattering is differentiating, and which differences come to matter, matter in the iterative production of different differences. Changing patterns of difference are neither pure cause nor pure effect; indeed, they are that which effects, or rather enacts, a causal structure, differentiating cause and effect. Difference patterns do not merely change in time

and space; spacetime is an enactment of differentness, a way of making/marking here and now (Barad 137).

In this spirit, the authors in the volume attempt to break outside of typical response patterns to human-nonhuman co-mingling that permeate both academic literature and public debates. Neither “fearful repudiation” nor “glib celebration” of the scientific and technological things that saturate our lives and co-determine our agency will do (x). Echoing Susan Leigh Star, the key question in reassembling political praxis in the wake of scientific and technological interventions becomes “*cui bono*” (43, cited in Kirksey and Helmreich 546). As the authors in this volume insist, we need more than anthropocentric utilitarian thinking and consensus orchestrated by economic and knowledge elites. We need nothing less than a rapprochement between the contents of the old categorizations of nature and culture that will adequately acknowledge their co-constitution in political life.

The collection is organized into three parts. In Part One, “Rematerializing Political Theory: Things Forcing Thought,” Isabelle Stengers, Jane Bennett and William E. Connolly provide philosophical lines of flight from the central questions of how “originary technicity, the affective capacity and eventfulness of things, and their temporalizing political effects change our definition of the political” (xxix). The essays in the first part of the volume sketch the broader framework and questions for the more detailed case studies contained in the other two parts. It is regrettable that neither Braun nor Whatmore contributes a research chapter to the volume. The collective creation and negotiation of scientific data entailed in Whatmore’s flood preparation research in the UK in particular would have been a welcome addition to a collection that contains a rich conceptual vocabulary for thinking about and examining technoscience-infused political discourse, but few examples of grounded, experimental praxis. However, the first section does provide provocative lines of inquiry. Stengers in particular provides an outline of a methodology, and attendant concerns, for working with the collective life of non-humans and their spokespersons. She provocatively suggests that collective identification of and response to nonhuman agencies in everyday matters of concern demands nothing less than dismantling the category of human. This is no deep ecology deconstruction that would dismantle the bias of human exceptionalism, but rather, a consideration of what political forms are appropriate once we have accepted relational ontology as fundamental.

Part Two, “Technological Politics: Affective Objects and Events,” begins with an essay by Andrew Barry on the political appearance of metals and metallurgy, which are at once a part of complex heterogeneous assemblages and in possession of hard factual properties beyond social constructivism. A chapter from Gay Hawkins explores sensory and political encounters with plastic bags in everyday life. The section

closes with an essay by Nigel Thrift on the spatial transformation of political imagination in virtual space. Hawkins’s essay is particularly effective in bringing political, STS and affect theory together. Hawkins emphasizes how environmental education about plastic often engages in a moral politics that limits both its reach and potential effectiveness. The substitution of cloth for plastic, the ubiquitous apologies at the checkout for forgetting one’s bags, and the guilty yearning for a ready-to-hand plastic bag for a wet swimsuit are all symptomatic of the “command morality” (121) of consumer environmental politics and its limitations. The participatory ethos of such a politics leaves room only for individual acceptance or refusal of preordained actions, and leaves aside all of the ways in which everyday, collective, practical dependencies upon plastic have developed. It refuses all that plastic is really caught up with: as Canavan, Klarr and Vu suggest, the matter of plastic is not only a product of oil capitalism, but will long outlast it, as an abject symbol of the modern fantasy of immortality gone awry (23).

In the third section of the volume, “Political Technologies: Public (Dis)Orderings,” four essays appear: Noortje Marres on public/private contradictions in environmental campaigns to combat global warming that target household consumption; Andrew Lakoff and Stephen J. Collier on the conditioned visibility of critical infrastructure in disaster preparedness modeling; Lisa Disch’s cogent and succinct discussion of the problem of political representation as illuminated by the works of Bruno Latour, Isabelle Stengers and Hanna Pitkin; and Rosalyn Diprose’s “The Political Technology of RU486: Time for the Body and Democracy.” For me, Diprose’s chapter was the highlight of the collection. It tracks how the pharmaceutical “abortion pill” acted as a catalyst for the reactivation of Australian democracy outside of party lines and in defiance of classic theoretical and practical categorizations of *zoe* and *bios*, public and private, biological and technical. Drawing upon the biopolitics of Foucault and Agamben alongside the “deconstructive phenomenological formulations” (212) of Arendt, Nancy and Derrida, Diprose urges us to consider the tenuous boundaries between biological and ideological reproduction that are contained in the governance of reproductive technologies. Diprose’s feminist critique of reproductive futurism avoids the excesses of nihilism present in some contemporaries by exploring the possibilities presented by reproductive technologies for assisting in the contestation of dominant political ideology and its reproduction. She demonstrates how technological interventions in the process of conception, gestation and birthing have served to highlight the crucial role of women’s bodies in sustaining and/or disrupting the commonly recognized political collective. However, this crucial agency of natality “rests on the condition that that path is not forced or predetermined by appeals to a future continuous with the past, either in terms of biology or conservative ideology” (222). Whether this technologically introduced voice is encountered as threat to, or possibility for, a future non-continuous with the past depends upon the body (political

and personal) that you inhabit.

For anthropologists, one of the central assertions of the book would perhaps strike as a bit self-evident: namely, that technological practice and innovation cannot be categorized as external to what it means to be human. As Braun and Whatmore attest, “[t]here is no moment at which humanity comes to be contaminated by technical objects and practices—no fall from a world of things—because there can be no human without them” (xix). While tool use is not the exclusive domain of humans, it has been argued that the invention and elaboration of tools was a—perhaps *the*—crucial evolutionary driver for the development of the human brain (and, by extension, hubris). Stated otherwise, but with a slightly different emphasis, there will be no strictly technical fix to the problems presented to democracy by technoscience. Democratic life has perhaps always-already been playing catch-up. This volume argues for a re-attachment to *technē* as a crucial site for the examination of human ontology and potential, but only after the ideas of human exceptionalism and separateness have been abandoned (cf. Boelstorff; Ingold); human social interactions are to be seen as fundamentally ecologically embedded and responsive no matter how seemingly artificial the setting and contents.

Alongside parallel work in the anthropology of science on multispecies relations and environmental ethics (see the excellent survey in Kirksey and Helmreich), the theoretical thrust of what Braun and Whatmore and their contributors are after is easy to agree with: that keeping the question of *technē* open is a matter of great importance, lest we continue diminishing ourselves and the ecological relations in which we are embedded. Otherwise, we risk mistaking politics for the process of “creating procedures that make possible a chain of command to be faithfully executed” (Stengers 19). The translation of this imperative into political praxis, creating a culture more tolerant of hesitation and capable of genuine implementation of the precautionary principle, is a much more difficult and variable task.

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Making Students' Movements

NICHOLAS JON CRANE

Fabio Lanza. *Behind the Gate: Inventing Students in Beijing*. Columbia University Press, 2010. 320 pp.

The story of a truly political movement is one of dispersed elements that come together in often unexpected and apparently accidental ways, and also, necessarily, of the movement's distance from and subsequent re-encounter with the State. At least this is what historian Fabio Lanza invites us to believe in his "willfully revisionist" *Behind the Gate*. An analysis of student politics in Beijing inaugurated by the May Fourth movement of 1919, Lanza's book traces two processes that overlap but do not completely converge: first, the politicization of students, and second, the invention of a political category that, since May Fourth, has been used to identify individual students with a particular "brand of political action." For Lanza, "students" is the name given to a group of individuals that has been classified, counted and accounted for, understood in relation to, and known by the State. But also more than that; Lanza argues that, through a wave of activism during what he refers to as "the May Fourth years" (1917-1923), Beijing students experimented with their classification as such, and, through their experiments in declassification—through "a specific political struggle that was located precisely around the definition of 'student'" (5)—they achieved distance from the State and came to do politics.

Beginning at the end, with his epilogue, one sees Lanza stretch Charles Tilly's notion of a political "repertoire" to its breaking point through an affirmative reading of Alain Badiou's provocative *Metapolitics*. Lanza claims, "May Fourth invented 'students' as a repertoire, but also as the name of the possibility of political action and organization programmatically outside any state-defined bond, one that challenged and unsettled the boundaries of the politically proper" (206). This is far different from what one finds in conventional accounts of contentious politics after Tilly, which explain the radicalization of "protest waves" as a mere response to primarily state-organized opportunity or threat "environments" (e.g. Almeida). I say this not only because Lanza avoids the incautious use of spatial metaphors but also because he does not presume that the State would drive non-statist politics. Indeed, for Lanza, the condition of possibility for the set of practices through which Beijing students engaged in locally meaningful politics was precisely students' distance from the State (and, after Badiou, the state). Created in part through the reforms of Beijing University president Cai

Yuanpei (1917-1926), and then actively maintained by student activists in the spaces of daily life, this distance was critical. When it collapsed, student politics were at an end. With fleeting exception, student activists were thereafter reduced to parading for more complete recognition from the State, and, as in 1989, "waged actions that were dependent on and justified by" their subjugation to its apparent imperatives (215).

For Lanza, following Badiou, distance from the State (as the enslaving "bond") and the state (as the structuring "state of the situation") is necessary not only for would-be student activists, but also for analysts of their movements. Addressing analysts more specifically, Lanza cautions that neither the process of the politicization of students nor the process through which the student is invented as a political category or "identitarian sign" can be examined upon the assumption, in advance, of students' position in relation to the State. Students are not "always already there," fixed in a preestablished or natural political location, nor can their daily life be understood as a mere reflection of shifts in ideology, intellectual posture, or ideas (115). If one is to invest student activism with any independent political meaning, Lanza argues, one must begin with its practices and associational forms and with the lived experience that particular students have taken as "the basis from which to propose a wider re-definition of student life" (48).

Here, with this emphasis on the level of the quotidian, Lanza benefits from Henri Lefebvre's critique of spatial fetishism, his insight that space is not only a social product but a means of production, "at once a precondition and a result of social superstructures" (*The Production of Space* 85). For Lanza, following Lefebvre, space is not simply a container for politics; it is generated and generative. Space is what's at stake! Lanza's account of Beijing's student politics suggests that, at the level of everyday practices, "representations of space" were actively disrupted by a struggle against sociological determination that produced symbolic transformations in "the Gate" (of Tiananmen) and allowed for its production as "lived space, truly public space" (172). But the May Fourth years did not, and could not, simply replace dominant (and dominated) space with appropriated "representational space." For Lanza, it would be better to say that May Fourth student politics expressed a tension between State-imposed classificatory bonds and the promise of infinite creativity held out by what Lefebvre once called "Total Man" (*Critique of Everyday Life, Vol. 1* 247). The argument is ambitious and the analysis inspired, but Lanza's treatment of the possibility of politics deserves further scrutiny.

For all that it is inflected by Lanza's effort to politicize the figure of the student, the State looms large in *Behind the Gate*. And indeed, the consequences of its ghostly presence are not obvious. Leaning on Badiou, Lanza argues that boundaries around "the politically proper" may be unsettled through "true politics," and that this pos-

sibility exists on the condition that its practitioners expose the State's classificatory order to inspection, thereby interrupting the errancy of the State (207). True politics denaturalizes categories that might otherwise be taken for granted. For Badiou, this *invariably* "summons the power of the State" (*Metapolitics* 144). For Lanza too, destruction of the bond inscribed in classificatory categories produces a "consequent need for repression and reordering" (213-215). As a rule, that is, the State reveals itself to practitioners of true politics and, through repression, reestablishes the proper boundaries of the political. Accordingly it makes sense that, when May Fourth students made evident an errant classificatory order and thereby challenged habits of identification with the State, they called upon the State to rigidly delimit the student, and to impose strict distinctions between activities that were appropriate to (apolitical) students and those that would be "dealt with according to the law" (142).

But this purportedly repressive State also appears, somewhat incongruously, to be absorptive or retentive. One finds this quality in Lanza's Part IV ("Social Space"), after a discussion of the May Fourth activism's intensification, when more radical experiments with self-definition and associationism are said to have elicited harsh repression that, far from having the effect of discouraging student politics, resulted in more widespread sympathy for the activists among non-students. Despite the subsequent multiplication of students' organizational activity and the State's response it summoned, it is apparent that repression alone did not dissolve true politics. Indeed, Lanza's account suggests that the May Fourth mode of activism was "exhausted" by its own overextension and gradually reabsorbed by State sociology. True politics, and its practitioners' denaturalization of classificatory categories, was, in this situation, a project that would continue only under the auspices of emerging communitarian ties that ensured the renaturalization of that which had been previously destabilized. The practitioners of would-be May Fourth activism came to be "separated from their 'student' origin and, while students did not disappear entirely from the political scene, their activism became increasingly limited to what was 'proper' to the newly settled category of 'students'" (198). If, during the May Fourth years, a politically proper position, with attendant tasks and responsibilities, had been held out to students but actively refused (126-136), upon the exhaustion of student politics, when activists "retreated" from the space for politics opened up by May Fourth, it was into this "apolitical" category that they can be said to have been reabsorbed.

Concluding at the beginning, with his introduction, one finds Lanza clearing ground for his contribution, explaining that, "while the influential presence of politically active students in China throughout the twentieth century has been widely studied, the confines and very existence of the category of 'students' have been largely taken for granted" (4). Far from taking the category for granted, Lanza's book faithfully examines the complex processes through which it has been invented and resignified.

Through the book's careful attention to practices, it also serves as a useful methodological model for analyses of what a mode of politics may mean to its practitioners. But one might well ask whether Lanza has not, at times, taken not students but the State for granted. When Lanza looks "behind the gate," does he not reinscribe a fraught distinction between state and society and therefore accept the "ghost-like effect" of the State (Mitchell)? Certainly it would be too strong to call his book "statist." It is not—at least, not in the sense conveyed when Timothy Mitchell writes of the state becoming a "disembodied ideality" set apart from society. If anything, *Behind The Gate's* homage to non-statist politics promises to disrupt political settlement. Lanza cannot be said to have made the State the independent cause of student politics. But, equally, he cannot be said to help us think through how student politics may itself have the effect of making an autonomous State appear to exist.

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The Art of Seeing Without Being Seen

SUSAN CAHILL

Sandra S. Phillips, ed. *Exposed: Voyeurism, Surveillance, and the Camera Since 1870*. San Francisco and New Haven: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and Yale University Press, 2010. 256 pp.

The widespread viewing of previously unseen activities and spaces has become commonplace in a moment characterized by cell phone cameras, youtube videos, reality television and programmes such as Google Earth. The need to uncover and see has gained increased social importance through the elevated use of CCTVs, UAVs and airport body scanners—surveillance technologies that are legitimized as innocuous, yet essential to ensuring global security. These uses of cameras and video to capture the private and public activities of everyday people have become so prevalent as to lend a cloak of social and political invisibility to the act of seeing. *Exposed: Voyeurism, Surveillance, and the Camera Since 1870*, the illustrated catalogue accompanying the exhibition of the same title, maps the history of the camera and its pervasive use in illicit, and often explicit, viewing and, thus, exposes the historical processes that have contributed to normalizing surveillance and surveillant viewing in the present moment.

Arranged by San Francisco Museum of Modern Art curator Sandra S. Phillips, the exhibition toured from the Tate Modern in London, to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, then finally to the Walker Art Centre in Minneapolis in the period from May 2010 to September 2011. Beautifully illustrated with over 230 photographs that span from the late 19th century to the present day, this exhibition's catalogue, edited by Phillips, is divided into five main thematic sections: The Unseen Photographer, Voyeurism and Desire, Celebrity and the Public Gaze, Witnessing Violence, and Surveillance. Along with an introduction that outlines the historical role of photography in voyeuristic looking, Phillips writes a short article to frame each section, elucidating the histories and moments in the development of the camera that help situate the subsequent photographs. Phillips' short introductions are supplemented by a series of five essays at the end of the catalogue—written by curators and critics from England, France and the U.S.—that explore further the role of the camera in structuring that which is available to be viewed.

Taken as a whole, *Exposed* presents a broad historical overview of the development of the technology and social uses of the camera, a theme discussed in Tate curator Simon Baker's essay "Up Periscope! Photography and the Surreptitious Image." Juxtaposing historical and contemporary visual examples, the materials included in this catalogue situate these social uses in reference to the ability and desire to capture people and events secretly. The written and visual pieces trace the history of photographer-as-voyeur, highlighting the photographer's interest in recording people in their unscripted moments rather than in posed portraits. This fascination to catch people unawares helps ward off the fears of isolation, alienation and solipsism—as if someone else's personal and vulnerable moments can reveal a fragment of the human condition and, possibly, hopefully, a piece of the photographer and viewer themselves, ideas touched upon in Washington, D.C. curator Philip Brookman's essay on modes of filmic and surveillant viewing, "A Window on the World: Street Photography and the Theatre of Life."

The photographs included in the catalogue reveal the types of objects that have been of interest as subject matter in a variety of time periods, placing works by contemporary artists such as Sophie Calle and Nan Goldin alongside photographs by early 20th-century photographers including Walker Evans and Brassai, and images by mid 20th-century documentarians Abraham Zapruder and the Associated Press. Some of the images included in the catalogue develop the theme of photographer-as-voyeur in terms of the photographer's desire to view and depict moments that present sinister elements of the human condition, as with William Saunder's *Chinese Execution* (1860s) and Susan Meiselas's image of a Nicaraguan site used for assassinations (1981). The underlying theme of all these images and the desire of those to capture them are questions regarding the artistic, political and moral implications of memorializing moments of people's lives (or deaths) without their permission.

There is an added dimension of viewing the historical development of the desires of the photographer-as-voyeur and what is deemed of interest to capture as a transient moment in a permanent way. The written and visual examples provided in the catalogue map not only the images to be viewed, but also the way in which we, as viewers, see the purposes and processes of viewing itself. That is, the historical progression of voyeuristic and surveillance photographs displayed in this catalogue makes apparent the technologies and images that have helped to legitimate and normalize particular modes of vision and visibility. In fact, this overview outlines the social and historical constitution of the surveillant gaze as a new form of visibility.

Early 20th-century aerial photographs from the United States Army Service as well as British surveillance photographs of "militant suffragettes" are brought into social

and historical focus through their juxtaposition with contemporary artworks, such as Emily Jacir's *linz diary* (2003) and Harun Farocki's *Eye/Machine II* (2002). As Jeu de Paume director Marta Gill argues in her essay "From Observation to Surveillance," artworks such as these attempt to "generate tension by questioning the boundaries between public and private, subject and object" (242), as well as help articulate the development of this new visuality, which naturalizes surveillant viewing as a recognizable and authoritative mode of looking. Addressing and potentially destabilizing this surveillant gaze is especially relevant in the present historical moment, when individual privacy is increasingly sacrificed in the name of collective security and through the infiltration of surveillant viewing into previously-unseen areas of people's lives.

While the concept of viewing and the theme of photographer-as-voyeur are central to this exhibition catalogue, what of the people whose lives are captured in the static permanence of these photographs? This role of the photographic object is a piece of the larger picture that remains slightly out of focus through the written and visual materials in the catalogue. While the concept and identity of "voyeur" is centralized, its opposite, "exhibitionist," is mentioned, but mainly in a secondary role. While the interaction of subject and object is uneven, there can be an active participation on behalf of the photographed and the photographer. The catalogue does engage with this relationship in works such as Shizuka Yokomizo's *Stranger Series* (1998-9), where the artist sent invitations to apartment inhabitants to appear at their window at a certain time, and American critic Richard Woodward's essay, "Dare to be Famous: Self-Exploitation and the Camera," which explores the notion of the agency of the photographic object.

Extending beyond the conventional relationship of active subject and passive object, the interaction of the photographer and the photographed is made particularly overt in reference to the focus on the documentation of the celebrity in Carol Squire's essay "Original Sin: The Birth of the Paparazzo" and images such as Marcello Geppetti's *Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton* (1962) and Nick Ut's picture of Paris Hilton being transported to court (2007). At a time when celebrity careers are made and unmade in the public eye and everyday people are willingly relinquishing their personal and private freedoms to be recorded and studied by states and corporations, the role of those who are captured in photographs cannot be sidelined.

Visual objects and the people who produce them cannot be viewed as occupying a space outside of or above social processes, but must be situated as operating within the politics, policies and technologies of a space and time. As a broad overview of the technological and social histories of photography, *Exposed* provides a helpful

entry-point into more detailed and critical examinations of who is viewing, who is viewed and for what purposes, as well as of the ways in which visual objects not only legitimate, but also constitute, historical and contemporary modes of vision and visibility.

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Broaching the Subject of War: Toward an Ethics of Vulnerability

J E F F R E Y B A R B E A U

Rosalyn Deutsche. *Hiroshima After Iraq: Three Studies in Art and War*. Columbia University Press, 2010. 88 pp.

Rosalyn Deutsche's *Hiroshima After Iraq: Three Studies in Art and War* is a slim volume at eighty-eight pages, but it represents a timely meditation on the often tense relationship between political resistance and contemporary visual culture. This remarkable work brings together psychoanalytic, feminist, and Levinasian approaches in order to question the "heroic masculinism" that animates military aggression as well as the critical analyses that are commonly brought to bare upon it (53). Deutsche's primary target is a spirit of restlessness, what she characterizes as a "warlike anti-war criticism" among critics who demand that artists need to contribute more conventionally recognizable and politically incisive works to the anti-war effort (5). What *Hiroshima After Iraq* strives for, by contrast, is to test the very discursive boundaries of what can and should constitute creative production and critique in an age of conflict.

Deutsche's studies celebrate those seemingly unconventional sites of artistic production that engage with the problem of violence and conflict on an ontological register. Rather than viewing the other as a suspicious person, at best, or an enemy combatant to be targeted, at worst, *Hiroshima After Iraq* presents a compelling case for a substantially different type of visuality. Deutsche ponders:

With what kind of vision shall we meet the appearance of others? Can art help establish ways of seeing that do not seek to reduce the impact of exposure? What kind of vision might overcome apathy and respond to the suffering of others? In short, what is public vision? (64)

What unites these three studies in art and war is that they tackle the contours of what it is to be a victor, a perpetrator, a victim, or a hybrid of the three. Moreover, they seriously consider the messy philosophical predicament of being-with others, whether it is as fellow citizens, or as potential enemies. And while this focus on being may not necessarily resemble the kinds of art produced during preceding periods of conflict,

these current works, in rushing to the barricades at the front lines of subjectivity, do a tremendous service to the cause of resisting warlike practices wherever they may appear. This notion of a 'public vision', a modality of sight and action which is committed to non-domination and abundance in terms of varied subjectivities and practices, is, to my mind, a valuable conceptual framework for theorizing the questions of identity, community, and conflict in visual cultural studies.

Specifically, Deutsche offers *Hiroshima after Iraq* as response to a recent issue of the journal *October* in which artists and critics were asked to account for the generally lackadaisical creative response to military aggression at the start of the twenty-first century. Deutsche notes the prevalence of what she refers to, after Walter Benjamin, as "left melancholy", that is, an imaginative and critical huddling around already enshrined identities and critical capacities that make novel and differential responses appear deficient in contrast (2). This yearning for a "traditional notion of the political subject—unitary, preconstituted, and self-possessed, one who enters an equally traditional public space of protest" serves to obscure the emergence of innovative political subjects and new tactics of resistance (5). In the interest of questioning this self-evident subject, Deutsche devotes a short chapter to three artists' video works, and uses each to philosophically undermine the "myth of pure identity—individual, racial, ethnic and national" (27). Silvia Kolbowski's *After Hiroshima mon amour* (2005-2008) is based on Alain Resnais' 1959 film *Hiroshima mon amour*, and combines this original footage with scenes from the Iraq war and the devastation of post-Katrina New Orleans. Leslie Thornton's *Let Me Count the Ways* (2004-2008) also draws upon archival scenes, original 8mm film, and text, in order to explore questions of trauma, memory, and personal culpability. Finally, Krzysztof Wodiczko's *Hiroshima Projection* (1999) documents a two day long audio and video performance comprised of the testimonies of fifteen survivors that was projected upon the memorial Atomic Dome in Hiroshima. While it is beyond the scope of this review to give a fuller account of each video work, Deutsche does a masterful job of using these works to "undo the viewing subject's narcissistic fantasies, fantasies that blind us to otherness, either rejecting it or assimilating it to the knowing ego or the Same" (67). In their ambiguous play with identity, these three video works trouble the easy performance of apportioned roles, and challenge the "representational adequacy" of images as an opening for the irruption of new relations and new subjectivities (69).

Deutsche proposes a recognition of how the "enigm[atic]" nature of subjects, in both senses of the word, requires that we admit a fundamental imprecision and unknowability when it comes to engaging with the other (63). Indeed, *Hiroshima After Iraq* makes a compelling argument that some of the most inspiring artistic production today takes up the always shifting contours of subjectivity and affective life. The author invites us to consider an "ethics of vulnerability", a mode of creation and critique that

resists the discursive complacencies that reduce subjects and attendant ways of seeing to the normal and the instrumental (54). Here, Deutsche describes the problematic relationship between vision and the other:

Transforming the other into a distanced image or bounded entity set before the self, vision, it has been argued, is a vehicle of the human subject's desire for mastery and self-possession. Oriented toward triumphalism rather than response, vision can, for example, take the form of a negative hallucination in which we fail to see something that is present but unknowable, something whose presence we don't want to know about. (64)

Hiroshima after Iraq, then, seeks a way of seeing beyond a visuality that simply monitors and classifies subjects. Deutsche presents these three works as exemplars of a kind of artistic production that challenges the "triumphalist fantasies" that not only fuel war-like behaviour, but also underwrite so many approaches to the autonomous, self-evident person as the seat of action (62). *Hiroshima After Iraq* makes an important contribution to the exploration of subjectivity as historically variable and negotiable, and points toward a potential vocation for artists as progenitors of more democratic modes of seeing and being in the world. Indeed, the strength of Deutsche's book is that she persuasively works toward this style of visuality that cultivates the emergence of new subjectivities and novel capabilities, rather than a type of vision that merely identifies and targets opponents. What role should art play during periods of conflict? The title of Deutsche's book itself, rendered in the form of the future anterior, gives some modest direction for this line of inquiry. Artistic production and the practice of critique may most fruitfully take place in an atmosphere of relentless creation, endless revisitation, and perpetual becoming.

Stringing a Quartet Together: A Methodology for World Literature?

CÓILÍN PARSONS

Peter Hitchcock. *The Long Space: Transnationalism and Postcolonial Form*. Stanford University Press, 2010. 295 pp.

Postcolonial writers, it seems, can't put a good book down—especially when they are writing it themselves. Trilogies, tetralogies and novels in series are features of postcolonial writing from the Caribbean to Indonesia, and Peter Hitchcock sets out in *The Long Space* to ask why this is. Does the form of the novel in series have a particular affinity with postcolonial or transnational content? How does a writing process that unfolds over time reflect and challenge the temporality of colonialism and its cognates? These questions are the backbone of Hitchcock's book, but they support a more exhilarating and innovative set of questions about methodology in the study of "world literature." How can we read four novelists (from Guyana, Somalia, Indonesia and Algeria) without doing an injustice to their differences? What scale of reading must we adopt when reading for the world? Hitchcock's ambitious new book both asks these questions and tries to provide a model through which to answer them. It is one of a number of recent books that engage substantially with the task of reading globally. Bernhard Schoene's *The Cosmopolitan Novel* (2010) and Rebecca Walkowitz's *Cosmopolitan Style* (2007), for example, encompass similarly breath-taking sweeps of geographical territory. Hitchcock's optics are somewhat different, focussed as they are not on cosmopolitanism, but on the "long space": a formal innovation of the postcolonial, transnational novel in series.

Appropriately for a book that ranges across continents, the "long space" is a baggy term designed to contain a multitude of possible characteristics and effects that manifest differentially across the globe. The term is not, for all that, a night in which all cows are black. The long space is characterized by a sideways glance at the spaces and times of modernity, colonialism, nationalism and globalization. The process of writing itself is implicated in this production of alternatives: "Writing takes time, but in transnational trilogies and tetralogies, duration in dynamic place is a crucial chronotope of decolonization, one that must claim time differently to narrate the fraught space between more obvious signposts like Bretton Woods and Bandung" (2).

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Writers of extended postcolonial narratives, in their choice of form, produce alternative temporalities, in which the high-political markers of global change are either absent or experienced differentially. Of course, Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* or Beckett's trilogy of novels also invoke and enact a "long space" of writing and memory, and Hitchcock acknowledges that all extended narrative claims time in a particular way, but he makes a special case for the long space as "bound to the concrete predicaments of postcolonial narration as transnational critique" (2).

The long space is, above all else, a Bakhtinian chronotope—a conjunction of time and space specific to a particular form; in this case, the form of the postcolonial novel. "The long in long space," writes Hitchcock, in one of his many definitions of the term, "is the irruption of local history into the truncated temporalities of globalization and transnationalism in their hegemonic formations" (9). It is the disruption of global narrative time by the concerns and needs of the local. Hitchcock's notion of "long" is drawn from Raymond Williams' *The Long Revolution*, where long "usefully posits a project rather than a historical description" (10). In other words, long does not refer to time in the conventional sense, but to a secular form of messianic time, defined by political aspiration. The space of the long space, on the other hand, is inspired in part by Said's relentless critique in *Culture and Imperialism*, which continuously links the spatial to the political. Hitchcock both admires the critical project of contrapuntal reading, and also offers the possibility of the long space as an instance of a postcolonial practice of "contrapuntal writing" (14).

The theoretical introduction to the concept of the long space is the most provocative section of the book—here we sense the author's gift for inspiring polemic—but the hard evidence for the long space is traced in four chapters, one each dedicated to Wilson Harris, Nuruddin Farah, Pramoedya Ananta Toer and Assia Djebar. The differences separating these novelists are many and, thankfully, Hitchcock doesn't attempt to draw them into strained relations of similarity. What they do have in common, and what gives Hitchcock the warrant to write of them together, is their transnationalism. The novels that he writes about "are not national novels because, even when they explicitly address the critical form of nationhood, the primary axis of narration favors a chronotope irreconcilable with the nation that is its putative object" (30). On this basis the comparison can proceed.

I will pass quickly over the argument of the chapters, for Hitchcock deserves to surprise the reader himself with his fresh and nuanced readings. Chapter 4, on Pramoedya's *Buru Quartet*, is in many ways the flagship chapter of the book. It is a careful, deeply informed discussion of the archive of Pramoedya's writing. No reference is made to Ann Laura Stoler's excellent work on the archive of the Dutch East India Company, *Along the Archival Grain*, but Hitchcock's attention to the fractures and

fissures of official and personal memory found in the archive of Pramoedya's novels has some quite fruitful connections to Stoler's work. He does not go so far as to say this—indeed, he is quite muted on the subject of archive overall, even as he writes on archival novels—but this chapter suggests that colonial archives themselves might be a fascinating subject for chronotopic analysis.

This chapter is followed by a reading of Assia Djebar's disintegrating and impossible Algerian Quartet. The unfinished quartet, Hitchcock argues, may never be finished because the formal demands of a tetralogy might simply be too much for the eruptive, disruptive history of Algeria. The chapter covers a great deal of Djebar's complex intertextuality, but Hitchcock pays particularly close attention to the figure of Jugurtha, the second-century BCE Numidian/Algerian leader whose revolt humiliated Rome. Jugurtha's anachronous appearance in Djebar's writing is an instance of the deep time of anticolonial revolt, the long memory of decolonization, which will continue to resist the amnesia of colonial modernity. This chapter, too, seems to have been a labour of love for Hitchcock—his closeness to the material is palpable.

In Chapter 3, a reading of Nuruddin Farah's *Blood in the Sun* trilogy, Hitchcock captures and rethinks a recurring issue in scholarship on Farah: that "the personal must do double duty as character and symbol" (115). Emboldened by the title of one of the novels in the trilogy, *Maps*, Hitchcock's reading of Farah rests on the question of scale so crucial to world literature, to mapping, and to this book: how can we both do justice to intimate space and at the same time allow for the distant view of analysis? He has an answer, in one sense: "Farah's feminist critique in *Maps* scales up the metaphor of Misra's miserable life as a comments on the Somali national ideal rather than bringing this mapping down to size, to the scale of difference that is the country's very possibility" (101). I am reminded of the innovative scaling of what Sheldon Pollock et al. call "cosmofeminism"—a construction of the world that begins with the intimate sphere, untrammelled by the global, and works outwards (584). If Farah can do this, Hitchcock argues, it is because of his "outsideness," or "exotopy," which makes his critique of the nation possible.

Finally, in the second, and perhaps most isolated, chapter of the book Hitchcock writes about Wilson Harris's *The Guyana Quartet*. The chapter is a self-contained analysis of Harris's return to the epic tradition, in a reclamation of a "living open tradition" that can transgress and redefine the boundaries of the time of the nation (47). Harris's form is not, as Bakhtin wrote of epic, blocked by novelization; it questions the time of novelization. "A variety of times," writes Hitchcock, "indigenous, exploratory, national, Gnostic—both fracture and suture Harris's text" (88). The time of the novel is too short, too modern to capture the deep time of postcolonial life—only the epic has the historical sweep and feeling needed to represent the time of Guyana.

The geographical breadth of these chapters is dizzying, and the scale at which Hitchcock writes is daring, yet the four chapters on postcolonial authors are oddly conventionally ordered. Each moves through the authors' works in chronological order, and the spaces and histories of the four authors are kept separate. This is somewhat disappointing given the audacious sweep of Hitchcock's lens—the long space is, after all, defined by transnationalism, by transgression and border crossing. But this is not a mistake, nor is it the result of a lack of imagination. *The Long Space* consistently foregrounds problems of scale in both postcolonial writing and world literature. How can we both attend to global history and yet define and defend an alternative sense of time and space that resists the flows of capital that make global history ever more possible?

Hitchcock's range and choice of subjects clearly place him in conversation with current trends in world literature, however that body of literary and scholarly writing is defined. Perhaps the clearest polemic in the book is directed against the proponents of world literature as a reading practice. We are all, by now, familiar with the terms of the debate: Hitchcock quotes Franco Moretti's dictum that "the way we imagine comparative literature is a mirror of how we see the world" (7). An attention to world literature might amount to recognition, or celebration, of an already globalized world. Hitchcock admires the transnationalism of David Damrosch's definition of world literature as a "subset of the *plenum* of literature," which circulates beyond its original site of meaning (32), and also the situatedness of Damrosch's reading practices. By contrast, Moretti emerges as the villain of the piece. Hitchcock is astute on the weaknesses of Moretti's method, and follows others in pointing out that his systematic approach "alludes to the cultural history but not the difference in it, which is precisely what enables the analysis to proceed" (35). His response to Moretti is at times caustic, and comes in the guise of sparkling aphorisms: "world cancels the literary in world literature for an outside of graphs, maps, and trees" (38). The social-science approach to literature, it seems, is unable to grasp what Derek Attridge calls the "singularity of literature", its status as event, to which Hitchcock is very much dedicated. The question is one of scale—the singularity of the literary event is lost to view if we try to aggregate events together to discern patterns. On the whole, the clinical dismantling of Moretti speaks to an anxiety of influence. Hitchcock tries, and succeeds, in this book to shuttle back and forth between world chronotopes and intimate chronotopes, simultaneously producing distant and close reading. The effect can be somewhat jarring at times, but this experiment in methodology is brave. His engagement with world literature is vigorous and thoughtful, but the trenchant response to Moretti seems necessary only to differentiate two somewhat similar projects that differ more in scale than in intention. These two projects can, and do, happily coexist in the world republic of literary criticism.

Hitchcock's book is an outstanding, provocative contribution to the fields of postcolonial literature, novel theory and world literature. It is also one of those rare scholarly books in which the voice of the author, his passion and his sense of humour, are on display, despite a writing style that can sometimes overwhelm. This is a minor quibble, for the real force of this book lies in the clear striving for a new vocabulary of reading that will allow us to take the global scale into account, and yet retain a strong sense of the particularities of alternative spaces and times in the still decolonizing South. The project both describes and enacts a contradiction, which is a hallmark of the very finest scholarship.

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Eat and Be Eaten: The Gastropolitics of the (Post) Colony

JULIETTA SINGH

Parama Roy. *Alimentary Tracts: Appetites, Aversions, and the Postcolonial*. Duke University Press, 2010. 277 pp.

If ever a work took seriously Jacques Derrida's insistence that we must understand eating as an act through which we both consume and are consumed, it is Parama Roy's remarkable new book, *Alimentary Tracts*. Here, Roy sets out to articulate how appetites, hungers, and aversions in colonial and postcolonial South Asia function all at once to confirm and deeply unsettle social relations in and beyond the colony. Far from being merely another boundary that differentiates the colonizer from the colonized, Roy argues that the alimentary tract reveals how desires and distastes confirm colonial identities and histories while also undoing them. Summoning both body and text in her use of the term "tract" (from the Latin *tractatus*—a literary discussion or treatment), Roy insists that the bodily passage (from mouth to anus) must be thought in relation to the proscriptive dietary logic that differentiates social bodies. Indeed, "tract" is also the French *trait*, evoking Levinas's concept of the trace, the line that marks the divide between the self and the other, that differentiates inside from outside in terms of both body and community, but which is also the terrain of ethics.

The book's central focus is the grammar of alimentarity in colonial and postcolonial narratives, how food and gastronomy are represented and articulated across an array of South Asian texts, from often overlooked colonial accounts to more widely read narratives such as Gandhi's diet-driven autobiography and Madhur Jaffrey's nostalgia-laden cookbooks that never fail to titillate Western tongues. Through a series of attentive readings of historical events, autobiographical accounts, literary texts, and popular figures, Roy persuasively illustrates how and why it is no longer enough to think of the self as the one who eats and the other as that which is consumed; instead, her careful analysis of gastronomical grammars insists that eating—perhaps more so than any other human act—complicates the distinction between self and other precisely because by eating we take into our own bodies the bodies (or cultures, or histories) of others. As such, Roy's text implicitly refuses the oft-regurgitated trope of "eating the Other" by persistently reminding us that the alimentary tract, as both

boundary and portal, incorporates as much as it differentiates the internal from the external.

Roy builds off of anthropological, deconstructive, and historical food studies to consider the work of appetite and aversion in the production of subjectivity in the South Asian context. Bringing to the proverbial table a host of critical inter-disciplinary food scholarship ranging from Claude Lévi-Strauss' formulation of the organizational link between language and cooking (cooking *as* language), Arjun Appadurai's work on the nostalgic and self-partitioning functions of Indian cookbooks, Derrida's provocative account of anthropophagy (the Greek word for cannibalism) as a form of ethical engagement with the other, and Leela Gandhi's account of how counter-cultural groups in late-nineteenth-century Europe linked vegetarianism to anti-colonial activism, Roy illustrates how food consumption and refusal are not extraneous to political relations in the colonial and postcolonial world but are rather at their marrow.

Organized along four key tropes—"disgust," "abstinence," "dearth," and "appetite"—the book engages in-depth and nuanced readings of how such figures across disparate colonial and postcolonial texts complicate official historical narratives. Beginning with the Indian Mutiny in 1857-58—a mutiny that is now legendarily evoked as having begun as a response to the rumour that the British had greased cartridges with pig and cow fat, thus defiling both Hindu and Muslim sepoys as they bit into the cartridges—Roy sets out to examine how staple food items of the colony such as salt and chapatis became signs of impurity, foment, and rebellion couched within the edible. Building from Ranajit Guha's work on the social function of rumour in the colony, Roy reads colonial accounts of the mutiny that illuminate the pivotal function that the fear of alimentary contamination played in Anglo-Indian governance and colonial dissent in British India. Through the accounts of British authorities and their colonial subjects, Roy illustrates how the valences of the gustatory served as a practice of "self-fashioning" that functioned not only to define who was properly British and who was Indian, but also to radically upset such categories.

Roy then turns to an examination of how eating and abstinence figure in (and to a lesser extent beyond) Mohandas K. Gandhi's autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. While many have noted the autobiography's insistence on the mundane aspects of everyday life and its preoccupation with sexual abstinence, scholars have largely ignored the nuances of eating and alimentary abstinence in his writings. Engaging with the work of Joseph Alter, Leela Gandhi, and Susanne and Lloyd Rudolph, each of whom have attended to the political import of Gandhi's eating from different vantage points, Roy argues that the contradictions and valences of eating in Gandhi's self-representation reveal two interrelated tracts. First, how meat and meat eating are inextricably linked to modernity in Gandhian thought. Gandhi's

relationship to vegetarianism shifts across his life, emerging first in the autobiography as a practice that as a young adult he imagined led to India's colonization by the carnivorous British, then as a vow to his mother that he will abstain from meat while pursuing his studies in Britain, and finally as a political vow that is linked to *ahimsa* (non-violence) and national independence. Second, how meat in the Hindu vegetarian household exposes the complex gender hierarchies that speak through Gandhi's evocations of who eats, who abstains, and from what. What Roy so convincingly illustrates is how in Gandhi's history and thought, "the tongue functions as a vehicle of violence both in its abstinences and in its indulgences" (115). As such, she refuses the conflation of vegetarian eating and nonviolence that constitutes the iconic make-up of Gandhi as *mahatma*, and urges us instead to consider Gandhian alimenterarity as a practice that is often marked by internal conflict and various forms of violence.

In her chapter "Dearth," Roy puts two pivotal events in modern South Asian history—the Bengal famine of 1943–44 and the Partition of India in 1974—into conversation with the "famine fictions" of Bengali writer and activist Mahasweta Devi. She explicates how these tales undermine the preconception that famine is a result of food shortage by engaging Amartya Sen's work on the social (as opposed to environmental) production of famine. These nuanced readings of Devi's fiction articulate the failure of modern liberal subjectivity, a subjectivity that refuses to acknowledge and act against the violence that constitutes postcolonial bourgeois life. Each of these narratives hinges upon the bourgeois liberal subject's desire to "do good" and his inability to reconcile such a desire with his own complicity in the subjugation of others, both human and animal. In Roy's own terms: "famine itself as a figure that, like all figures, exceeds the conventional logic of numeration, accounting, and modularity" (123). The incommensurability of famine in Devi's fictions, the impossibility of calculating degrees of human suffering or responsibility, marks a crisis of liberal subjectivity and as such these texts confront the reader in intimate and disturbing ways. Perhaps the most persuasive aspect of her work on Devi is how Roy articulates the intricate relation between India's *adivasi* (first inhabitants) and prehistoric animals across "Shishu" and *Pterodactyl*. The pivotal question of the animal in postcolonial studies begs more intellectual attention than it has received, and here Roy anticipates a critical postcolonial animal studies to come.

Turning away from hunger to "appetite," Roy examines culinary diasporas through the public persona of the "grand dame" of Indian cookery, Madhur Jaffrey. These consecutive chapters, as Roy adeptly remarks, "constitute the contrasting bookends of a distinctly uneven postcolonial continuum" (165). Here she illustrates how gastronomy in the diaspora (in stark contrast with the ill-fed subaltern classes of Devi's work) is teased out through nostalgic (sometimes bordering on orientalist) evocations of a past and place which both tantalizes and escapes the Western reader as culinary

devotee. Weaving the most famous gustatory fictions of the South Asian diaspora—namely Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and Sara Suleri's *Meatless Days*—into her readings of Jaffrey's cookbooks, especially *An Invitation to Indian Cooking*, Roy explores how the diaspora reveals and conceals "native" identities through the culinary. For example, while Jaffrey decries the use of the term "curry," revealing its origins as a British term that flattens and conflates the extraordinary diversity of South Asian cuisines for British ease, she also makes use of the term, and of curry powder itself, to sell the quickness and ease of her culinary secrets to desiring and aspiring cooks in the West. Through the interpretation of such slippery rhetorical turns, Roy illuminates how enmeshed diasporic culinary grammars are with other paradoxes such as the desire for and desired distance from "home," and the comforts and destructions of Western hegemony and advanced capitalism.

Roy's engaging new book leaves us to consider how the postcolonial extends beyond the particular geo-political context of her work. How, for instance, does Roy's focused analysis of the gastronomical grammars of South Asia and its diaspora reflect or extend itself to other (post) colonial grammars? *Alimentary Tracts* paves the way for such work, for a thinking of how gastronomical concerns, so prevalent and recurring in colonial and postcolonial narratives around the globe, might follow other gustatory tracts.

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Branding in Everyday Life

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Melissa Aronczyk and Devon Powers, eds. *Blowing Up the Brand: Critical Perspectives on Promotional Culture*. Peter Lang, 2010. 339 pp.

Blowing Up the Brand, an edited collection originating from a conference of the same name held in New York in 2009, does not so much seek to provide definitions for the brand as it does critically engage with “the increasingly central role of brands in contemporary culture” (5). Extending the line of critique introduced by Andrew Wernick’s seminal book, *Promotional Culture*, which describes “an environment in which capitalist forms of exchange came to dominate all other forms of exchange” (4), *Blowing Up the Brand* takes as its starting point the fact that branding has become a practice ubiquitous among supposedly non-commercial entities, such as educational institutions, political actors and medical devices, in addition to corporations that wish to promote their products and services. By the end of the volume, the reader is left with a great deal more insight into *how* this is so in current times. The collection of studies included spans many dimensions of the debate about how branding has come to shape and influence many dimensions of contemporary politics, culture and society.

The double meaning of the phrase “blowing up” provides insight into the juxtaposition of work included in the volume. One the one hand, it can entail the deconstruction or exploding of an idea and set of practices associated with brands, which have become incredibly influential in communication and management practices in the creative and cultural industries and beyond. To blow up the brand in this sense is to push against the normative notions of promotional culture and commercial communication that have arguably seeped into almost every form of public image management in the contemporary age and to develop critiques of its power. On the other hand, “blowing up” can indicate magnification. From this perspective, the analytical lens is tuned less to pulling apart and challenging normative brand practices, and more to an exercise of better understanding how brands are constructed and operate, that is “perceiving the intricacies” (18) of the brand.

Drawing on Lazarsfeld’s (1941) characterization of two streams of media and communications research, these two meanings of ‘blowing up the brand’ can be aligned more broadly with what might be termed the ‘critical’ and ‘administrative’ approaches to studying brands. The former is aligned with social sciences and humanities ap-

proaches to studying culture, and is rooted in deeper concerns about power, identity and agency. The latter is rooted in management and marketing studies, which aim to contribute to the efficient practices and strategies of organizations that practice branding and institutions that own, or wish to construct, valuable brands.

Despite the play on words and a claim that the aim of the book is to “neither lament nor cheer the branded world” (21), *Blowing Up the Brand* speaks more to the critical than the management tradition, as indicated by its subtitle, *Critical Perspectives on Promotional Culture*. This is not to suggest that brand practitioners are unlikely to find value and relevance in some of the chapters included, but rather to highlight the fact that the critical agenda provides a red thread that pulls the volume together. This is neither one-dimensional nor rigidly compliant to overly deterministic Marxist models of how culture is produced and shaped by political-economy. It takes into account that in order to critique promotional culture in all its forms, it is also necessary to understand its operations, and this requires insight into the practices of branding practitioners, as well as the values that they hold.

Thirteen chapters penned by a cross-section of scholars, both established and emerging, each present new empirical work that ‘blows up the brand’ in a different way; each provides an account of one of the many ways in which promotional culture saturates, and is constantly rearticulated throughout, the flows, practices and spaces of everyday life. These are prefaced by an introduction by editors Melissa Aronczyk and Devon Powers, who outline three key conceptual orientation points. The first, drawing on the work of Adam Arvidsson (2006) and Celia Lury (2004), reiterates that branding is a form of communication that ‘does work’ (i.e., creates value). The second highlights the conceptual place of the public (as an agonal space) in theorizing the brand (as performative). The third, again drawing on the work of Lury, emphasizes that the brand is a site of (inter)activity, an interface between production and consumption, and as such, one that demands new forms of media literacy.

Although there are many links and relationships that can be drawn between the various chapters, for the purposes of this review, I will group the key contributions of the volume into four themes: those that engage with the role that branding plays in forging new forms of social relations, those that problematize questions of power implicit within branding practices, those that critically assess the intersection of branding with individualized subject positions, and those that seek to provide an account of how promotional communication produces affect.

Branded social relations?

Social relationships play out in public spaces, through public debate about matters of

social justice and in exchanges related to the provision and receipt of socio-economic facilities such as education and health care. Engaging with the extent to which promotional culture has shaped consumption practices in public shopping spaces, Arlene Davila reports on an ethnography of a Puerto Rican mall. She argues that credit-fuelled consumption as well as performed sociality in the spaces of the mall allow “Puerto Ricans to protect and project an optimistic image of the island as a modern country with high living standards in reference to an imagined ‘third world’ beyond the island that truly suffers” (111). Graham Knight’s article explores how activist organizations and networks are forced to use the tools of promotional communication and branding in order to “acquire prominence in a public sphere crowded with noisy, competing actors” (190). This raises questions about the freedom and quality of public debate, now that branding has become a stabilizing factor and organizational identity reference point, even for social justice movements.

Considering the broader question of whether education should be marketized, Alison Hearn writes about the ‘Promotional University 2.0’, reviewing the conflicted history of the university and the rise of the ‘corporate university’, which has intensified since the 1990s. Considering case studies of North American universities, “the degree to which image, reputation and branding play a central role in the generation of capital” is considered evidence of the increasing impact of neoliberal values in the education system. Health care, like education, might be considered an area of social life that should remain outside of the ambit of promotionalism. However, as Mary Ebeling demonstrates, “branding contributes to the wider commercialization of medicine” (242). The chapter explores how this happens by focusing on the development of a marketing campaign for a medical device intended to be used off-label for cosmetic purposes in the US. Ebeling concludes that the “direct-consumer marketing of branded medical devices that emphasize consumer choice over medical expertise” aims to “insinuate the brand into the centre of the relationship between a patient and a doctor” (248) – an area that has significant, even life-threatening, implications for health care and the rights associated therewith.

Political-economy and branding

Brands are enmeshed in structures of economic and political power. Liz Moor and Celia Lury, adding to their already seminal individual and joint contributions to critical theories of the brand, outline the “social and technical means through which brands are implicated in the measurement and creation of value” (30). In other words, they discuss the ways in which brands are defined as assets and therefore embody economic power. Considering the central role that ‘value’—at first material and increasingly informational—plays in the organization of neoliberal societies, this is a crucial area for ongoing research. In their chapter, Moor and Lury outline forms of

economic value beyond the financial and analyze corporate brand valuation strategies in order to highlight “their multidimensionality, lack of internal consistency and reference to external measurement standards, and relation to a dynamic space of future possibility” (48). They emphasize that brands are ‘epistemic objects’ precisely due to the ways in which practitioners are able to experiment with definitions and constructions of value. Considering the explicitly political dimensions of communication, John Corner’s chapter provides an account of the ways in which deception has become “professionalized” in political communication, as well as an outline of the key features of “institutionalized deception.” Corner considers the challenges that this poses for critique in its engagement with the ethical and normative dimensions of the role that communication (particularly the carefully managed form of spin common to political communication professionals) plays in democratic societies.

Two other chapters provide explications of seminal case studies of the intersection of branding and political power. Gabriele Cosentino and Waddick Doyle take a close look at the career of Silvio Berlusconi, Italian prime minister and corporate brand, who rose to power precisely due to his canny ability to apply market logic to his rhetoric, as well as strategies of commercial communication to his image management. Cosentino and Doyle argue that “Berlusconi’s main political innovation [is] his capacity to generate and maintain public attention with an innovative use of language, the strategic use of visibility, and the capacity to move across multiple social domains” (225), that is, the ability to function like a brand. Across the Atlantic, Miriam Greenberg examines the relationship between political-economic brands—as embodied in the New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg—and city brands, in particular the revamped city branding campaign for New York City ushered in by the Bloomberg administration. Greenberg shows how the Bloomberg brand was established by his formidable corporate and media experience, which in turn defined his election campaign. This co-evolved alongside the development of a new NYC brand that in turn contributed value to the political identity of its champion. Greenberg concludes that the “utopian urban imaginary” represented in the new NYC brand is “reinforced by the rebranded image of urban politicians” (139).

Subjectivity and promotional culture

Commercial communication in general, and branding in particular, aims to encourage the construction of personal relationships between consumers and the object of their consumption. Subjectivity and identity are thus key arenas of critical concern. Jefferson Pooley’s contribution aims to resurrect an area of scholarship that, although apparently neglected, remains relevant to contemporary studies in promotional culture: “thinking on the twentieth century consuming self,” which highlights the “yearning for individual self-fulfillment through authentic experience.” This cuts to

the heart of the role of subjectivity and the ways in which consumer culture invites us to perform the self through brand attachments. Pooley argues that a contradiction central to contemporary brand culture, namely “the injunction to explore and realize one’s true self is hopelessly mixed up with the demand to treat oneself as an object” (78).

Hongmei Li provides a fascinating account of the ways in which discourses of self-worth and reputation in China shifted from a class-status framework in the decades following the founding of the People’s Republic of China, to a commercially oriented, individualized framework since the 1990s. This move from *chengfen* to *shenja* highlights the particular ways in which marketized discourses have influenced the construction of identity in China, and raises questions about the unique characteristics of this process in other non-Western contexts. Shifting to questions of the subjectivity of producers of brands, Sarah Banet-Weiser and Marita Sturken analyze artist Shepard Fairey’s “creation of a recognizable ‘nonbrand’” and his own status as “an icon of a new form of cultural entrepreneurship whose profile reveals the current relationship of brand culture, postmodern indie remix culture, and neoliberalism” (265). They argue that Shepard Fairey’s model of anti-consumerist cultural entrepreneurship complicates the binary model of consumerism vs. social activism and has created a new meaning of the brand.

Branding effect and affect

Jonathan Gray examines several case studies in order to argue that paratexts such as promotional texts for television shows and films can function as productive sites of meaning that supplement the artistic narrative in the primary texts. From this perspective it is possible to appreciate the ‘culture’ (textual production) that goes into certain forms of promotion and how intertextual brands are produced and operate in very effective ways in the marketplace.

In an important contribution to the study of brands and their relationship to questions of affect, Devon Powers raises questions about the branded soundscape. By focusing on the emotional resonance produced by music, and the significance of music to branding practice, Powers argues that “music is endowed with the power to brand” (287). By reviewing the strategy documents of sonic branding practitioners, Powers makes the case that “the sound of a brand is not simply an addendum to its visuality but is rather a multifaceted terrain of value worthy of consideration on its own terms” (289). How multimodal communication can produce multisensory affect is something as yet understudied in critical literature on branding and is certainly deserving of more attention.

Ultimately, what *Blowing Up the Brand* succeeds in doing is “draw[ing] examples

from a variety of sites to magnify the ways in which brands have become structuring elements of our everyday lives” (3). It is worth noting that the case studies in the book, barring two chapters, are limited to Western contexts, and there is huge scope for more research that explores questions of social relations, political-economy, subjectivity and affect in branding in other cultural and linguistic settings, particularly in the ‘global south’.

The contemporary expansion of branding beyond commercial strategy and into social, individual, political and cultural spheres is convincingly demonstrated by significant empirical evidence presented in *Blowing Up the Brand*. However, an open theoretical question remains (appropriately) unanswered by the volume: to what extent does the conception of branding as a ‘silver bullet’—a ‘one size fits all’ promotional tool appropriated by a variety of social actors in order to achieve power—itsself require scrutiny? What are the possibilities for the deconstruction and discursive dismembering of the concept of the brand itself, and what might be the implications of this project for empirical research about branding practices? Nevertheless, *Blowing Up the Brand* provides a rich and timely cross-section of current critical approaches to commercial communication and promotional culture, and as such, represents a valuable contribution to this evolving field of scholarship.

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The Politics of Culture in *The Late Age of Print*

SEAN JOHNSON ANDREWS

Ted Striphas. *The Late Age of Print: Everyday Book Culture from Consumerism to Control*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009. Print. 272 pp.

With *The Late Age of Print*, Ted Striphas cements his place among the growing number of cultural studies scholars, including public intellectuals like Siva Vaidyanathan and copyright prankster Kimbrew McLeod, who are interested in the contemporary problem of publishing and copyright. Vaidyanathan has written several books on the topic and has a forthcoming exploration of Google generated from his initial interest in the controversy over Google's book search project. Striphas and McLeod recently edited an issue of *Cultural Studies* on intellectual property rights. In *The Late Age of Print*, Striphas' monograph, the author begins a deeper exploration of the original object of copyright's concern: the book.

While issues of copyright and control are still central to his conclusions, Striphas' main object is the historical production of everyday book culture: more specifically, book culture in the United States in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, or what he refers to as "the late age of print." This phrase, borrowed from Jay David Bolter, illustrates Striphas' first premise, meant to counter the conventional wisdom that books, and the U.S. public's reading and buying of them, are in their death throes:

The late age of print, Bolter explains, consists of "a transformation of our social attitudes towards, and uses of, this familiar technology. Just as late capitalism is still vigorous capitalism, so books and other printed materials in the late age of print are still common and enjoy considerable prestige." [...] The phrase points up the tense interplay of persistence and change endemic to today's everyday book culture without necessarily presuming a full-blown crisis exists. (3)

Thus Striphas begins from the premise that books are alive and well, but are also in the midst of a transformation that itself represents a key index to some of the larger changes that have unfolded over the past century. In addition to its role as the bearer of "homogenous empty time" in the "print capitalism" of Benedict Anderson's germinal work on nationalism, Striphas locates the book and the book industry as key

sites of innovation—one of the first to adopt wage labor, one of the few commodities in the early twentieth century that could effectively defy the Protestant injunction against buying on credit, and an early commodity of middle class conspicuous consumption.

Consumer society forms the first pole of the field within which Striphas frames what he sees as the defining characteristics of these social transformations and the book's function as agent and symptom of these changes. Following Lefebvre's *Everyday Life In the Modern World*, Striphas argues that we have moved from a consumer society in the early twentieth century to the present-day realization of what is a version of the "society of controlled consumption...premised on a transformation of the figure of the consumer from subject to object of capitalist accumulation" (183). This dialectic is threaded lightly through the book, but serves mostly as a framing device in the introduction and conclusion.

Chapter one focuses on e-books, framing the controversy over them as a continuation of campaigns in the early 1900s (sponsored by "father of spin" Edward Bernays) to encourage the middle class to buy books (and homebuilders to install bookshelves) that were entwined with a parallel attempt to legislate the circulation of used books outside the market. As an extension of this earlier moment in the history of book culture, e-books are understood as "an emergent technological form by which problems pertaining to the ownership and circulation of printed books are simultaneously posed and resolved" (22).

Though Striphas proposes this historical continuity as part of a broader periodizing claim about a transition from consumerist society to a society of control, his analysis is primarily aimed at illustrating the ways in which profiting from culture as a commodity is a precarious endeavor: it depends on consumers' continued need and desire for the product, their uncompromised respect for property rights, their continued willingness to go out of their way to pay for these products when they are available for free, and their capacity to afford the cost at all. Striphas returns to the problems raised by e-books in his conclusion, but it is unclear exactly how he sees this tension operating differently today than it has at any other moment in the history of capitalist social relations. His strange insinuation is that "consumer society," made possible by rising wages and the shortening of the work week, was both more liberating and the result of capitalism itself (rather than hard won political struggles and worker agitation). This makes the transition to the society of control more foreboding, but it misses the key continuities throughout both periods—not to mention overlooking the agency of politicians, unions, and workers who fought for the earlier benefits he describes (182).

The bulk of Striphas' work in *The Late Age of Print* is devoted to developing a genealogy of different aspects of what, again following Lefebvre, he calls the everyday life of book culture. For Striphas, the everyday life of book culture encompasses:

some of the key conditions under which [habits of thought, conduct, and expression with respect to books] are produced and reproduced. What interests me are the legal codes, technical devices, institutional arrangements, social relations, and historical processes whose purpose is to secure the everydayness of contemporary book culture. [. . .] a key question I want to ask is: How have books come to be perceived as 'everyday entitlements,' that is, objects that pretty much can be counted on to be wherever and whenever we expect them to be? (10-11)

For Striphas, addressing this question involves looking at several key sites where the material arrangements and practical habits of book culture have been produced over the past century or so. Striphas has a surprising ability to tie what appear to be tangential bits of history into a larger story. In this narrative, as would be expected in a study emerging out of cultural studies, Striphas takes what he calls an "extensive approach," which, instead of "situating an object in context," "[treats] the context—a multiplicity of elements—precisely as one's object of study" (14). This is extremely effective at historically contextualizing key aspects of everyday book culture, but at times it risks occluding some fundamental issues.

While Striphas looks at "the ways in which legislation and court cases affect [copyright infringement] and other patterns of book circulation and reception," his interest is largely limited to the context of piracy and attempts on the part of the book industry to control the circulation of "imposter editions." In doing so, he neglects one of the key features structuring the "everydayness" of book culture, namely the banning of books. Given cultural studies' long standing attention to this practice—exemplified, for example, in Hoggart's testimony in the obscenity case for *Lady Chatterley's Lover*—one would expect it to merit at least some mention.

In some ways, this lacunae stems from Striphas' seeming reluctance to directly address the role of social politics or the state. The exception is a section devoted to the GI Bill, where Striphas ties the rise in large corporate bookstores to the growth in the number of students attending college and, hence, to the size of college bookstores—the origin, as it happens, of Barnes and Noble. With the exception of this admittedly fascinating instance in the book, the everyday book culture Striphas explores is almost entirely shaped by economic actors operating in a seemingly autonomous sphere of market relations. The role of civil society or the state in securing these relations—or their conditions of production and reproduction—is rarely, if ever mentioned, even as a controversial prohibitive force for preventing some books from being "wherever

and whenever we expect them to be." Thus, while *The Late Age of Print* clearly means to position itself in conversation with politically committed theorists of culture—Paddy Scannel, Janice Radway, and Meaghan Morris, to name a few—it remains largely apolitical in its conclusions.

Striphas' third chapter interrogates the claim that big chain bookstores are crowding out small independents. Against this widely accepted argument, Striphas argues that there is little empirical evidence to support its claims. He reviews the corporate history of Barnes and Noble, then focuses more closely on one particular North Carolina branch of the chain. Because the branch provided job opportunities to minority builders and workers, Striphas argues that the corporate entity's bookstore in Durham, North Carolina "is but one facet of a much larger struggle to redress socioeconomic and racial disparities" (77); he then impugns white middle class citizens who tried to hold up the construction based on fears about it threatening local bookstores (a belief he has just proven to be a powerful, if unsound, myth) by claiming that they were actually acting in the interests of preserving white privilege.

He concludes that this case provides evidence of the potential civic and cultural utility of the big box store. Yet he casually points out that the only reason Barnes and Noble (a private corporate entity) can be seen as part of this struggle is that the Durham City Council (a public political entity) built and financed the shopping center in which the bookstore would operate with this "socioeconomic redress" in mind, mandating these minority hiring practices. According to Striphas' conclusions in this apparently conflicted account, it is evidence of Barnes and Noble's community-oriented values, an expression of the store's history corporate identity, or an example of what big box booksellers can accomplish, as if similar state mandates and social movements regulated all such construction. In reality, this socioeconomic redress is the result of a political process that Striphas doesn't discuss in detail.

Striphas' subsequent chapter on Oprah's Book Club aims to show that elite, literary-minded critics of the television show fail to understand the cultural role it plays in women's lives. Assuming a domestic housewife in a traditional gender role (where much of her free time is taken up with care of the household), and bracketing the issue of literacy altogether, Striphas praises Oprah's Book Club for "its pragmatic disposition towards books and reading" (138). The club teaches its readers how to find the time to read, how to relate books to their everyday lives, and how "to reflect on how their needs correspond with other's expectations of them, and perhaps even to invent new possibilities for repeating everyday life differently" (128). While his conclusions are in line with Radway's in *Reading the Romance*, he relies entirely, and with very little apparent critical reflexivity, on the organization itself for his evidence, taking quotations from book club readers presented by the Book Club (either in pub-

licity materials or on-screen testimonials), rather than employing any independent ethnographic data. He provides a compelling analysis of why the book club works, but seems overly eager to celebrate it as a cultural institution as such.

In each of these chapters, Striphas' reflex is to take what appear to be contrarian positions in relation to progressive scholarship and criticism in order to evacuate their claims and present what is an almost unequivocal celebration of these dominant cultural trends. This is a strange reflex in each of these cases as it somewhat pushes against his overall organizing tension—that we are moving more towards a society of control—yet he doesn't frame it this way until well after the fact.

His interesting, but not explicitly critical, discussion of Amazon.com fits the main thread of the book tracing the history and institutions that led to the everyday book culture of the present. Amazon, therefore, is best seen as facilitated—and its founder inspired to sell books instead of anything else—by innovations in the infrastructure and organization of the book industry, especially adoption of the ISBN system that catalogs inventory and keeps track of prices internationally.

The final chapter on the Harry Potter series, which draws on some of Striphas' work on Intellectual Property Rights, rounds out his case studies. Here, Striphas seems to hit his stride, outlining the elaborate control mechanisms the Scholastic corporation put in place to police the release of the Harry Potter books. In the final pages of this chapter, exploring some of the politics of piracy and the grey market of international commerce, the book takes some clear positions of public importance. Striphas' impassioned appeal to have us rethink how we see originals and copies in an age of transnational cultural appropriation and transfiguration is a welcome finale to the book.

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The Politics and Erotics of Time

AMBER JAMILLA MUSSER

Elizabeth Freeman. *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*. Duke University Press, 2010. 256 pp.

What does it mean to take pleasure in or to have fantasies about “rubbing up against the past” (xii)? Elizabeth Freeman's *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* weaves together affect studies, critical historiography and politics to nuance our understanding of queer time. Building on Michel Foucault, Dana Luciano, and Jacques Derrida's yoking of modernity with the temporality of nation states and corporations, Freeman argues that alternate formations of time offer the power to disrupt. She describes queer time as a “hiccup in sequential time” that “has the capacity to connect a group of people beyond monogamous, enduring couplehood” (3). For Freeman, queer time is political work: it articulates a separate register from the time of modernity and capitalism; it is a temporality of slowness; and, most importantly, it works on bodies. Indeed, Freeman is most interested in what happens when bodies meet across time.

The corporeal entanglements of the past and present prove particularly enticing for Freeman. The non-sequential interactions produced in experimental film, fiction, and performance art form the ground of queer time and grist for Freeman's close reading. We are led through a dazzling array of queer temporalities, which are experienced through the visual juxtaposition of photographs, the handling of historical objects, inhabiting places with a past, performing practices with a history, and, in one case, actual time travel. Freeman is less concerned with the negative feelings that might accompany temporal dislocation—feelings that other theorists such as Jack Halberstam and Lee Edelman have described in negative terms—than she is invested in the connections and pleasures that these encounters produce. In contrast to melancholy and pain, Freeman focuses on the reparative possibilities that these encounters engender.

Most centrally, *Time Binds* explores the ways that queer time can “fold subjects into structure of belonging and duration” (xi). The first chapter, “Junk Inheritances, Bad Timing” works with Julie Kristeva's concept of Women's Time to illuminate the possible alternate generational time of daughters and domesticity via a reading of several

experimental films and a novel. Freeman argues that these films explore the classed nature of familial intimacy and illuminate queer possibilities by highlighting pleasure as a mode of class struggle. This connection between queer time, politics, and pleasure is at the fore of the readings and arguments offered by Freeman in each of the book's subsequent chapters. The second chapter, "Deep Lez," brings feminism in conversation with LGBT politics through Sharon Hayes's project *In The Near Future* and the civil rights movement by way of the film *Shulie*. In putting these political movements face to face with their failed projects, Freeman explores the seductive undertow of temporal drag. The third chapter, "Time Binds" produces close readings of *Frankenstein*, *Orlando*, and the science fiction film *Sticky Fingers* to explore the ways in the practice of history is infused with tactile pleasures in the joining together of the past and present through what Freeman terms erotohistoriography. The final chapter, "Turn the Beat Around," works through the race play and sadomasochism in Isaac Julien's film *The Attendant* to show the reparative potential of erotohistoriography. Sadomasochism, in this case, provides a way to come to terms with the collective legacies of the transatlantic slave trade through its attention to suspension and slow time.

If reparation is central to Freeman's vision of a political temporality, so, too, is reenactment. In a provocative (and timely) reformulation of Judith Butler's notion of performativity, Freeman presents the concept of temporal drag, which highlights drag's associations with "retrogression, delay, and the pull of the past on the present" (62). Temporal drag illuminates that which is often left ignored in the future-oriented time of performativity; it is the excess of historical signification. Freeman uses temporal drag to examine the generational aspect of the relationship between feminism and queer theory. In a compelling reading of the 1997 film *Shulie*, Freeman illuminates the ways in which Elisabeth Subrin's inhabitation of Shulamith Firestone, in a shot by shot remake of a never screened 1967 documentary, produces moments of harmony alongside moments of smugness and discomfort. The moments of discomfort, Freeman suggests, arise because they "reanimate cultural corpses" (72). Instead of shedding the ghosts of the past, Freeman suggests that the present remains haunted by it, in a particularly queer way. These moments exert a drag on the present and show the failed projects that precede it. In this way Freeman argues we can read the failure of feminism with regard to civil rights and the schism of identity politics vis-à-vis queer theory. Most saliently, Freeman suggests that temporal drag highlights the tactility of our relationship to the past. It is Subrin's demeanor, the subtly changed backgrounds, and the present day context that illuminate these moments of drag; temporal drag is located in the meeting of bodies.

In Freeman's analysis of *The Attendant*, reenactment also plays an important role. Freeman argues that the race play in Julien's film emerges as a set of *tableaux vivants* which rescript history in a mode of erotics so that it can be analyzed and reexperi-

enced as pleasure. The protagonist of Julien's film, the black attendant, engages with the white visitor as an S&M bottom, a form of reenactment that alludes to the treatment of blacks during the transatlantic slave trade. The attendant thus reexperiences a collective history in an erotic mode: "historical memories, whether those forged from connecting personal experiences to larger patterns or those disseminated through mass imagery, can be burned into the body through pleasure as well as pain" (162). Referring to sadomasochism as a mode of erotohistoriography, which sutures affective history to *jouissance*, *The Attendant* presents a temporality of stasis and suspension as a way to produce pleasure and reparative possibilities for the future.

In addition to elegant and radical close readings, *Time Binds* gives us a way to think about pleasure and temporality in combination. Pleasure suffuses the text and emerges as one of queer time's primary modes of disrupting the hegemony of capitalism and modernity. In this way, we might assign Freeman to a genealogy that includes Fredric Jameson, Gilles Deleuze, and Michel Foucault. Where Freeman's work departs from this genealogy is through her attention to the specificity of pleasure and temporality; the working class lesbian generationality of the mothers and daughters of the first chapter is not reducible to the racialized sadomasochistic play that she explores in the fourth chapter. The encounters that Freeman stages are particular in their attention to race, class, gender, and sexuality such that the bodily effects of the temporal collisions have profound implications for thinking about both identity and history. If we take identity to be a mode of mixing the present and the past, then the erotic dimension of Freeman's work offers new possibilities for theorizing affect, identity, and embodiment. Similarly, we have been given tools to theorize history as a mode of producing pleasure, which, in turn, allows us to think critically about what has been omitted and how we might begin to reincorporate these other histories. Theorizing temporality and pleasure in tandem also gives us a way to think about the materiality of temporality and invites us to think about class in a different mode, as "embodied synchronic and diachronic organization" (19). Here, Freeman writes that she "aims ... to restore a differently queer body—the body erotic thought not only in terms of its possibilities for making sexual cultures but in terms of its capacities for labor" (18). Class struggle is figured in terms of both temporality and pleasure. Following Freeman, we might begin to imagine using temporality and pleasure to work through identity and class and the ways in which they overlap and pull apart.

In short, *Time Binds* provides us with close readings of experimental works of film and literature while simultaneously exposing the political stakes of temporality by foregrounding pleasure and the body on both an individual and collective level.

The Trials of Translation: Psychoanalysis and Islam

ALESSANDRA CAPPERDONI

Fethi Benslama. *Psychoanalysis and the Challenge of Islam*. Trans. Robert Bononno. University of Minnesota Press, 2009. 272 pp.

Robert Bononno's English translation of Fethi Benslama's *La psychoanalyse à l'épreuve de l'Islam* is a welcome contribution to debates about the role of religion in the contemporary world at a time when divisions and polarizations occupy a central stage in public rhetoric. A sophisticated psychoanalytic reading of Islamic texts and culture to unravel the "primal fictions of Islam and the workings of its symbolic systems" (vii), the book bears witness to Benslama's reputation as an established psychoanalyst in Paris, where he practices and teaches at the University of Paris VII, and proves to be a refreshing departure from academic studies not grounded in clinical experience and caught up in self-referential academic discourse. The dialogic intent of the book is evident not only in Benslama's courageous engagement with sacred and exegetical texts of the Islamic tradition, as well as its relation to Judaism and Christianity, but also cultural texts and events which symptomatically re-enact unresolved tensions in Islam's symbolic and institutional structures. Freud's theory of the unconscious and his key work on culture, institutions, and the genesis of the law is the primary terrain of Benslama's research, though his approach is markedly Lacanian (his reading of Freud is grounded in Jacques Lacan's key seminars *The Four Fundamental Concepts in Psychoanalysis*, *On Feminine Sexuality: The Limits of Love and Knowledge*, *Le séminaire du nom du père*, and the essays from *Écrits*), and owes much to Jacques Derrida's deconstruction. Benslama addresses the role of psychoanalysis in attending to questions that are not limited to the psyche of the individual but thoroughly engage with the social and the cultural. This is also evident in the cultural work, with which the book is in conversation, on "the interrelations between Europe and Islam through psychoanalysis," whose primary avenue is the journal *Cahiers Inter-signés* Benslama founded in 1990, and to which many psychoanalysts and writers from the Groupe de recherches maghrébines de l'université Paris VII belong.

As the author points out in his preface, the book differs from the body of knowledge of political sociology which, in the last decade, has attempted, without much success, to explain the role of Islam within the modern condition. Benslama's choice of a psychoanalytic approach reflects his belief—as a practicing psychoanalyst as well as

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a Muslim—that a deconstructive approach of Islam’s mythotheologic structures can best shed light on the mechanisms of repression on which institutions are based and explain the dynamics of the unleashing of violence that has increasingly characterized Islamists’ movements since the 1980s. The importance of the contribution of psychoanalysis’ deconstructive action to the production of “the necessary work of culture” (45), in the sense of Freud’s *Kulturarbeit*, to address the unresolved tensions of the present is made clear by the author at several moments of his discussion.

In the first chapter, “The Torment of Origins,” Benslama begins his intellectual investigation of the signifying structures of Islam by unravelling the question of origins as a central question in “the relationship between psyche and civilization” (viii). Reopening the question of origins at a time when Islamist movements reassert the necessary return to an idealized, archaic, and originary temporality, from which Islam has supposedly departed in the course of its history, is essential to understand the role of culture in the symbolization of experience. “The language of Islamist speech,” Benslama notes, “is haunted by the question of origins” (7). This impulse has been misunderstood by most critics as a return of tradition or literal interpretation of the text, rather than “a delusional *appeal* to origin” (26) foreclosing interpretation and the alternative possibilities that a reading of origins opens. This reappropriation of essence, of the “proper” that had been, has convincingly “subjugated many members of the working and middle classes” (10) that the ills of the present are explained through a separation from the “proper” source. The question is one of temporality between sacred and historical time, which cannot be explained through a simple ‘going back to tradition,’ as many Western observers assume. In fact, unlike Muslim fundamentalism (with which it is often conflated), Islamist speech condemns the Muslim world for having regressed to pre-Islamic barbarism, and demands it passes through its origin again—a process the author calls “a point of invagination” (27). In its most radicalized form, “the urge to return to one’s origins is accompanied by a terrifying wish for vengeance in the present” (10), to the point that many are resentful of the fact of being born into modernity.

The “torment of origins” is explained by Benslama as a failure of translation at the moment of Muslim cultures’ sudden entry into modernity. This time of radical transgression suspended between the end of colonialism, the establishment of national governments, and the end of religion as a form of organization of political life is caught between different forces. On one side, a social and cultural elite for whom “the irreverence of the modern world” entertained “the desire to be an other” (2). On the other side, the masses register the failure to translate the sudden advances of technology and the discourse of modernity into the lived experience of the people. Between the promises of modernization of the postcolonial nation and the growth of Islamist fanaticism in the 1980s, therefore, lies a failed symbolization whereby people were

“unable to live out their present experience through an accessible language” (4) and change was not made available to individual and collective representation. With the “failure to implement *Kulturarbeit*” (52), the older order of primary identification is destroyed, only to be replaced by a simulacra of modernity (a Lacanian instance of empty speech). As “the immediacy of tradition to itself is broken and uncoupled from its awareness” (62), a traumatic caesura is experienced in the Muslim subject, a loss of individual and collective anchorage. A sign of this caesura is a new phenomenon that marks a historic mutation in Islam: the entry of science in Islamist discourse—often in the form of pseudoscientific arguments or populist readings of scientific knowledge—to substantiate theological truth. The claim that science has “realized sacred writing” (49) is new to Islam’s history and proves to be a mechanism of autoimmunization against the terrifying feeling that religion, perhaps, no longer holds the finality of meaning. Religion, therefore, is no longer the only referent and proves to be unable to ensure the order of truth. The traditional mode of subjectification of the Muslim subject has been disturbed, thus producing not only the loss of a former coherence (which was not cohesion) but “the undoing of an entire economy of *jouissance*” (51). It is in this context of the radical alienation of the masses that fiercer forces of repression (repression being, in Freud’s analysis, always coupled with civilization) replace the older ones, which Benslama identifies as totalitarian ideology.

Benslama’s revisitation of the Rushdie affair following the publication of *Satanic Verses*, with the discussion of the novel’s subversion of the metaphor of origins and the “reworking of the textual body of the father” (49) leads him to investigate the central role of the father in the theory of religion and the notion of origin not in relation to “truth” but “the impossible” that is the fundamental loss which is part of human experience and which religion, and the illusionary shield it provides, cannot hope to seal. The second chapter, “The Repudiation of Origin,” is indebted to Freud’s *Moses and Monotheism*, where Freud seems to argue for the incompleteness of origin, or “infinite origin,” through the double figure of Moses (the patriarch of the Hebrew people is also an Egyptian foreigner to his own people and thus never “proper”), the theory of the primal father in *Totem and Taboo*, and the theory of religion in *The Future of an Illusion*. Benslama’s close reading of the Book of Genesis highlights the tension between the primal father (following Freud’s use of Meyer’s thesis for whom the Jewish tribes “borrowed their god from the Arabs,” 70) and the Father-of-Genesis as different deployments of *jouissance*. The primal father, Benslama argues, establishes a symbolic order based on the acceptance of “unlimited *jouissance* and recognition of the radical alterity of the Other” (73); and Abraham, the Father-of-Genesis (a central figure to the formation of Islam), represents the site of “imaginary omnipotence” (73), whose renunciation will be concluded through the pact of circumcision and the covenant. The genesis of the father is particularly relevant to Islam’s tradition, for which the staging and restaging of father-son relation is central to its symbolic system

and establishes the monotheistic relation of the national to filiation. In Benslama's reading, this logic of paternity is a necessary translation of god's originary "withdrawal" as non-place and outside paternal relations, and is inscribed in language and lack. It links Abraham, the father of the monotheism, and Ishmael, the father of the Arab nation ("but solely because the Prophet said it," 75), to the orphan status of the Father of Islam ("orphan" is also the god of Islam's call to Muhammad). The lack of the father is transformed into phallic jouissance through linguistic inscription in the name and the flesh. Yet, it ultimately needs the gift of the child to establish his position.

Here the author's discussion turns to a central question within Islamic religion for contemporary Muslim societies: the role of the feminine in the genealogical construction, and subversion, of the father and the position of women in society. Two figures of the maternal play a significant role within the phallic economy of monotheism: Sara and Hagar. Their apparent oppositionality, which, in fact, is necessary to establish man as father ("between-two-women," 97), is reread by Benslama as a differential position toward jouissance in relation to the gift, rather than the question of mastery and jealousy often commented upon. In this narrative which foregrounds the mother as fiction, the womb of the slave is used to restore patriarchy. But if Sara represents the Other woman through her relationship to phallic jouissance (she "lacks" in god), Hagar (Ishmael's mother) is the radical alterity of flesh, the seer and "other woman" whose clairvoyant power is close to Lacan's description of female access to radical jouissance in *Seminar XX*, and whose disruptive power is a threat to the house of the father. The question of the other woman haunts Islamic representations of origins. Not only is Hagar absent from the Koranic text, but the question of the feminine is restaged "on a path between two women" (112) in the biographical narrative of the Prophet. The textual containment of the feminine is the attempt to control the other woman—the excess of her radical otherness. It is this containment that Benslama reads in contemporary debates about the veil. Within Islamic theology, the author notes, the veil is not a sign. Instead, it is the response to the threat of the eye: "woman becomes an irradiating sexual eye that had to be shut"; at the same time, she is "the obscure object of desire" and "the promise of infinite unveiling" (132). Here Benslama's argument is not fully convincing as it does not seem to take into account the dynamic nature of the veil. The veil may not be a sign within Islamic theology, but it is taken up as such in the social, for example by Muslim immigrant women or Muslim women fighting colonial rule. This dynamic has been explored by many feminist critics, and perhaps most convincingly by Winifred Woodhull's rereading of Franz Fanon. Yet feminist engagements remain marginal to Benslama's discussion. Finally, the repression of female alterity, and its textual subversion, is attended to in the last chapter of the book, "Within Himself," in relation to a central text of literature, *The Arabian Nights*, which also provides an opportunity to discuss the question of mas-

culine narcissism that the narrative structure of repetition both enacts and disrupts.

Benslama's effort to reread the primal fictions of Islam within the framework of psychoanalysis is commendable. The book is the result of many years of research in light of a close observation of the drastic changes, and continuing challenges, the Muslim world is undergoing. While it sometimes suffers from a lack of cohesion between its chapters, it provides readers with an important alternative to the impasse of political sociology. The notion of "trial" of the title (*épreuve*), borrowed from Antoine Berman's seminal essay on translation, is well chosen for a text that not only discusses the failed translation of modernity within the symbolic order of the Muslim world and the translation of the father in Islamic texts, but also highlights the ethical import of productively placing psychoanalysis and Islam in dialogue.

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On the Loss of Feminism

MICHELLE MEAGHER

Angela McRobbie. *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change*. Sage, 2009. 192 pp.

A scholar very much rooted in the tradition of British cultural studies, Angela McRobbie first turned her attention to the figure of "the girl" in an important set of analyses of magazines aimed at working class British girls. Her work on the 1970s periodical *Jackie* explored the ideologies of working class femininity embedded in popular culture aimed at girl readers and identified the centrality of romantic individualism: a sort of every-girl-for-herself in the pursuit of a boyfriend. In the 1980s, she began to examine surprising and welcome shifts in girls' magazines, shifts largely owing to the integration of feminist rhetoric—if not feminist politics—into juvenile popular culture. If *Jackie* promoted a romantic individualism structured around the pursuit of an appropriate male partner, by the 1980s, magazines like *Just Seventeen* promoted a different kind of femininity. By downplaying boyfriends and husbands-to-be, and instead emphasizing self-care, experimentation, and self-confidence, girls' magazines seemed evidence of the integration of feminist common sense into the wider cultural field. By the 1990s, McRobbie argued that the magazine industry might be viewed as a key site of knowledge transfer, especially as the industry appealed to and recruited from feminist-influenced graduates.

In her most recent book, *The Aftermath of Feminism*, McRobbie reflects on what she now sees as her overly optimistic declaration of feminism's success. "I attributed too much hope," she writes, "in the capacity of the world of women's magazines to take up and maintain a commitment to feminist issues" (4-5). She describes her work and the work of other feminist cultural and media scholars as over-enthusiastic and as potentially complicit with forms of popular feminism that she now identifies as central to the undoing of feminism as a political project. Although the book often reads as a *mea culpa*, it is also a valuable reflection on the impact of theoretical trends that shaped both cultural studies and feminist cultural studies in the 1980s and 90s. Buoyed by cultural theory that searched for and celebrated acts of subversion and transgression, feminist scholars were keen to find feminism in everyday culture, including popular culture. In the process, notes McRobbie, the commitment of a leftist feminist politics to dismantle large-scale oppressive or regulative structures has too often fallen to the wayside.

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Although the book takes the girl as a key object, and is surely an important addition to the vibrant field of girl studies, the subject of the book is ultimately those “new modes of regulative gender power” (115) that cohere around the figure of the girl. Influenced by Pierre Bourdieu’s analysis of the social field, McRobbie asks important questions about the social field(s) into which young women are habituated. These are fields, she argues, in which the liberation of (white, middle class, mainly heterosexual, Western or Western-bound) women is taken for granted. These are fields shaped by a new sexual contract that encourages girls and young women to take advantage of the opportunity to study, to gain qualifications, and to work; a sexual contract that encourages them to control their fertility, to explore their sexuality, and to participate avidly in consumer culture. In this context, the girl is no longer adequately conceived as a disciplinary subject in the Foucauldian sense but instead emerges as a site of luminous potential. Using this language of luminosity, borrowed from Gilles Deleuze, McRobbie argues that girls are interpellated into subject positions that endow them with limitless capacities, but these capacities are distanced from the new global economy that produces and carefully regulates the girl. Central to *Aftermath* is the insistence that contemporary celebrations of girlhood as a site of luminous potential ought not be celebrated as signs of feminist success. Though it seems to secure and even promote gender freedom, the new sexual contract offered to girls ultimately secures a carefully delineated “feminine citizenship” (54) that benefits right-leaning consumer culture, feeds a capitalist labour market, and ultimately contributes to what postcolonial feminist scholar Chandra Mohanty calls the re-colonization of culture and identities. McRobbie reads the emergence of a new sexual contract, its multiple technologies of girlhood, its normalized pathologies of femininity, and the related widespread gender- and class-based symbolic violence in popular culture as symptoms of a post-feminist culture.

A hotly contested term of reference in the field of women’s, gender, and feminist studies, post-feminism is understood by some to be simply a term of periodization (denoting the period following the demise of second-wave feminism); others use it to indicate an emergence of new forms of feminism (third-wave feminism). McRobbie, however, sides with those for whom post-feminism is equated with anti-feminism. On this view, the “feminism” that informs post-feminist popular culture and cultural theory is a “faux feminism” (1). For McRobbie, feminism must always be tied to larger radical democratic political movements. Shaped by neoliberalism, post-feminism’s “feminism” is organized around notions of choice, empowerment, and personal gain that are deeply individualizing. Post-feminism, then, is founded upon a double movement that pushes away, rejects, and disavows feminism as a *collective political movement* in the same instant that it appears to support its demands.

In what I take to be *Aftermath*’s most rewarding chapter, “Top Girls? Young Women

and the New Sexual Contract,” McRobbie describes the ways in which neoliberal economic policies have supported (and indeed depend upon) women’s labour participation, increased education, reproductive freedom, and global mobility. The modes of independence that result from these liberties stand as significant challenges to traditional gender relations. In response, however, McRobbie argues that the Symbolic, understood here in the Lacanian sense as both the source of sexual identifications and patriarchal authority, moves quickly to reassert its power. The Symbolic “allows itself to be dispersed” and “discharges (or maybe franchises) its duties to the commercial domain” (61). In the moment that women seem to have attained many of the freedoms most aggressively demanded by second-wave feminism, a vigorous commercial culture steps in to re-secure the terms of traditional gender relations.

The new sexual contract produces new subjectivities, each produced in a particular zone or “space of attention” (58). A post-feminist masquerade is produced by the fashion-beauty complex; the working girl is produced by the spaces of education and labour, the spaces of sexuality and reproduction produce a phallic girl, and a global political culture that turns on increasing mobility produces the global girl. Although the chapter would benefit from a more thorough working through of some of the subject positions described here, McRobbie nonetheless offers compelling arguments about the ways in which young women are drawn into the double movement that characterizes post-feminism. I was particularly struck by her descriptions of a post-feminist masquerade, understood as “a new form of gender power which re-orchestrates the heterosexual matrix in order to secure, once again, the existence of patriarchal law and masculine hegemony” (64). Nostalgic, retro, and apparently light-hearted performances of glamour by post-feminist fashionistas are read here through Judith Butler and psychoanalyst Joan Riviere to suggest that this theatricalized femininity, though posed as a matter of personal choice and playfulness, also plays into the demands of a fashion-beauty complex. Practices that might be read as transgressive and subversive can also work to lock young women into what McRobbie calls “new-old dependencies and anxieties” (10).

McRobbie argues that feminism as a political project has been removed from the political imaginary, disconnected from the contemporary, and disarticulated from the field of radical democratic politics, only to be replaced by a faux feminism characterized by misleading and often damaging declarations of girl power. Ultimately, the point of *Aftermath* is to draw attention to the ways in which the feminist complaint has been rendered irreconcilable with those social fields into which young women are habituated. Drawing on both popular and scholarly texts, McRobbie argues that feminism is the object of disavowal and caricature; when it is not ignored, it is depicted as having relevance only to a faraway place or a faraway time. Gender mainstreaming in political institutions and public agencies places the need for feminist activism

in the past. The increasing deployment of postfeminism within feminist scholarship contributes to the dismantling of a political and intellectual tradition that has at its core a commitment to unveiling established power and gender hierarchies. *The Aftermath of Feminism* thus reminds readers that the urge to celebrate feminism's apparent political successes is premature, in popular and scholarly settings alike.

“Erring on the Side of Democracy”: Nations, Modernities and Disputations

HUGH CHARLES O'CONNELL

Partha Chatterjee. *Empire and Nation: Selected Essays*. Columbia University Press, 2010. 384 pp.

In the introduction to this collection of Partha Chatterjee's writings, Nivedita Menon states, “I am one of those whose engagement with the contemporary has been utterly transfigured by reading Partha Chatterjee's work over the years” (1). This volume collects essays that engage with the central concerns of Chatterjee's *oeuvre*, including the development and limits of postcolonial nationalism, the provincializing of the theories and histories of modernity and the development and implementation of the “political society” as a theory and actually-existing site of democratic engagement—among many others—that have put Chatterjee at the forefront of the study of Indian history and politics, cultural studies and postcolonial studies for the last twenty-five years. As an overarching compendium of essays that are organized thematically rather than chronologically, it provides a crucial supplement to Chatterjee's major works: *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (1986), *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (1993) and *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (2006). Significantly, the non-chronological approach directs the central concerns that have occupied Chatterjee's longer works to coincide and interrogate one another, allowing new insights to form and seemingly finished ideas to jettison off in new directions.

While always grounded in the particularities of Indian history and governance, the essays grouped together here ask questions that are transposable beyond this context, at least in their asking if not in their findings. Indeed, Chatterjee's own summation of the work of the Subaltern Studies Group announces this very aspect of their methodology: “Having travelled from Italy to India, the idea of subaltern history has now produced a generally available methodological and stylistic approach to modern historiography that could indeed be used everywhere” (301). Even when writing on the specific case of the rise of Hindu nationalism in Indian politics, Chatterjee's

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questioning of whether secularism is an enviable or even viable alternative to religious fundamentalism provides an analogue for debates elsewhere. Arguing for a concept of tolerance over secularism, Chatterjee reminds us of the secularism of historical fascist movements as well as the relative ease with which a majority religion can mask itself in the progressive discourse of secularism: "The Hindu right in fact seeks to project itself as a principled modernist critic of Islamic or Sikh fundamentalism, and to accuse the 'pseudo-secularists' of preaching tolerance for religious obscurantism and bigotry" (205). By adopting this position as the mouthpiece of enlightened progress, the Hindu right becomes the voice of the state on matters of religion in India. Here, an all too obvious parallel can be drawn for readers in the United States, as Chatterjee reminds us of "the very real theoretical possibility that secularization and religious tolerance may sometimes work at cross-purposes" (206). By moving from the concrete example of the Hindu right in India to the abstract terms of liberal democracy, this last is not only a reminder for south Asian nations and communities, but should also be kept in mind in Europe and the Americas as religious tolerance is threatened by a particularly virulent pro-Christian pseudo-secularism.

Alongside the issues of religious tolerance, secularization and democracy, perhaps the most pertinent aspect of Chatterjee's text given current debates between postcolonialism and globalization theories is his reminder of the power the nation-state still holds on the popular imagination as well as its productivity as a continued site of a politics that privileges difference over universality. In this vein, Chatterjee avers that:

...for certain strategic reasons which have to do with the politics of theoretical intervention, I will insist that the journey that might take us beyond the nation must first pass through the currently disturbed zones within the nation-state; and that in fact a more satisfactory resolution of the problems within could give us some of the theoretical instruments we are looking for to tackle the questions beyond. (165)

For Chatterjee, there is a very real fear that by taking up the cause of populations left out of civil society whose rights are not recognized by the state, the transnational actors (NGOs, human rights organizations, United Nations agencies, etc.) "whose moral claims derive from the assumed existence of a universal society" essentially end up modeling the imperialist logic of "the moral-cultural drive to spread 'modernity' throughout the world" (176).

Opposed, then, to this framework of a universal "global modernity" that is predicated on the logic of a global civil society, Chatterjee privileges an opening of the spaces of political society, which present the potential for real democracy through localized action. As such, the "spectre of pure politics" raised by political society presents not

a prepackaged concept of democracy, but instead opens a space between civil society and the state where "the certainties of civil-social norms and constitutional properties are put under challenge" (201). Consequently, political society simultaneously raises both the threat and promise of democracy: "Rights and rules have to be, seemingly, negotiated afresh.... There is violence in the air. Not everything that happens here is desirable or worthy of approval" (201). But as such, it is a site that breaks the yoke of a universal modernity and allows for postcolonial nations to be producers of their own modernities and democracies. In the end, between the threat of global modernity and the pure politics of political society, Chatterjee chooses to "err on the side of democracy," while all the while remembering that "Those who dream of building the new democratic society must aspire to be greater story writers than god" (235, 201).

My only real note of complaint with this text comes not in the quality of its arguments, but instead in the structuring of the collection; while the nonchronological organization of *Empire and Nation* does bring to light new points of comparison in Chatterjee's thought, at the same time the seemingly arbitrary re-distribution of the essays into three discrete categories limits the potential of this reorganization and closes off some of the possibilities that it would otherwise allow for. The structure of the volume is divided amongst those constitutive aspects of the history of modernity that Chatterjee's work responds to through a tripartite structure of: [a] Empire and Nation [b] Democracy and [c] Capital and Community. However, while these are certainly major themes in Chatterjee's corpus, the logic by which these divisions were made and substantiated is not clear and the reasoning for aligning the essays with one concept over another is similarly absent. Without this explanation, the divisions feel capricious and unnecessary, and as such, they ultimately impinge on the book's strengths such that the comingling of ideas from different periods in Chatterjee's work, and the possibilities which arise from reading in this way, are ultimately arrested. The divisions attempt to give some conceptual order to the flow of the essays, but the most positive attribute of this volume is its breaking of the limits of the chronological chain of Chatterjee's work and its departure from the more specific, focused queries of his longer works.

The conceptual intermixing that this non-chronological ordering encourages allows us to read and think the limits of "The Nationalist Resolution of the Women's Question" from 1986, for example, alongside later works dealing with the development of the political society in India from the later 1990s and early-2000s, as referenced above. Ostensibly, according to the logic of the collection, these essays fall into different registers of Chatterjee's thought, the former under the rubric of "Nation and Empire" and the latter under "Democracy," but there is no clear explanation in the volume for why this should be so. So while Chatterjee contends in the essay on the "Woman's Question," that neither the state nor the civil society of the nationalist

bourgeoisie are able to continue the necessary work of a feminist politics, it would seem that it is precisely the lack of such an institutional space in this instance that provides the grounds for Chatterjee's later development of the political society where "the certainties of civil-social norms and constitutional properties are put under challenge" by minority religious populations, thus opening the space where "Rights and rules have to be, seemingly, negotiated afresh" (201). What was posited as a conceptual dead end in the former essay can therefore find new life through the development of the categories of the latter essays. While my concern with the text's organization may seem a minor quibble, or even worse overly nit-picky, these divisions seem to arrest the free-flowing intellectual permissiveness that is otherwise enabled by this collection by walling off Chatterjee's ideas as of different conceptual concerns; what the collection enables with its break from chronology it ultimately reinstates through its introduction of section divisions as a conceptual apparatus.

Compiled editions of previously published works can be a tricky thing to pull off well. Often times they seem to suggest datedness by way of canonicity, something similar to a "best-of" recording by a band that (re)markets the familiar and the already known. As such, collections of this sort simultaneously risk announcing the importance of the author's ideas, while at the same time, potentially or inadvertently, relegating them to the library stacks of history. That is, while in today's cultural climate, the fetishization and marketing of the new finds its way into academia through the announcement of the next big idea or the new theory of "x" or, all too commonly, as the promotion of a new "post-" that renders all that came before it obsolete and quaint, a collection of previously published works can seem inert and finished. The editors at Columbia University Press are able to stave this off by including some of Chatterjee's more well-known essays, such as the first included essay "Whose Imagined Community?" alongside lesser known essays and even those newly translated by the author such as "A Brief History of *Subaltern Studies*," which will undoubtedly prove of interest to readers. Perhaps more luckily for Chatterjee's publishers and certainly for his readers, however, is that even Chatterjee's most well-known work manages to come off as fresh and provocative. Ultimately, by bringing old and new ideas together, I found myself newly inspired by the re-reading of familiar pieces and intrigued and challenged by those that were unfamiliar.

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