

SEXING THE ECONOMY

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Regenia Gagnier, *The Insatiability of Human Wants: Economics and Aesthetics in Market Society*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 2000; 264 pp; £10.50 paperback.

In one of her earlier books *Idylls of the Marketplace: Oscar Wilde and the Victorian Public* (1986), Regenia Gagnier demonstrated the complex, ironic relations between Wilde's brand of aestheticism and late-Victorian consumerism. Her most recent book *The Insatiability of Human Wants* offers a much broader and more ambitious historical analysis of the relations between economic and aesthetic discourses from the Enlightenment to the present. Her analysis functions in part as a critique especially of neoclassical economics, which, after the so-called marginalist revolution of the 1870s and 1880s, abandoned much of the social-critical dimension of earlier economic thinking.

Symptomatic of the transition of economics to a mathematised social science focused on marginal utility as the standard of value was William Stanley Jevons's rejection of the word 'political' from the earlier name for the discipline: 'political economy'. As Gagnier puts it, in contrast to earlier economic thinking from John Stuart Mill back to Adam Smith, neoclassical economics has entailed 'the decoupling ... of wealth and welfare' (32). It has also entailed the decoupling of conceptions of economic demand or desire from aesthetic taste. As Gagnier notes, a book like *Accounting for Tastes* by Nobel Prize economist Gary Becker is precisely not about taste in the sense of aesthetic discrimination. Instead, as do the other neoclassical economists, Becker treats the capitalist marketplace as a level playing field in which equally equipped or moneyed individual consumers make equally valid rational choices among goods and services. Aesthetics has no more to do with this model than do social class, gender, or race. Individuals' supposedly rational choices or preferences can be measured as economic demand, but cannot be interpreted or explained in aesthetic, ethical, or for that matter political terms.

In part, Gagnier wants to restore an aesthetic dimension to economics. In so arguing, she follows in the tradition of what she calls, echoing John Ruskin, 'the political economists of art'. Ruskin was one, and so were William Morris and Oscar Wilde. Although she indicates, as she did earlier in *Idylls of the Marketplace*, some of the formal and thematic parallels between marginalist (or emergent neoclassical) economics and late-Victorian aestheticism, which to many of its interpreters has seemed also characterised by the attempt, at least, to divorce art from social, political, and moral critique (as suggested by the slogan, 'art for art's sake'), she argues persuasively

that, in part through its emphasis on taste, aestheticism retained a socially critical function that economics was losing. This was certainly the case with Ruskin and Morris (the latter was a Marxist after all, albeit a romantic one, and Ruskin has figured in several histories of British socialism). Wilde, too, penned 'The Soul of Man under Socialism,' which is at least half-serious about socialism as an alternative to capitalism.

The Insatiability of Human Wants almost functions as a history of alternatives to orthodox economics, at least in the British context. If it is not quite that, it is because Gagnier is just as interested in tracing representations and patterns of economic rationalisation, consumerism, desire, and aesthetic taste in nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature (as, for example, in her fascinating albeit brief analysis of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*). She brings to life, however, such intriguing figures as William Thompson and Anna Wheeler, whose 1825 *Appeal of One Half of the Human Race, Women, Against the Pretensions of the Other Half, Men, to Retain Them in Political, and Thence in Civil and Domestic Slavery* expressed both an early version of radical feminism and Owenite socialism. As Gagnier notes, 'This example from the Owenite socialists indicates how multifariously' early nineteenth-century intellectuals 'contested the values of market society' (76). By no means do the alternatives to orthodox economics boil down to Marx and Engels. Among those usually categorised as orthodox, both Thomas Malthus and David Ricardo understood (in contrast to today's neoclassical economists) that there were limits to economic growth or the expansion of capitalism and industrial production. And John Stuart Mill, also ordinarily categorised as orthodox, shed both his father's strict utilitarianism and equally strict belief in the virtues of unrestricted free trade to become an advocate both of cooperative socialism and of feminism. As Gagnier points out, both Adam Smith and Mill feared that 'the social emotions of sympathy and altruism ... would be obliterated by market society' (67), the theme also of Charles Dickens's industrial novel *Hard Times*, with its insistence on the interdependence of ethics and aesthetics.

As itself a version of alternative economics (or of Ruskin's 'political economy of art'), *The Insatiability of Human Wants* points to the consequences of economic rationalisation and reification in our own time. Economists neglect 'the aesthetic dimension' at their and our peril. As Dickens insisted in *Hard Times*, a just and humane society must also be one that allows for the expression of imagination and the exercise of taste. 'If we are prepared to say that Marxism is dead,' Gagnier writes in the conclusion to her challenging analysis, 'and that Smith's sympathy and Mill's progressivism are discredited, are we also prepared to make the image of our future ... [Francis] Fukuyama's "infinitely diverse consumer culture" or Pater's "flood of external objects", or just the solipsistic individualism of "each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world"?' (234). It is that last dessicated image from Pater that *homo economicus* seems to have been reduced to in our era of relentless downsizing, outsourcing, and

transnational corporate greed.

It would be good if economists, and not just literary and cultural historians like myself, would read Gagnier's study of the complex historical intertwinings and 'decouplings' of 'economics and aesthetics in market society'. Most neoclassical economists seem to be uninterested in the history of their discipline. They seem even less interested in alternative versions of economic theory. As feminist economist Dianne Strassman remarks, 'dissent' in today's college and university economics departments 'is labelled not economics and is suppressed'. This is unfortunate. Without an understanding of and, indeed, respect for alternatives, the outcome is what Friedrich Nietzsche for one insisted is a thoroughly irrational fetishising of 'the factual' and of the status quo. Gagnier's study opens many intellectual windows, revealing both the rich diversity of alternatives - most of them related in one way or another to aesthetics - and the limits of marginalist and neoclassical economics. It is a book that all economists could benefit from reading; I am going to purchase additional copies to send to Gary Becker and, perhaps, to the Chairman of the US Federal Reserve, Allen Greenspan.

MOBILE HOMES

Tony Bennett

David Morley, *Home Territories: Media, Mobility and Identity*, London and New York, Routledge, 2000, 340pp; £14.99 paperback.

‘A home,’ Didier Maleuvre writes, ‘is not simply a house. It is an image of how we dwell, how we inhabit the world, how we view ourselves in the world’.¹ The context for these remarks is Maleuvre’s discussion of the nineteenth-century bourgeois interior. He suggests we should treat this as an anthropological document which, in telling us what it was like to dwell in the nineteenth century, also tells us what it was like to *be* in the nineteenth century. It tells us, as he puts it, ‘about the ontological (and therefore sociological, psychological, historical) self-grounding of a particular society at a particular historical juncture’.² This is so, however, only provided that we know how to read the idealisation of the bourgeois interior as a compensation for the new forms of homelessness that were produced by the massive relocations of rural populations associated with the first wave of industrialisation. Far from supporting stable patterns of domesticity, industrialisation ‘prohibits dwelling permanently’ in the unending uprooting of labour that its development entails. ‘Only in the midst of such dire homelessness’, Maleuvre concludes, ‘does the image of the snow-blanketed, thatched-roofed cottage, windows aglow with the promise of a warm hearth, have a sentimental appeal’.³

The perspective informing these remarks derives from Maleuvre’s view that how the home is constructed - how it is organised, viewed, and represented - offers an insight into different social and cultural forms of accommodation to (after Heidegger) the essential uprootedness of human existence. This is also Morley’s concern in *Home Territories*, but with the important qualification that his application of this perspective to the relations between homes and the intensified and geographically extended forms of labour mobility prevailing at the end of the twentieth century throws light on a vastly expanded repertoire of the relations between home and movement. And not least because, in Morley’s analysis, homes themselves become mobile. Although, in much of the earlier literature, the home had been seen as always connected to movement - as a place from whence movement initiates and to which it returns - it has often been viewed as itself a fixed and stable point of reference, affected by movement but not in movement itself. Agnes Heller’s influential account of the role of home in providing an ontological grounding for everyday life is a case in point. ‘Integral to the average everyday life is awareness of a fixed point in space, a firm position from which we “proceed” (whether every day or over larger

1. Didier Maleuvre, *Museum Memories: History, Technology, Art*, Stanford CA, Stanford University Press, 1999, pp119-20.

2. *Ibid.*, p120.

3. *Ibid.*, p120.

periods of time) and to which we return in due course. This firm position is what we call “home”.⁴ For Morley, by contrast, an adequate approach to the full range of contemporary practices of home, as these are defined in relation to increasingly international patterns of movement, requires a deterritorialisation of home. Stressing the need for ‘a more plurilocal concept of home’, he suggests that we need to think about home less as ‘a singular physical entity fixed in a particular place’ and more as ‘a mobile, symbolic habitat, a performative way of life and of doing things in which one makes one’s home while in movement’ (46-7).

It is, however, more than the household as home that is at issue for Morley here. He also has his eye on the wider set of questions prompted by the relations between movement and home that arise from the broader currency of ‘home’ associated with its application to the territory of a region or nation, as well as that of household. To put the point more accurately, it is the cross-overs between these different meanings of home - and the ways in which these inform one another in the different practices of home that are caught up in the histories of immigration, of refugees and asylum seekers, and of varied diasporas - that concern him. His focus, as he summarises it, ‘is thus on the mutually dependent processes of exclusion and identity construction, in relation to the domestic home, the neighbourhood and the nation as “spaces of belonging”’ (p4). And the political horizon informing these concerns is provided by Morley’s assessment of the need for a postmodern geography that will be able to connect what, following Foucault, he calls the ‘little tactics of the habitat’ to the ‘grand strategies of geo-politics’ (p3). He seeks to do this by examining the dialectic between practices of home, their link to processes of identity formation and their dependence on practices of othering and exclusion operating across reciprocally reinforcing boundaries of nations, ethnicities, regions, religions, cultures and civilisations. And it is to his credit that he avoids the metropolitan bias that is often associated with these concerns by encompassing the practices of home of indigenous populations who have been obliged to reach an accommodation with the invasive movement of others in the history of colonialism.

Home Territories is, as a result, nothing if not ambitious in the scale of its conception. Morley is, of course, no stranger to issues focused on the relations between home and nation. This was an important focus of his and Charlotte Brunsdon’s study of *Nationwide*,⁵ while the use of the media in domestic settings was the central concern of *Family Television*.⁶ The legacy of these earlier areas of work is evident in the attention he gives to the shifting relations between the media and practices of home (understood in their relations to domestic, national and regional territorialisations), especially insofar as these concern the changing dynamics of gender, both within the household and in relation to the varied gendered forms in which the nation-as-home is imagined. There is, though, also a significant broadening of Morley’s focus as his discussion encompasses these issues in a wide range of

4. Agnes Heller, *Everyday Life*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984, p239.

5. Charlotte Brunsdon and David Morley, *Everyday Television: Nationwide*, London, British Film Institute, 1979.

6. David Morley, *Family Television: Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure*, London, Comedia, 1986.

national contexts and, in the process, brings questions of ethnicity fully into play alongside those of gender and class. It is, however, Morley's insertion of this wider set of relations between the media and the formation of identities within a nuanced account of the relations between travel and dwelling in a world of fluid and changing boundaries that delivers a reach to match the ambition of his enterprise. For this allows him to connect his specific concerns to the more general re-orientations of contemporary social theory evident in the stress now placed on mobilities, borders and boundaries.

Home Territories is, in these respects, a book of its times, with - for me - a couple of general features that are especially valuable.⁷ The first is the sense of theoretical and political balance that informs Morley's discussion throughout the book. If anxious to press the case for rethinking the home - as household and, metaphorically, as nation - from the point of view of new theories of travel, he is careful not to press that case too far. His discussion of the mobile practices of home that are evident in some diasporic formations thus does not result in any neglect of the senses in which, for many caught up in histories of travel, home remains elsewhere, serving as a place of origin and a place of imagined return and final rest. Nor does Morley fall into the trap of valorising movement over stasis: he is as robust in his criticisms of uncritical celebrations of cosmopolitanism as he is in his rebuttal of the tendency to latch diaspora theory onto standpoint epistemology as a means of generating - in the figure of the nomad - yet another in a long line of epistemologically privileged social positions. And if he rightly stresses the greater fluidity of borders that characterises some contexts - inter-state mobility within Europe, for example - he is careful to point to the emergence of new borders and boundaries in the phenomenon of 'white flight' and the emergence of gated communities, while also noting the contradictions between the putatively 'free air' rhetoric of globalisation and the increased policing of international boundaries that is evident in 'First-World' responses to the current refugee crisis.

It is also an extraordinarily accessible book. As I have already indicated, there are few concerns in contemporary social and cultural thought that *Home Territories* does not engage with. The politics of difference, Europe and its others, the changing forms of the city, the changing relations of space and time characterising postmodern geographies, the contested politics of diaspora, changing conceptions of citizenship: all of these are among the issues that Morley factors into his account of the changing and varied experience of being 'at home' in the modern world. But his mode of engagement with these issues is always concrete and vividly illustrated, allowing the reader to hook into and connect with a wide range of debates through the thread of home that connects them. And, in the extensive literature he draws on and quotes from, Morley has a good eye for the arresting image that will help drive his point home. Adorno's persistence in using German as a means of preserving some sense of home during his

7. There is much interesting common ground between *Home Territories* and John Urry, *Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-first Century*, London and New York, Routledge, 2000 (reviewed in *new formations* no. 43).

exile in the United States (47); James Joyce's reference to his wife Nora as his 'portable Ireland' - his 'home away from home' - as a telling abbreviation of the gendered associations of home (65); and the Barbadian flag stuck to the door of an immigrant family's home to establish the boundary which said that 'whenever we entered the house we were not English - we were in Barbados and would behave accordingly' (Gary Younge, cited p52) are all examples of what I have in mind here.

That said, it's also true that Morley quotes too much and too often, so that his discussion often has the feel of a literature review. He rarely makes a point without putting it in someone else's name - which, while an eloquent tribute to his modesty, is a shame, for when he speaks in his own voice he is usually worth listening to. And, to complete my list of gripes, each chapter has too many sections, dividing the reader's attention between too many discrete issues at the price of some loss of flow and direction in the development of the argument. But, viewed in the round, *Home Territories* is a major accomplishment - and a very good read.

PHILOSOPHY REFLECTING CULTURE

David Cunningham

Peter Osborne, *Philosophy in Cultural Theory*, Routledge, London and New York, 2000, 146pp; £40.00 cloth, £12.99 paperback.

In his *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, Hegel marks a division within the modes of 'scientific consideration' applied to the subject of art, 'each of which appears to exclude the other, and so to hinder us from arriving at *any true result*'. On the one hand, he writes,

we see the science of art merely, so to speak, busying itself about the actual productions of art from the outside, arranging them in series as a history of art ... or sketching out theories intended to provide the general points of view that are to govern both criticism and artistic production. On the other side we see science abandoning itself independently to reflection upon the beautiful, and producing mere generalities which do not touch the work in its peculiarity.

Few have been convinced by Hegel's own philosophical reconciliation of 'metaphysical universality with the determinateness of real particularity'.¹ Yet this unsatisfactory split between the torn halves of 'empirical method' and 'abstract reflection' has continued to trouble all post-Hegelian philosophies of art and culture. In the draft introduction to *Aesthetic Theory*, for example, Adorno refers to the seeming 'obsolescence of aesthetics', its 'antiquated quality' in the light of its continuing attachment to 'a universality that culminates in inadequacy to ... artworks'. With this situation, Adorno argues, the theorist finds herself caught in the 'miserable alternative' between a 'dumb and trivial universality', which reduces particularity to the mere 'status of exempla', and a slippage into the arbitrariness of a 'radical nominalism' which characterises the hegemonic practices of art and literary history.²

Despite the rather patchy influence of Adorno's own difficult brand of *Kulturkritik* on contemporary thought, if anything this 'situation' seems even more acutely our own today, particularly in relation to an 'Anglo-American' context in which philosophy is, for the most part, still governed by the narrow perspective of what Quine called a 'logical point of view'. It is of course true that the apparent chasm between the 'abstract' transcendentalism of philosophical aesthetics (such as it is) and the 'concrete' empiricism of cultural, literary and art historicism (self-styledly 'new' in character or otherwise) has in recent decades been seen as bridgeable through something called 'theory', taking its central terms from Continental 'post-structuralist'

1. G.W.F. Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, Bernard Bosanquet (trans), Michael Inwood (ed), Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1993, pp17, 25-6.

2. Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, Robert Hullot-Kentor (trans), London, Athlone, 1997, pp332-3, 343.

philosophy, psychoanalysis, or certain strands of Western Marxism. In practice, however, these alternate theoretical vocabularies have tended to be engaged only as a means of recasting them as decontextualised 'sources' either for standardised interpretative models - the 'general points of view' of which Hegel writes - or, even more commonly, for new 'objects' or 'thematics' of empirico-historicist enquiry ('the body', 'writing', 'desire' etc.). To the extent that such approaches are *themselves* theorised, it is in terms of the increasingly tired metaphors of *bricolage* or - that most persistent cliché of contemporary positivisms - the critical 'toolbox'.

If traditional aesthetics has indeed become obsolete, one of the beneficiaries of its demise has undoubtedly been cultural studies, which, as Peter Osborne notes in his excellent new book, has partially defined itself through an 'antipathy' to 'anything connected to "aesthetics"' (30), positioning itself, more generally, as 'one of philosophy's most stridently *non*-philosophical - indeed, proudly "post-philosophical" - others' (2). Such antipathy has not, it should be said, been without its justifications - an understandable suspicion of dehistoricising generalisation and lofty abstraction - but it has itself risked giving way, as Hegel also recognised, to reliance upon 'abstract principles and categories ... without being aware of it', resulting in an *unreflective* philosophy which is placed beyond critical interrogation.³

It is in this context that the importance of Osborne's book reveals itself. For the ambiguity of its title reflects the dual task involved in any demand to reconfigure the relationship between the disciplinary 'fields' of philosophy and cultural theory today, insofar as the critical role of philosophy *in* cultural theory may be read both as an 'interpretation' of the philosophy which already (consciously or otherwise) underwrites 'really existing' cultural studies, and as a more directly interventionist 'critique' of that unreflective philosophy, from the point of view of more explicitly articulated alternatives (chiefly, here, the thought of Benjamin and Peirce). At the same time - lest this be thought to be a question of philosophy merely correcting the misapprehensions of a slightly simple-minded younger cousin - such a project must also, Osborne argues, entail a rethinking of the historical character of 'philosophy' itself as a cultural form, and of the 'legitimate range of application' of its concepts.

Osborne's setting out of the 'task to which the essays in this book aim to contribute' (19) may therefore, on the basis of his argument in the eponymous first chapter, be divided into two parts. First, an account of the implicit philosophical underpinnings of cultural studies as it evolved from the 1960s; most crucially, its roots in Marxism, which appears here as the 'vanishing mediator' in its disciplinary formation, and (more contentiously) a developing conception (or at least 'attitude') of 'pragmatism' as that which constitutes the 'philosophical unconscious of post-Marxist cultural studies' (p9). Second, a rethinking of what might be the most productive role for philosophy itself as a kind of 'anti-disciplinary specialism, excessive in

3. Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, op. cit., p24.

relation to each and every disciplinary field, yet without a determinate field of its own' (p6). The meeting point for these two strands lies in the exploration of those specific kinds of concept which might be seen to belong to a 'cross-disciplinary type of generality' necessarily straddling the domains of both philosophy and cultural theory. As explored in the other six essays of the book, such concepts include 'sign', 'image', 'modernism', 'modernity', 'art', and (in the final chapter on Laplanche) a range of psychoanalytic categories.

For those who have read Osborne's 1995 book, *The Politics of Time*, the most familiar work here will be that on the concepts of 'modernism' and 'modernity' elaborated in the three central chapters of this collection. Extending the analyses of the political significance of particular conceptual forms of historical temporalisation carried out in that earlier work, Osborne develops a persuasive account of modernism as a term whose most fundamental meaning is limited to neither a literary/art period style nor a philosophical 'discourse' (in Habermas's sense), but which 'displays the universality of a philosophical concept ... in its transcendental or quasi-categorical status as a temporal form' (57). It is the distinctive character of this 'universality' which generates its significance for a rethinking of cultural theory in general. For, as Osborne states, it is a peculiarity of the 'general concepts of cultural theory'- particularly when they are extended or 'translated' beyond the restricted spatial ground of the nation-state - that they apparently 'have the universality of the *categorical* in the Kantian sense ... [but] are nonetheless "historical" in the sense that their universality has historical conditions of existence' (18). Thus a focus upon the concept of modernism 'raises in a particular instance the general question of the relationship of philosophical to historical form' (58). The implicit *promise* here is that of marking out a passage beyond the kind of 'miserable alternative' Adorno locates in the torn halves of traditional aesthetics and art history.

To a large extent Osborne makes good on this promise, or at least he shows the path which future work might take in this respect. This is not to say that there are not several arguments here with which one might take issue. Deleuzians will no doubt find much to question in the rather hasty critique of their master in the second chapter entitled 'Sign and Image'. Derrideans, meanwhile, would have good reason to dispute the claim - in the context of a welcome re-reading of Peirce *contra* Saussure - that *différance* is little more than a 'refinement' of the Saussurean semiotic 'paradigm' (22-3). (Surely the Heidegger of *Identity and Difference* is at least as important a precursor, if not more so. Typically, however, Osborne's writing does seem to be governed by a regulative principle of being as hard on Derrida as possible, sometimes to the point of misleading simplifications - as in his comments on *Specters of Marx*). Yet, none of this should distract from his achievement in outlining plausible theoretical criteria for the construction and philosophical mediation of concepts which would be 'analytically

adequate to action on a par with the educational-political project from which cultural studies set out' (16).

Osborne's own philosophical master in this is - explicitly enough - Walter Benjamin, who, as he says, 'sets the theoretical course, with his concern for the conjointly historical, metaphysical and political experience of cultural form' (ix). Fascinating as is the attempt to use Peirce's respective theories of 'pragmatism' and the 'sign' to bridge the division between 'Continental' and 'Anglo-American' thought, it is finally Benjamin's conceptions of the 'messianic' - as 'the practical moment of Benjamin's thought' - and of the 'image-space' that provide the crucial models for Osborne's delineation of both philosophy and cultural theory's potential as 'speculative anti- and cross-disciplinary specialisms'. Such potential is demonstrated in Osborne's own engagements with particular problematics in cultural studies and art theory. If there is any criticism to be made here it is only, I suppose, in terms of the limitations of his choice of topics. In the preface, while recognising that 'for a certain German tradition, philosophy simply *is* the ideal reflexive form of modern culture as a whole', he rightly criticises this tradition's somewhat Arnoldian conception of what 'culture' in this instance might mean, excluding as it does 'vast bodies of significant practice and experience within Western capitalist societies' as well as non-Western cultural forms (viii). Yet, one might argue, Osborne's own focus, (however brilliant his individual readings might be), is itself directed upon a rather restricted cultural terrain: Greenberg, conceptual art, the *Communist Party Manifesto*. That said, more important is the fact that Osborne provides - in, for example, his reworking of the concept of modernism or (in his discussion of photography) of the relation of image to text - the basis for an extension of theory, without loss of philosophical sophistication, into areas of cultural practice that Critical Theory characteristically ignored. More than anything, perhaps, the value of this book lies in its impetus for work to come, demanding of both philosophers and cultural theorists that they finally take as their true object of analysis 'cultural *experience* in the full sense of the term' (118). It is for this reason that *Philosophy in Cultural Theory* seems to me to be such an important and timely book.

THE SERIOUS PLAY OF CONSPIRACY

Clare Birchall

Peter Knight, *Conspiracy Culture: From Kennedy to The X-Files*, London, Routledge, 2000, 287pp; £45.00 hardback, £12.99 paperback.

Martin Waller in *The Times* recently reported a conspiracy theory doing the rounds: 'The first signs of foot-and-mouth can be dated to a short time after we last bombed Iraq. It was, as was reported at the time, a Middle Eastern strain. And which rogue state is most advanced in biological warfare?' Waller is quick to point out that he '[does] not vouch for this one, but at least you read it here first'.¹ Although Waller's reportage is tongue-in-cheek, the theory does bring to the surface a Western fear of Middle Eastern military capability. And therein lies conspiracy theory's paradoxical significance: it entertains us, to be sure, but repeats back, through a certain suggestibility, something we recognise as our own. The cultural circuit of conspiracy theory is at work.

Peter Knight's *Conspiracy Culture* marks a significant contribution to the growing research into conspiracy theory. Knight situates conspiracy theory within its socio-historic context (from 1960s countercultural interest to today's ironic and demotic use of it), while reading it at a close textual level. In this way, he manages both to introduce and interrogate the rhetorical manoeuvres utilised by this form of popular knowledge.

As introduction and interrogation, *Conspiracy Culture* caters to a variety of readers familiar or otherwise with the research. As with any academic specialism, conspiracy studies has its seminal texts, and Knight is as careful to point towards these as he is to position the conspiracy theories themselves within their socio-historic framework. Key voices include the progressive historian Richard Hofstadter, who analysed the Right's employment of a paranoid rhetoric. Other historians such as Bernard Bailyn suggested that conspiracy theory had played a major role in the founding of the American Republic and national identity. Novelists such as Don DeLillo, Thomas Pynchon and Ishmael Reed responded creatively to the register of conspiracy theory and paranoia that they observed around them, and influenced the concerns of a whole area of literary study. John Fiske highlighted the positive role of popular knowledges in the articulation of power and privilege differentials between the upper echelons and the working class. Fredric Jameson suggested ways of thinking about conspiracy narratives as attempts to represent or map out the ever elusive social totality. More recently, there have been arguments by Daniel Pipes, Elaine Showalter, Robert Robins and Jerrold Post that seek to warn us against the dangers of conspiracy thinking.

Indeed, conspiracy theory offers an object of interest for many different

1. Martin Waller, 'City Diary,' *The Times*, Thursday, 22.03.01.

disciplines. It has been lauded as subversive social formation, and criticised as failed intervention into the political sphere. Both tendencies, as Knight recognises, assess conspiracy theory against an ideal of political action. Knight explains how many cultural studies approaches 'end up insisting that other (usually less sophisticated) people's everyday cultural practices fulfil one's own political agenda - and then chastising them for failing at what they never intended in the first place' (21). Like conspiracy theory itself, the academic study of conspiracy theory has been used and abused to various political ends.

More interesting is how conspiracy theory exceeds or complicates this (either positive or negative) narrowly defined political interest in popular practices and texts. For conspiracy theory appears (to varying degrees in different contexts) *both* politically engaged *and* deeply ineffectual in the realm of democratic politics. Knight relates this apparently contradictory status to the way in which conspiracy theory is employed in both an ironic and earnest fashion. In this way, conspiracy theory is characterised by a continual oscillation between the figural and the literal. Because the effects of institutionalised racism, for example, make it look *as if* there has been a conspiracy, exactly how these theories are being invoked by African-American communities becomes undecidable. Do such conspiracy theories refer to actual conspiracies or merely something *like* conspiracy?

Knight has an eye for cultural movements and discursive moments - for the way in which tropes substantiate a socio-political climate. He is careful not to get bogged down in the details of specific conspiracy theories, although he provides enough of an outline to convey the playfulness and passion of these vivid narratives. He also avoids the trap of attempting to correct conspiracy theory's 'mistakes'. What commands Knight's interest, rather, are firstly a diachronic movement from 'secure' to 'insecure' paranoia that has apparently taken place over the past half century, and secondly a synchronic play between the literal and the figural in conspiracy theory. With reference to DeLillo's *Underworld*, Knight writes of 'the relatively secure paranoia of the Cold War years, through the countercultural hopes of the 1960s and after, and into the as yet unconfigured work of insecure paranoia beyond the end of the Cold War' (226). Insecure paranoia emerges alongside the vertigo of interpretation or an overriding structure of connectedness inherent in contemporary economic and technological encounters. *Underworld's* mantra, 'everything is connected', becomes the guiding logic of conspiracy culture, but it also suggests something about contemporary experience in general. Knight advises us to read this movement from secure to insecure paranoia in economic terms: we should interpret the anxiety produced by this movement as prompted equally by a 'loss of a sense of control over national ... economic destiny that previously allowed governments to guarantee the social contract between the state, capital, and labor' (235). However, Knight falls short of a totalising theory of conspiracy theory, stressing instead how it performs different functions in

different situations (for example, it could be used as a way to understand institutional sexism or racism in one context, and as the glue that holds America together in another).

Knight has well-researched chapters on the Kennedy assassination, the trope of conspiracy in popular and academic feminism, paranoia in African-American communities, the role of conspiracy theories in body panics (especially AIDS and food scares), and technologies and theories of connectedness in late capitalism. A range of media is addressed throughout this study, along with a number of key events and texts in the underground and mainstream histories of conspiracy theory. Occasionally, Knight has to skim over complex issues and texts (such as conspiracy thinking in rap music), but the benefits which accrue from an all-encompassing study outweigh the detrimental effects of a lack of detail. His footnotes are generous too, pointing us to other interesting studies in the field.

Occasionally, his desire to present a genealogical shift in conspiracy thinking (such as his overriding schema from secure to insecure paranoia, or what he calls 'the secret history of conspiracy culture') appears too neat. Just as there is an oscillation between ironic and earnest elements of conspiracy theory, or between its figural and literal status (as Knight points out), post-fordist, postmodern paranoia operates in other ways as well - for example, as a *play between* secure and insecure paranoia, or even involving a third term such as solipsism - an internally assured knowledge system that has nothing to do with our relation to outside structures; or countless other terms that those nominal positions might not encompass. In fact, a different model altogether might be in play, one that traces the conditions of possibility of conspiracy, paranoia, etc., back to a prior, generative agency of discourse and knowledge. In this view one moves away from Knight's 'genealogical' view to an atemporal, though equally political, approach. Nevertheless, Knight's identification of a definite shift in paranoia as both thought-structure and trope in the light of post-Cold War politics, post-fordist models of production, and globalised commerce, does help to account for the unprecedented popularity of conspiracy theory that we have seen at the turn of the century.

Perhaps the least interesting thing to say about conspiracy theory is that it signals an aberration in an otherwise functional code of interpretation (such a position has been put forward in one guise or another by commentators including Elaine Showalter and Umberto Eco). This only serves to pathologise conspiracy theorists, ignoring the relationship we all have to such structures of interpretation - and for his part Knight recognises too the common structure of connectedness between legitimate and 'illegitimate' discourses: 'Everything Is Connected could function as the operating principle not just for conspiracy theory, but also for epidemiology, ecology, risk theory, systems theory, complexity theory, theories of globalization, boosterism for the Internet, and even poststructuralist literary theories about intertextuality' (205). In my view, what is critical when thinking

about conspiracy theory is to recognise the way it puts on display a general condition of reading. Once we recognise how conspiracy theory (or 'overinterpretation' as Umberto Eco terms it) shares characteristics with - and even structures - the idea or possibility of an accepted paradigm of interpretation (what, we might ask, would interpretation be without the idea of overinterpretation?), many other ways of writing about conspiracy theory in an academic sphere suddenly become particularly precarious.

Those studies that want to decry the presence of conspiracy theorists as a symptom of an individual and social ailment fail to take on board the relationship between the conditions on which their own statements depend and the discourse they wish to denigrate. Conspiracy theory perfectly highlights the value of cultural studies at its best, when it analyses both the institutional anxiety that attends popular phenomena and the social significance of those phenomena themselves. Knight's book is an impressive attempt at coming to terms with the significance of a discourse that plays with the limits of textuality - how conspiracy narratives work on a figural and literal level simultaneously. That this is precisely why it becomes such a problematic discourse in the everyday realm points towards the problem of how to read cultural phenomena at all (and consequently the anxieties produced by disciplines, such as cultural studies, that draw on a range of methodologies). In considering textual effects, *Conspiracy Culture* loses nothing of the socio-political significance of conspiracy theory. In fact, the textual comes centre stage in order to comment on a shift in interpretative practices. The cognitive subject is not incidental to this process, but our access to him or her derives from the textual effects he or she produces, rather than any psychological state that creates those texts. Pathologising falls away.

When, on occasion, my own research into the subject of conspiracy theory has been frostily received, I have wanted a book such as this in order to justify my enquiry. This might make it sound like the groundwork I didn't want to do myself. This is not the case. Knight has a particular American Studies angle on a phenomenon that can support many methodologies and approaches from various disciplines. While his is not the only approach, it is certainly a much needed one if we are to make headway in assessing the confrontation between 'legitimate' or official and 'illegitimate' or popular knowledges.

DANCING WITH REFLECTION

Bob Bennett

Valerie A. Briginshaw, *Dance, Space and Subjectivity*, Basingstoke and New York, Palgrave, 2001; 233pp. £45 hardback.

In Britain, Valerie Briginshaw and Ramsay Burt have maintained the vibrancy of the New Dance movement in scholarship after its collective commitments to the *New Dance* periodical - a movement which poignantly addressed issues related to gender and sexuality. Latterly Burt edited the journal, then went on to write *The Male Dancer* (1995); and now Briginshaw has produced *Dance, Space and Subjectivity*.

As her rather plodding introduction makes clear, Briginshaw is no less committed today to issues related to gender, sexuality and race than she was in those heady days of post-1960s fervour. She might be forgiven for having taken on the stateside, postmodern-inflected vocabulary of New York's Judson Dance Theatre, but this has involved her overlooking its British equivalences in 'New Dance'.

That introduction gives us a false sense that we are heading for a mix and match of 'dances' (by which Briginshaw indicates choreographed performance events) with contemporary cultural theorists. In the chapters that follow comment abounds, interweaving the case for engagement in a kinaesthesia of tactility - a 'proprioception' - with theoretical reflection. Take for instance the following, from a chapter on 'Dance that can be Read as Lesbian': 'Desire can be seen to be spatialised differently. This different spatialisation is not based on lack, or space seen as distance, but rather on surfaces, intensities, interfaces and touching' (80).

'Dance' and dance scholarship in Britain, however, are the product of a higher educational system which placed the physicality of the arts subordinately, and has only lately, and begrudgingly, admitted writing about dance into its canon. Briginshaw's book serves well those of us who are educators, and who want our performing arts students to understand what cultural theory has to do with their 'creative' projects.

In the last decade, writing about dance from North America has overtaken the liveliness of the New Dance engagements in Britain, despite the kickstart of Angela McRobbie's brilliant 'Dance and Social Fantasy'. McRobbie's 1984 essay, originally published in *Gender and Generation*, theorised dance as 'the one pleasurable arena where women have some control and know what is going on in relation to physical sensuality and to their own bodies'.

Dance was much less regulated in North America through dedicated institutions, and thus has been more generally positioned, particularly in state/provincial universities. For this reason, perhaps, it is instructive to read

Briginshaw alongside Marta Savigliano's *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion* (1995, Westview). Where Briginshaw labours to make explicit how theory is related to dance - that sense of having to justify dance as academically worthwhile - and in doing so, for instance, takes on postmodernity somewhat uncritically, Savigliano blasts away at postmodernity's coldness and distancing, showing it to be inadequate for nuancing the passion of tango, say. She demands of her readers that they realise what being placed with a remit for 'autoexoticism' might mean in the lives of Argentinians subordinated to Northern European/North American hegemonies.

Savigliano remains the only dance scholar to have produced a sustained and coherent book-length argument for a 'whole life' engagement with dance as the basis for wide political and cultural reflection. Briefer but equally intense articles in edited volumes, especially from the States, are now rapidly accumulating (Jane Desmond's recent *Dancing Desires: Choreographing Sexualities On and Off the Stage* being an excellent example), and the news of a new journal edited by Susan Leigh Foster and Ramsay Burt, *Discourses in Dance*, bodes well for dance scholarship becoming much more critically adventuresome.

There is the possibility of an explosion in dance writing of the quality of Savigliano's in Britain, too. McRobbie continues to produce occasional essays on dance and popular culture. Why not a volume commensurate with Briginshaw's which brings these essays together and reinstates the primacy of that 1984 essay referred to above? Maria Pini incorporates ethnographies of ravers into a dynamic of what space might mean to the subjectivities of young women in *Club Cultures and Female Subjectivity* (Palgrave 2001). As someone who has collected well over a thousand 'dancing' memories from students during the past ten years, I know there is a wealth of reflection to come from sustained work in this area. To return to Briginshaw, for women the refiguring of desire within that distance can take place not only on the stage or in the studio but also in the ravers' field or on the club dance floor. Mirroring and response as danced by women in these spaces has a long tradition and needs to be honoured as such.

DIFFERENCE: SPORTS THEORY AND STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION

Grant Farred

Ben Carrington and Ian McDonald (eds), *'Race', Sport and British Society*, London, Routledge, 2001, 256pp; £55.00 hardback, £16.99 paperback.

The effects of racism have impacted upon every aspect of black (African, Afro-Caribbean) and brown (South Asian) life in post-imperial Britain. From campaigns against racist policing to protests against prejudicial housing and educational policies, diasporic communities in different parts of Britain have struggled to obtain redress against the state - or local government structures. Like any other sphere of minority life in London or Glasgow, sport has not been immune to racist practices and, like many cultural struggles, it has seen the rise of popular anti-racist movements. The major sports - football and cricket - have, over the last three decades, seen the founding of 'Kick it Out' and 'Hit Racism for a Six' respectively, both multi-racial organisations publicly committed to identifying, attacking, and eradicating racism from the playing field, from amongst the spectators, and from the media.

Ben Carrington and Ian McDonald's *'Race', Sport and British Society* is a thoughtful collection of essays. It is a timely contribution to a growing discipline which explores the difficult, frequently unarticulated relationship between sport, race and the nation - sport seen, as the editors and some of the contributors suggest, as the enunciation of a (nostalgically) raced national identity. (These loaded conjunctures are taken up most directly in the essay by Les Back et al on the notoriously racist history of Millwall F.C.) Conceived as an attempt to determine how sport creates, shapes, and informs the public's perceptions of race and racism, *'Race', Sport and British Society* is also a critique of a conspicuous absence in British sociology: a theoretical paradigm which could initiate and sustain a rigorous investigation into the connection between racism and sport, a disciplinary framework which could simultaneously offer itself as an intervention into the day-to-day machinations of sports organisation. Carrington and McDonald want to 'advance the debate about "race" and sport within sociology itself to a more self-reflexive critical positioning' (13). Revealing their transformative political vision, the editors also want *'Race', Sport and British Society* to participate in the process of procuring structural transformation. They want to produce a praxis out of critical sports race sociological theory: 'we hope that this book will contribute to an emerging policy focus on tackling racial inequality amongst sport governing bodies'.

The second of the book's goals, the production of programmatic suggestions that would allow for structural reform, is a project not always kept in view by the various contributors. This is an understandable lack, since the range of essays offers a rich account of the variegated experiences of racism in British sport that would require an expansive, reflexive paradigm to accommodate the nation's several articulations of discrimination and prejudice against people of colour, women, and different ethnicities and religions.

In their essay on football 'north of the border', Paul Dimeo and Gerry Finn provide a convincing refutation of Scottish 'exceptionalism' (racism is exclusively English, Scottish sectarianism does not equal racism), while Sheila Scraton calls for an engagement with other (mainly literary) black feminist theories in order to rethink sport sociology's inattention to the role of black women, and in the process offers a useful suggestion for enriching and recalibrating one discipline through the history of another. Scott Fleming and Sanjiv Johal raise the important and under-researched issue of sport in the South Asian community, in essays sharpened by their willingness to confront the demeaning, historically inaccurate public images of the role sport plays for subcontinentals. Carrington and McDonald's contribution on 'recreational cricket', as direct a challenge as any in the collection to the notion of post-imperial white ownership of a sport that has long since been claimed and remade by black and brown ex-colonials (both in the metropolis and abroad), is the best of three chapters on the game. (Mike Marqusee's and Chris Searle's are too anecdotal to offer much in the way of theoretical insight, a shortcoming shared by Emma Lindsey's essay on the condition of being a black, feminist journalist.)

'Race', Sport and British Society, however, is less wanting in terms of structural suggestions than it is cognisant of the deeply embedded nature of racism in British sport. This text calls for a polyvocal, multi-accentual paradigm in which race theory (so necessary to rethinking sport's sociology), will be attentive to the specificities of context and will be applied strategically and selectively.

All sport racism may be equal, but one theory will fit neither all sport's codes nor all experiences. It is for this reason that the collection's structural lack is not so much a conceptual shortcoming as a recognition, albeit an unacknowledged one, that different racisms call for particularised responses. The recreational cricketers in Yorkshire and the female Muslim *kabbadi* players in London all experience discrimination and racism; they are all denied access to equal facilities, but their encounters with racism require that they make their different demands on the state, or the local governing authority, if they are to transform their sporting lives. It is by bringing difference into such keen focus that *'Race', Sport and British Society* is most likely to produce both a racially conscious discourse in sociology and improved conditions for the various communities its contributors champion.

READING IMPERIALISM: COMPLEXITY VS HYBRIDITY

Carolyn Burdett

Laura Chrisman, *Rereading the Imperial Romance: British Imperialism and South African Resistance in Haggard, Schreiner and Plaatje*, Oxford, Clarendon, 2000; 241pp, £40 hardback.

Chilling accounts of the twenty-first-century death of the humanities monograph are a not uncommon feature of academic publishing gossip. It is reassuring, therefore, to find a work such as Laura Chrisman's appearing in the Oxford English Monographs series. Consisting of extensive readings of four fictional texts, three of which are not well known, authored by three interestingly marginal writers, this is a scholarly study which brings together writing on South Africa in a new and distinctive way. It is committed, as the book's final phrase has it, to 'historically specific' readings of its selected fictions and of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century imperial contexts with which they engage. This detailed work aims to exemplify a number of theoretical issues explicitly addressed in the book's introduction.

These issues are ones that have been raised before in Chrisman's shorter criticism, and they concern the dominance, at least through the 1980s and part of the 1990s, of certain practices and assumptions associated with 'the postcolonial theory industry' which she wishes to counter. An over-exclusive focus on India and mid-Victorian missionary ideology as the paradigmatic sites of imperialism, associated with the work of Gayatri Spivak, for example, must be resisted in order to understand the 'stubbornly local' writing of Rider Haggard's *Nada the Lily* or Olive Schreiner's *Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland*. Similarly, Edward Said is taken to task for seeing 'the imperial metropolis as unified', while overused postcolonial concepts such as mimicry and hybridity are rejected as inadequate tools with which to understand the complex rewriting of the imperial romance undertaken in Sol Plaatje's *Mhudi*. Chrisman's theoretical friends here are the Frankfurt School writers, particularly the Adorno and Horkheimer of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, and Hannah Arendt. Thus the introduction serves as a commentary on where theoretical postcolonial studies might be going, while much of the book's strength lies in its preparedness to allow this theoretical argument to be exemplified via the detailed readings in which it is engaged.

In a book about the imperial romance it is perhaps no surprise that the writer who occupies most space is Rider Haggard, 'King Romance' of the Age of Empire. Haggard has attracted a good deal of critical attention in recent years, and Chrisman uses the novel which made his name, *King Solomon's Mines*, to explore the emergence of gold and diamond mining in

South Africa. A more compelling illustration of the aim to historicise imperialism comes, however, when she turns to a much lesser-known work, *Nada the Lily*, Haggard's fictionalised account of the rise and fall of the Zulu nation, written during 1889-90 just after the British annexation of Zululand. Read in conjunction with Haggard's 1881, pre-annexation commentary on South African affairs, *Cetywayo and His White Neighbours*, Chrisman explores the fraught metropolitan response to the Zulu nation across the decade during which the conquest of Zululand takes place. Haggard's attempt to write Britain out of responsibility for the demise of the Zulu kingdom in *Nada* is central to Chrisman's assessment and critique of his 'contradictory but ultimately affirmative imperialist articulations' (20).

Haggard knew and admired Olive Schreiner, and Schreiner herself was friendly with Sol Plaatje. Chrisman's book in fact suggests a whole web of subtle connections between her three writers as she uses their fictions to explore 'important moments of South African transformation' (4). The two chapters dealing with *Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland* - which provide the fullest critical treatment yet published of this extraordinary 1897 novella - concern Schreiner's attempt to intervene in and halt the rapacious colonising activities of Cecil Rhodes during the violent making of Rhodesia. Schreiner was a writer all too keenly aware of the importance of audience, and Chrisman's subtle reading of *Trooper Peter's* rhetorical strategy produces a nuanced and intelligent account of Schreiner's humanitarian and radical position. The historical sharpness here also means that Chrisman corrects critical assessments of Schreiner which see her as an apologist for white liberalism, pointing out rightly that neither English nor South African liberalism 'was at this time readily reducible to a single, identifiable, belief system or practice' (125). Similarly, Chrisman's sustained reading of Sol Plaatje's *Mhudi* uncovers a far more complex and dynamic picture than is often associated with the early black nationalists in South Africa. *Mhudi* 'dramatically revises, and critiques, the imperialist textual politics of *Nada*' (163), producing a proto-nationalism in which the central character of Mhudi herself is an active, self-affirming agent. For Plaatje, there is no 'escape' from history into a mythic past.

The chronology of these chapters clearly echoes a move from the 'imperialism' of Chrisman's sub-title, towards 'South African resistance', with consequent implications about the villains and heroes of the book. *Mhudi* in particular emerges as an extraordinarily positive portrait of a 'constitutively multiple' understanding of nation and its 'diverse ethnic, gender, and political implications' (208). This affirmative reading works so well, however, because Chrisman is scrupulous in interrogating all the texts with which she is concerned at their strongest and most complex points.

BECOMING STUART

Jeremy Gilbert

Paul Gilroy, Lawrence Grossberg and Angela McRobbie (eds), *Without Guarantees: In Honour of Stuart Hall*, London, Verso, 2000, 433pp; £17 paperback, £45 hardback.

Stuart Hall: the most public and yet the most enigmatic intellectual of the British left in recent decades. Admired far and wide, many things to many people, this man, whose only single-authored book is a relatively overlooked collection of political essays, seems at times to be famous largely just for 'being Stuart'. A leading theorist who has always made explicit his own distaste for theoretical systematisation, he still has not offered us, three years after his retirement from the chair in Sociology at the Open University, any system which bears his name, any coherent way of nailing him down, any hostage to posterity's modish cruelties. A speaker, an essayist, an editor, a mentor - but never a writer of Big Books - it is ironic that his retirement should be the occasion for one of the biggest books to come out of cultural studies for some time.

This tributary volume contains no less than thirty-four essays, ranging from one-and-a-half to twenty-three pages in length, and taking many different forms: poetry, personal reflections, essays using Hall's ideas to work through theoretical and empirical topics (including Jamaican post-war politics and struggles over the meaning of globalisation in South Korea). It includes contributions from many of the leading figures of Anglo-American cultural studies and theory, and some from other areas (criminology, social policy) to which Hall's oeuvre remains relevant, as well as from writers that I had not encountered before.

Celebrity is no guarantee of quality, and very often the essays by the better known contributors consist of lyrical but inconsequential rehearsals of well-worn cultural studies themes. From Iain Chambers we learn, for instance, that music culture is, like, all about identity, and identity is, you know *fluid* and, well, you shouldn't go around making rigid distinctions between the cultural and the economic. This is hardly front page news.

Valuable as these contributions may be in their own right, far more interesting at the present moment, and more appropriate to the occasion they mark, are those which challenge the complacencies of mid-Atlantic cultural studies with concrete reminders of what, following Hall, cultural studies was always supposed to be about. For example, John Clarke - once a contributor to *Policing the Crisis*, now Professor of Social Policy at the Open University - offers a fascinating set of reflections on the premise that Hall's work holds great relevance for his own field. In the process, he reminds us

that something has gone desperately wrong with cultural studies, that this should be a statement which surprises - indeed, which needs to be made at all.

Perhaps the most striking difference between the various pieces is the nature and extent of their engagement with Hall's work. The fact that the book is not, nominally, *about* Stuart Hall but merely *for* him can technically excuse a complete lack of such engagement on the part of the contributors. However, this hardly lessens the embarrassment of noting that Judith Butler's seven-page exposition of her own work demonstrates no direct knowledge of Hall's, apart from one minor essay in which he happens to cite her. Similarly, Gayatri Spivak presents a characteristic deconstructive reading of Jamaica Kincaid's novel *Lucy*, the relevance of which to Hall's projects can best be described as tangential.

This reviewer would emphasise - despite his editor's distaste for such pleasantries - that there are no living intellectuals he holds in greater awe than Butler and Spivak. Nevertheless, it is hard to resist the conclusion that their contributions tell us something about the individualistic culture of American - and to some extent all - academic life which goes some way towards explaining the reverence in which Hall is held.

In comparison with him, these are figures whose brilliance lies largely in their capacity to fill whole books with their own ideas (often in the form of commentaries on the Great Traditions of literature and philosophy). This is the classical mode of intellectual life, and it is unavoidable for most of us. Hall's genius has always been to avoid it. It is the pithy essay, the concise analysis, the momentary synthesis, the rousing speech, the timely collection, the concern for the popular and the immersion in the contemporary for which he is famous. In other words, it is always - *always* - for the sake of some tactical intervention, in the name of some collective project, at the moment of some precise conjuncture, that Hall has acted, written and spoken.

Perhaps, after all, the contrast which the work of these quite different scholars provides is a necessary part of any such collection. It is in the nature of Hall's methods that they should be mobile, polysemic, and often unpredictable in their effects. Thought in these terms, we can see that only a collection as rich and varied as this could possibly be a fitting tribute to a man who has always said exactly what needed to be said, and no more.