# DEMISE AND PUBLISH

*David Macey*

Michel Foucault, *Sécurité, territoire, population (Cours au Collège de France, 1977-1978)*, Paris, Gallimard and Seuil, 2004, 435pp; 25€; *Naissance de la biopolitique (Cours au Collège de France)*, Paris, Gallimard and Seuil, 2004, 355pp; 25€

On 2 December 1970, Michel Foucault delivered his inaugural lecture to the Collège de France. He had been elected by his peers to an institution that is as prestigious as it is unique. Originally a Renaissance foundation, the Collège de France is quite autonomous and, although it is a teaching and research institution, is not part of the university system. Its professors are elected by their fellows rather than being appointed, and their formal qualifications count for much less than their actual achievements and publications. The Collège awards no degrees or diplomas. It has no student body, and anyone is free to attend its lectures. Its professors do not teach any syllabus. Like his peers, Foucault had only one responsibility: to teach for twenty-six hours per year (half the hours could take the form of seminars). His only topic was his on-going research into what he himself termed the history of systems of ideas. In November 1971, the first year of lectures began on the topic of 'Penal Theories and Institutions'.

Foucault's lectures drew large crowds. Every Wednesday, over five hundred people would pack into a lecture theatre that could hold three hundred and fifty. Loudspeakers had to be set up in an overflow room where the disappointed listened to a disembodied Foucault. Many of those present were equipped with cassette recorders, and were it not for them, the only available record of the lectures would be the course summaries published in the Collège de France's *Annuaire* (Yearbook).

Six of the planned thirteen volumes of 'Lectures at the Collège de France' have now been published in French, and two have appeared in English translation.[1] They consist of transcripts of tape recordings of the lectures; the original manuscripts exist and were consulted during the preparation of these volumes, but will not themselves be published. Although he left no will, Foucault had made it clear that he wanted there to be no 'posthumous publications'. Ten years after his death, four volumes of *Dits et Ecrits* appeared. They contain (almost) everything published, but the lectures were not included on the grounds that their publication was not authorised in the lifetime.[2] In their general introduction the chief editors François Ewald and Alessandro Fontana now argue that the very act of giving a public lecture is in itself a form of publication.[3] It does not, on the other hand, appear to mean that the lectures are or were in the public domain. The decision to

1. The other volumes are *Il faut defendre la société*, Paris, Gallimard/Seuil, 1987; David Macey (trans), *Society Must Be Defended*, London, Allen Lane, 2003; *Les Anormaux*, Paris, Gallimard/Seuil 1999; *Abnormal*, Graham Burchell (trans), London, Verso, 2003; *L'Herméneutique du sujet*, Paris, Gallimard/Seuil, 2001; *Le Pouvoir psychiatrique*, Paris, Gallimard/Seuil, 2003.

2. Daniel Defert, François Ewald and Jacques Lagrange, 'Présentation' in Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits 1954-1988*, Paris, Gallimard, 1994, Vol I, p9. Subsequent references are given as *DE*. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own. The three volumes of *Essential Works* published by Allen Lane provide a rough English-language equivalent.

3. François Ewald and Alessandro Fontana, 'Avertissement', *Sécurité, Population, Territoire*, px; the same text appears in all the 'lectures' volumes.

publish the lectures was no doubt influenced by the circulation of unauthorised transcripts and even pirate editions (especially in Italy); it may have been the Foucault estate's way of establishing ownership of intellectual property rights. Publication is also a form of privatisation.

There is something deeply ironic about the posthumous publication of so much material by Foucault. The terms of his critique of the notion of 'the author' or the 'author-function' are well known: "'What does it matter who is speaking?", someone said, "what does it matter who is speaking?"'[4] He was, in his own view confronted with the problem facing any 'author': how to 'succeed in erasing one's own name and in inserting one's voice into the great, anonymous murmur of discourses that speak by themselves'.[5] In life, he could hope to slip into the anonymous murmur and the impersonality that has characterised a certain literary modernity from Mallarmé onwards. In death, he becomes - and will remain - an author. A similar fate has, in death, befallen Barthes who, in 1968, so gleefully announced 'the death of the author'.[6] He has become the dead author of posthumously published lectures, and even of a 'Collected Works' that has expanded from an initial three volumes to a five-volume compendium.[7]

As Foucault himself demonstrates in a discussion of units (or unities; the French is ambiguous here) of discourse, neither 'works' nor 'complete' has a self-evident meaning, but the juxtaposition of the two is symptomatic of the belief that 'there must be a level (as deep as it is necessary to imagine it) at which *l'oeuvre* is revealed, in all its fragments, even the tiniest and the most inessential, to be the expression of the thought, experience, imagination or unconscious of the author'.[8] Should, he asks, a complete works include the 'immense welter of verbal traces that an individual leaves around him at the moment of his death?'[9] Neither Foucault's nor Barthes's editors have included those traces, or even sought to record them. Although the definition of 'publication' has slipped somewhat, it is still predicated upon a private/public dichotomy.

The quality of the scholarship that went into *Dits et écrits* has, if anything been improved upon in the 'Lectures' series. The editors of the individual volumes - Michel Senellart in this case - have traced and (in many cases) corrected Foucault's allusions and references and identified virtually all his quotations. The scholarly afterwords appended to each volume situate the lectures in terms of Foucault's evolution and the broader context. This level of editorial input is somewhat at odds with Foucault's cavalier attitude to references, quotations and other scholarly conventions. What he liked to think of as an intellectual 'tool box' has, for better or worse, been kitted out with a full critical apparatus. The quality of the editing does not, however, necessarily make for easy reading. These are transcripts, but they inevitably lose the immediacy of orality: there is, quite simply, no voice. At its best, Foucault's rhetoric was impressively powerful; it does not always serve him well here. The attempts at humour do not come off in print. What was a passing allusion to an article published by Genet in 'last September's *Le*

4. 'What Is an Author ?', Josué V. Harrari (trans), in *Michel Foucault. The Essential Works 1954-1984. Volume 2: Aesthetics*, Harmondsworth, Penguin 2000, p205.

5. 'Sur les façons d'écrire l'histoire' (Interview with Raymond Bellour, 1967), *DE* IV, p596.

6. Roland Barthes, 'La Mort de l'auteur' in *Le Bruissement de la langue: Essais critiques IV*, Paris, Seuil, Collection Points, 1993, pp. 63-69

7. *Comment vivre ensemble: simulations romanesques de quelques espaces quotidiens; Notes de cours et seminaires au Collège de France,1976-1977*, Claude Coste (ed), Paris, Seuil/IMEC, 2002; *La Préparation du roman. I et II: Cours et séminaires au Collège de France*, 1976-1977, Nathalie Léger (ed), Paris, Seuil, 2003; *Œuvres complètes*, Eric Marty (ed), Paris, Seuil 1993-95 three vols; *Œuvres complètes*, Eric Marty (ed), Paris, Seuil, 2002, five vols.

8. *L'Archéologie du savoir*, Paris, Gallimard, 1969. p35.

9. Ibid.

10. *Sécurité, Territoire, Population*, pp270, 287n 28. Genet's article was close to being an apologia for the terrorism of the Rote Armee Fraktion (Baader-Meinhoff gang) in West Germany.

11. See the materials in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (eds) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, Hemel Hempstead, Harvester, 1991.

12. For a more concise discussion of these themes see '*Omnes et singulatim:* Towards A Critique of Political Reason' in James Faubion (ed), Michel Foucault, *Power: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, vol 3*, London, Allen Lane 2001, pp298-325. This was one of the Tanner Lectures, delivered in English at Stanford in October 1979; French version, *DE* IV, pp134-161.

13. *Naissance de la biopolitique*, op. cit., p71.

*Monde*' is now an enigmatic comment requiring exegetical elucidation.[10] Perhaps lectures cannot simply be read in the same way as books. There is, for example, a great deal of repetition: necessary to get the points over to an audience of listeners, but not necessarily attractive to one of readers. Although Foucault's lectures were open to anyone who chose to attend them, they were not addressed to non-specialists and do not provide an introduction to his work. Nor do they 'replace' the published books; rather, they complement them.

The lectures are fragments from a work in progress that was never completed. Foucault is not speaking of some body of knowledge that exists, so to speak, 'outside' the lectures; these are not lectures 'on' his published work. Both the content and the style are disconcertingly uneven, as Foucault suddenly changes direction, wanders off into a digression or goes over old ground. The digressions can be on the grand scale. The lectures on 'security, territory, population' open with discussion of the question of governmentality,[11] but suddenly veer into a long discussion of pastoral power, and of the metaphors in which shepherds govern flocks in religious and political discourse. The digressions are not, of course, without their rationale. Foucault's 'governmentality' is an extremely broad concept. It can and does refer to the banal activity of 'governing a country', but also to the wider (and in many ways older) idea of 'governing others' and 'governing the self'.[12] Although it is not made explicit, there does appear to be a play on the words *gouverner* and *mentalité*: governmentality described, in other words, the way in which power structures are internalised so as to become norms of behaviour or technologies of power.

As always, reading Foucault can be as frustrating as it is stimulating. Whilst his broad thesis about the emergence of a disciplinary power founded mainly upon the control of individual bodies and then of a form of power based upon a concept of 'security' is both persuasive and exciting, the lack of historical precision is worrying. Foucault continues, for instance, to refer to the 'classical age' first evoked in *Histoire de la folie* (1961) but its temporal limits are alarmingly elastic: it is at once a recognisable period and a moveable feast. The discrepancy between the precision of the textual references and the historical vagueness of references to changes that occurred 'in the seventeenth and eighteenth century' is striking. The transitions that signal the emergence of biopower are said to have affected 'the contemporary world, or at least the modern world since the eighteenth century'.[13] For most historians 'contemporary' and 'modern' are not near-synonyms, but Foucault uses the terms quite promiscuously. There are other related problems, and at times a disturbing lack of specifics. Foucault notes that an important shift occurs when the inhabitants of a town or country cease to be a mass of individuals some of whom will die and some of whom will not, and become a population with quantifiable rates of natality and mortality. A 'population' is a statistical entity, but Foucault rarely produces actual statistics.

Foucault's rhetoric often employs startling and illustrative contrasts, the most memorable being the diptych formed by the screams of the public torture and execution of a regicide and then the silent regime of a prison at the beginning of *Surveiller et punir*. The tactic sets out to seduce rather than to convince. In the lectures on 'Security, Territory, Population', the treatment of leprosy is contrasted with that of plague.[14] 'During the middle ages', or 'until the end of the middle ages' lepers are excluded. Plague regulations, at the end of the middle ages, in the sixteenth century, and even in the seventeenth century, set out that plague victims are confined within their homes. They are allowed to go out at specific times and for specific times. Simple exclusion gives way to a rudimentary administration of an urban space. That a shift has occurred is clear; where and when is not. Leprosy is a matter for physical expulsion/exclusion; plague quickly becomes a matter for doctors and medicine. It is a disciplinary matter. Given that the administration of leprosy is, for Foucault, the beginning (or the emblem) of a process that will medicalise and rationalise urban space (through the introduction of better communications, the provision of clean water and the elimination of endemic diseases), more documentary evidence would be welcome, but it is not forthcoming. The notorious problems with the ubiquitous 'power' remain intact. For Foucault, power is not something to be seized, held or lost, but rather the system of relations of power and force that is coterminous and coextensive with social existence. Whilst his theory of the ubiquity of power and resistance is consistent with his actual involvement in the micro-politics of the day, it leaves certain difficulties unresolved. It is not, surely, 'power' that builds prisons and hospitals; it is the state, or agencies acting for or on behalf of the state.

The real value of the lectures probably lies in what they reveal about how Foucault worked, and about how certain of his books were written. They are haunted by the presence of books that were written, such as the case of Pierre Rivière, and by the absence of those that were not. When all the lectures have been published, it should be possible to reconstruct the 'History of Sexuality', which was abandoned after the publication of the first, introductory volume.[15] Long sections of *Abnormal* cover the topics that were meant to be dealt with in the volume on 'The Children's Crusade', namely the crusade against masturbation and the concomitant medicalisation of childhood, while *Society Must Be Defended* contains the raw material that should have gone into 'Population and Races'.

The lectures on 'Security, Territory, Population' began in January 1978. Foucault's last major publications had been *Surveiller et punir* (1975) and then *La Volonté de savoir*. There would be no more major publications until the second and third volumes of *Histoire de la sexualité* appeared immediately before Foucault's death in June 1984, by which time it had mutated into a genealogy of the desiring subject. The absence of major publications does not indicate a downturn in Foucault's productivity. On the contrary, he wrote widely and lectured all over the world. It was simply that books were no

longer the main support for his work. The spoken word replaced the written to a degree, and the words written were in the more ephemeral media of journals and even newspapers. The seminar that ran parallel to the lectures was also productive, and might have been more so if Foucault had been able to keep the numbers down. The very successful and popular *Moi, Pierre Rivière* was a product of the seminar, as was the less well-known exploration of the origins of the modern hospital.[16] Foucault's work was changing direction, with the genealogy of techniques and technologies replacing the earlier emphasis of the archaeology of knowledge.

The notion of bio-power and the cognate bio-politics emerges in the mid-1970s, or in other words as Foucault begins to move away from the somewhat implacable disciplinary mechanisms described in S*urveiller et punir* (1975). It derives initially from the right over life and death that was one of the attributes of sovereign power: the right to 'take life' or 'let live', but is quickly used to mean 'the acquisition of power over man insofar as man is a living being'.[17] In the 'introductory' volume of the *Histoire de la sexualité* series, biopower is further described as power that is 'exercised at the level of life, of the species, the race and of the massive phenomenon of a population', as a power that 'no longer deals solely with legal subjects over whom the ultimate hold was death, but with living beings'.[18] Something happens in the mid-eighteenth century, when hospitals cease to be *mouroirs* or places where people went to die (*mouroir* is a very pejorative term for an old people's home) and become 'curing machines' (*des machines à guerir*): biohistory begins.[19]

At first, Foucault seems to be tracing a historical sequence: a direct correlation between types of illegal act and types of punishment, as defined by codes of law; a correlation between disciplinary mechanisms of surveillance and correction; and, finally, a correlation between a regime of security in which delinquency rates can be predicted on a statistical basis, and in which security itself can be planned on the basis of a cost-benefit analysis. A discipline that applied primarily to individual bodies gives way to technologies of security applicable to a population. Foucault then denies that there is any such thing as a sequence of legal age, disciplinary age, age of security. The use of cells in a prison is clearly a disciplinary technology, but cells are also used in the very different regime of a monastery: the new regime can use the tools of the old.[20] There may be an aporia here. The leprosy/plague doublet invoked in January 1978 is effectively a reprise of a passage at the beginning of *Histoire de la folie* describing how the exclusion of lepers gave way to the 'management' of the bearers and victims of plague,[21] but there is no mention of either 'discipline' or 'security' in 1961. What appears to be a description of a historical sequence may, that is, be no more than a modification of the interpretive grid.

In a sense, Foucault's description or analysis shadows the development of its object. At the beginning of the first lecture on 'Security, Territory, Population', Foucault announces that he is going to talk about 'bio-power'

16. *Moi, Pierre Rivière, ayany égorgé ma mere, ma soeur et mon frère …* Paris, Gallimard,/Julliard 1973; *Les Machines à guérir (aux origines de l'hôpital moderne), dossier présenté par Michel Foucault, Blandine Barret Kriegel, Anne Thalamy, François Beguin, Bruno Fortier*, Brussels and Liège, Pierre Mardaga, 1979.

17. *Society Must Be Defended*, op. cit., p239.

18. *La Volonté de savoir*, op. cit., pp180, 187-88.

19. See in particular 'Crise de la medicine ou crise de l'antimédicine?' *DE III*, pp40-58. This is the text of a lecture given in Rio de Janeiro in October 1974.

20. *Sécurité, Territoire, Population*, op. cit., pp11-12.

21. *Histoire de la folie a l'âge classique*, Paris, Gallimard, Collection 'Tel', 1972, pp13-16.

or the mechanisms that allow the basic biological features of human beings to become the object of 'a politics, a political strategy, a general strategy of power'. He will discuss, that is, how 'modern Western societies began, from the eighteenth century onwards, to take into account the biological fact that human beings make up a human species'.[22] Foucault then moves on to discuss the notions of security, territory and population, or in other words the preconditions for the emergence of biopower, and as in any discussion of preconditions (which also have their preconditions), there is a danger of infinite regress or at least endless digression, and Foucault does not always avoid it.

The most astonishing feature of *Naissance de la biopolitique* is, however, that so little of the text is actually about biopolitics and that so much of it deals with economic liberalism and neo-liberalism.[23] This is the only sustained discussion of economics in Foucault, other than chapter VI of *Les Mots et les choses* (1966). It might, however, be more accurate to say that it is a discussion of economic *theory.* Foucault constructs a general model of an economic theory, characterised by its hostility to state intervention, its desire to place limitations on state power, and its insistence that market forces can drive and indeed govern an economy. In pre-war Austria and America, as in post-war Germany, liberalism (and then neo-liberalism) is further typified by its dislike of New Deals and Welfare States of all kinds; it projects on to a general art of government the formal principle of a market economy.[24] Foucault provides a sort of genealogy that goes back to Adam Smith's 'invisible hand', to Bentham's nice distinction between *agenda* and *non-agenda (*'Things to be done' and 'things not to be done'), and even the phsyiocrats' theories of 'natural prices'. At the same time, the power of the state is restricted in international terms by the recognition of the territorial integrity of nation-states and the establishment of a stable balance of power in continental Europe, thanks largely to the terms of the Treaty of Westphalia (1648).

At one point, Foucault chides 'socialism' for attaching such importance to 'texts': 'Under any real socialism ... we have to ask ... not "What text are you referring to, are you being faithful to the text or not" ... We have to ask what governmentality is appropriate to socialism'.[25] This is a valid criticism of some tendencies within socialism, though it might be more properly applied to those communists of an Althusserian persuasion for whom a correct reading of *Capital* would have spared us the ravages of Stalinism. Yet Foucault too has a tendency to fetishise the texts he reads from Quesnay onwards, and he does not read as an economist might: this is an economics in which there appears, for instance, to be no rate of profit or interest. And like the socialists he criticises, Foucault fails to ask about the form of governmentality appropriate to actually existing neo-liberalism. In doing so, he fails to pick up one of neo-liberalism's grimmer tendencies: its reliance upon authoritarianism.

Foucault's last lecture on 'the birth of biopolitics' was given on 4 April 1979. A month later, Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister. Britain was about to become the laboratory for an experiment in neo-liberalism or

22. *Sécurité, Territoire, Population*, op. cit., p3.

23. For a cogent account of the economics involved (and a more competent one than I can offer), see Thomas Lemke, 'The Birth of Bio-Politics: Michel Foucault's Lecture at the Collège de France on neo-liberal governmentality', *Economy & Society* vol 30, no 2, (May 2001): 190-207.

24. *Naissance de la biopolitique*, op. cit., p137.

25. Ibid., p95.

'Thatcherism'. That Foucault does not mention the British election is not particularly surprising, as he never displayed any interest in political life *outre-Manche* (and there is no categorical imperative requiring French thinkers to do so). It is, perhaps, surprising that he does not mention a slightly earlier, and already notorious experiment. He speaks, briefly and in passing, of the 'anarcho-liberalism' of the Chicago school, but only in order to locate it within the broad historical tradition of liberalism.[26] There is no mention of what happened when *los Chicago boys* were unleashed in Pinochet's Chile. Shock treatment was administered. An economy was gutted. A welfare state was dismantled and a dictatorship reinforced. Between 1974 and 1976, wages fell to half their 1970 value whilst interest rates soared to 178 per cent.[27] There was nothing 'frugal' about the repression of popular resistance. 'Small government' went hand in hand with 'big violence.' *Mutatis mutandis*, Thatcherism's talk of rolling back the state went hand in hand with a massive extension of the repressive state apparatus in 1984-85.

Governmentality and the related security/population/territory sequence implies a move away from 'contract' theories of the state and theories of 'natural' rights from Hobbes onwards. The paradox that underlies all such theories is of course that there must be a legal subject who exists prior to the contract that supposedly makes him or her a political subject. If the subject is a product of the internalisation of norms of security and discipline, the paradox is at least attenuated: there is nothing outside the framework of governmentality, and therefore no need for a theory of origins. Rights are not 'natural' but something won in struggle between those who govern (*gouvernants*) and those who are governed (*gouvernés*). In July 1981, Foucault and a delegation from Médicins du Monde attended a conference on piracy and the plight of the Vietnamese 'boat people' at the UN in Geneva. They were, stated Foucault, 'mandated by no one':

> And it is precisely that which gives us the right to speak … We must reject the division of labour we are so often offered: it is up to individuals to become indignant and to talk; it is up to governments to think and to act … The will of individuals must be inscribed in a reality over which governments wish to have a monopoly, a monopoly which we must wrest away from them, gradually and day by day.[28]

This is an eloquent statement of an honourable position. It is also a reminder that a thinker who is so often represented as being an 'absolute relativist' who makes political choices so problematic as to be impossible, had in fact a very sharp sense of what was and what was not 'tolerable'. '*Intolérable*' was the generic title of the pamphlets published by the Groupe d'Information sur les Prisons, with which Foucault worked so effectively in the 1970s.[29] The treatment of the boat people was indeed 'intolerable'; whether or not the elaboration of a theory of governmentality is a necessary preliminary to its denunciation must remain a matter for debate.

26. Ibid., pp121, 166.

27. Andy Beckett, *Pinochet in Piccadilly*, London, Faber, 2002, p174.

28. 'Face aux gouvernements, les droits de l'homme', *Actes: Les Cahiers d'Action juridique*, 54, (Summer 1986): 22. Not published in Foucault's lifetime, the text is not included in *DE*.

29. See the comprehensively magnificent Groupe d'Information sur les Prisons, *Archives d'une lutte 1970-1972*, Paris, Editions de l'IMEC, 2003.

# AFTER THE SCIENCE WARS

## Mara Mills

Bruno Latour, *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*, Harvard UP, Cambridge, MA, 2004, 307 pp; £16.95 paperback.

> One of my goals is to make a small contribution toward a dialogue on the Left between humanists and natural scientists – 'two cultures" which, contrary to some optimistic pronouncements (mostly by the former group), are probably farther apart in mentality than at any time in the past 50 years.
> Alan Sokal, 'Transgressing the Boundaries: An Afterword' (1996)

Earlier this year the science wars resurfaced in tangles of nation and personhood: What did that dark lake in Terri Schiavo's CT scan mean? Would Superman have been more monstrous with the living prostheses of stem cells? The imaginary of a 'science war' now stretches across the new American creationism and the feminist critique of objectivity. By most accounts, however, the physicist Alan Sokal's faux (foe)-hermeneutics of quantum gravity marked the bitter escalation of what are known as The Science Wars. Published in a 1996 issue of *Social Text* devoted to the 'science war' theme, Sokal's counterinsurgency propelled a line of flight in the realism-relativism debate that only recently seems to be running down.

Sokal's infamous paper was less a mock-critique of science than a politics of aspiration founded on the model of quantum gravity, misrendered as the physics was. His unveiling of the hoax shortly afterwards in *Lingua Franca* faulted the *Social Text* editors for, among other things, wanting to yoke progressive politics to a 'liberatory science'. Half a century after C.P. Snow staked out 'the two cultures' - and in the wake of culture-warring in the 1980s that had failed to shore up the canon and traditional disciplinarity - it seemed physics still required much boundary maintenance.

Most importantly, in retrospect, the 'Sokal affair' brought home the heterogeneity of expertise and democracy. Ten years later, in the midst of evermore science-and-gender trouble, we might recall the concluding 'joke' of Sokal's original article:

> The fundamental goal of any emancipatory movement must be to demystify and democratize the production of scientific knowledge, to break down the artificial barriers that separate 'scientists' from 'the public'. Realistically, this task must start with the younger generation, through a profound reform of the educational system. The teaching of science and mathematics must be purged of its authoritarian and elitist characteristics, and the content of these subjects enriched by incorporating the insights of the feminist, queer, multiculturalist and ecological critiques.[1]

1. Alan D. Sokal, 'Transgressing the Boundaries: Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity', *Social Text*, 46/47 (Spring 1996): 230.

2. See, for instance, *The One Culture? A Conversation About Science*, Jay A. Labinger and Harry Collins (eds), Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 2001; *Knowledge and the World: Challenges Beyond the Science Wars*, M. Carrier, J. Roggenhofer, G. Küppers, P. Blanchard (eds), Berlin, Springer-Verlag, 2004.

3. Biology has proven more amenable than physics to these projects, in part due to its 'genealogical' characteristics.

4. Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely*, Durham and London, Duke UP, 2004, p1.

5. Mark Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media*, Cambridge, MA, The MIT Press, 2004.

6. For example, Bruno Latour, '"Do You Believe in Reality?": News from the Trenches of the Science Wars' in *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard UP, 1999, pp1-23. See also his *War of the Worlds - What About Peace?* Chicago, Prickly Paradigm Press, 2002.

While physicists might still scoff at the prospect of content-reform, the question of democratization, the 'public and its problems', now transects the American academy. Sokal's local Science Wars are being disavowed or forgotten, and the militancy of the academic cottage industry that sprang up around his text has waned.[2] Sokal himself says it was never a war, a number of recent anthologies proclaim science peace, and, more than ever, feminists are 'transgressing the boundaries' to theorise *with* science.[3] Read the first page of Elizabeth Grosz's new *The Nick of Time*, 'an exploration of how the biological prefigures and makes possible the various permutations of life that constitute natural, social, and cultural existence'.[4] Or consider Mark Hansen's 'new philosophy' of mediation, grounded in certain performative theories from the cognitive sciences.[5] Moreover, Bruno Latour has finally drafted his post-constructivist manifesto which pledges that science need not obstruct the public sphere.

Meriting his own chapter in Sokal and Jean Bricmont's *Impostures Intellectuelles*, Bruno Latour's work has been equally contentious within the field of science studies. Latour has written a series of articles 'from the trenches of the Science Wars', arguing the precariousness - the monstrosity - of science studies, a quasi-discipline beleaguered equally by scientists and humanist-technophobes.[6] And science studies has been internally fraught over the increasing reach of relativism, particularly as that relativism has crept into matters of ontology. Latour's 'actor-network theory' (ANT) - wherein microbes, trains, doors, and humans are equally actants, a concept borrowed from semiotics - amounts to 'one more turn after the social turn' and has been accused of crossing over to a post-relativism that resembles a conservative realism.[7] Harry Collins's and Steven Yearley's notorious 'Epistemological Chicken' article earmarked the radicalism of ANT as 'a backward step' from the Sociology of Scientific Knowledge (SSK) and the latter's emphasis on the social-constructing of humans. The tenets of the 'strong programme' of SSK, outlined in the 1970s by David Bloor, proposed a 'symmetrical' treatment of scientific facts and falsehoods, a sociology of scientific content as much as context. Bloor's 1999 'Anti-Latour' firmly ousted the French School-master from the land of social constructivism, at the same time avowing that things themselves were distinct from the knowledge-making of subjects (and did not merit the agency Latour accorded them).[8]

By this point, Bruno Latour had already walked away from constructivism; *Politics of Nature* represents the culmination of his attempts to produce a new narrative (perhaps even a master narrative, although Latour has claimed on numerous occasions to write only books, not philosophies). His early *Laboratory Life*, co-authored with Steve Woolgar, examined 'the construction of scientific facts'; thereafter he rapidly distanced himself from the 'social' in social constructivism, deeming that term too universalising, god-like, amenable to conspiracy theory, and reliant upon nature-culture binarisms. (He always appreciated, however, the 'history, solidity, multiplicity, uncertainty, heterogeneity, risk taking, fragility of construction'.[9]) Moreover, Latour quartered his own ANT around the time of its tenth birthday for *not going far enough*, for

failing to demonstrate the transactions between potentially mutable actors.[10] (Trusting Latour's re-visionary impulses, ANT and 'the social' may very well make comebacks in 2006.)

Into this vacated space, Latour has introduced his political ecology, which promises that finally, 'Thank god, nature is going to die' (10). *Politics of Nature* offers a self-proclaimed tortoise's stroll through a new, and elaborate, *res publica*: a public assembly structured by two houses or powers, four professions (scientists, politicians, economists, moralists), and seven tasks. This political ecology is also a philosophy for things, and a *thing* is 'a scandal at the heart of an assembly that carries on a discussion requiring a judgment brought in common' (54). We start off from Plato's Cave; Latour urges us not to look back at its dangerous bifurcation of the noisy prevaricating social world from the mute shining truths of nature. No; herein humans and other things take part in a common world, co-producing one another - and all facts. 'Political philosophy did not anticipate that it would end up administering the sky, the climate, the sea, viruses, or wild animals' (204). Reification and social construction lose their sting: 'humans and nonhumans, provided that they are no longer in a situation of civil war, can *exchange properties*' (61).

Much of the material in *Politics of Nature* is recycled from previous work. We are still non-modern. Multi-naturalism is still preferable to multi-culturalism, and the realism/idealism debate remains passé. The distinction between facts and values continues to be flawed because 'the more we interfere with the production of facts, the more objective they become' (119). What once counted as fact or nature, however, now becomes the power 'to take into account', for instance, the ability of things to perplex a system and demand attention (109). In one of the nicest neologisms of the book, nonhumans and humans alike speak via spokespersons; we all have 'speech impedimenta' and require prostheses to articulate with one another. Social values, in this political ecology, are replaced by the power 'to arrange in rank order', which involves a necessary (and frustratingly undertheorized) hierarchisation of the public assembly. Somehow, the moralists must ensure 'the progressive composition of the common world' by determining, for instance 'on what basis might we declare a migratory bird more important than the time-honored customs of the hunters of the Baie de Somme' (158). The common good perpetually shifts, and cosmopolitics (a category indebted to Isabelle Stengers) relies on trial and consultation, not war. In fact, a major purpose of this project is to get out of the Cave and the science wars, to make professional expertise compatible with common sense (meaning what *is* or *might be* shared publicly).

Latour's politics are avowedly antirepresentational; he rejects the notion that secondary qualities such as colour or feeling delude subjects. Drawing on the intimate example of wine-tasting in Burgundy, he shows how noses, palates, chromatographers, vaporous alcohol, 'the arrangement of glasses on the barrel, the notations on the labels, the pedagogy of the cellar master' are technologies whose interactions are additive, and take part in an *experimental metaphysics*: 'reality grows to precisely the same extent as the work done to become sensitive

7. Bruno Latour, 'One more turn after the social turn …', in Ernan McMullin (ed), *The Social Dimensions of Science*, Notre Dame, Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 1992, pp272–294.

8. David Bloor, 'Anti-Latour', *Stud. Hist. Phil. Sci.*, Vol. 30, No. 1, (1999): 81–112.

9. Bruno Latour, 'The Promises of Constructivism' in *Chasing Technoscience: Matrix for Materiality*, Don Ihde and Evan Selinger (eds), Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana UP, 2003, pp27-46.

10. Bruno Latour, 'On Recalling ANT', in *Actor-Network Theory and After*, John Law and John Hassard (eds), Oxford, Blackwell, 1999, pp15-25.

to differences' (84-85). Latour's political ecology advances a pragmatics of re-presentation, whereby lost or excluded things can potentially be re-attached to the assembly, which as a unit demonstrates a learning curve (not to be confused with modernist progress). Naming, however, matters in Latour's system. Playing up active assembly, Latour reworks the social into association, matters of fact into matters of concern, nature and society into a collective, Science into the sciences, and the universe into a pluriverse. Construction is quietly replaced with composition. Things begin as propositions, which may become habits, or even 'instituted essences'. (Turning habits into essences is, in fact, one of the tasks of the scientists.) Alternately, these thing-appellants to the cosmos may be exteriorised as 'enemies'. Deemed neither foreign nor immoral (supposedly), these enemies can always appeal again for membership in the collective. Social structures, finally, have been reconceived as frequently-negotiated constitutions.

Latour's tone has noticeably changed from his earlier work. Yes, this is still the Latour of exuberant language, glossaries, and diagrams, although the trademark case studies of his empirical philosophy are regretfully slimmed to passing mention of mad cow disease, asbestos, and Kenyan game preserves. Perhaps he still 'wants to enrol us and keep us in line', as Steven Shapin complained in his review of *Science in Action*,[11] but it is likely that readers of *Politics of Nature* will fracture Latour's complicated system into a handful of keywords. Following on the heels of his recent *Critical Inquiry* polemic against conspiracy-theorising as the predominant mode of academic discourse,[12] Latour's infamous 'agonism' and militaristic language seem to have given way to a science studies version of reparative reading. Reviewers within his own field (for instance Adrian Johns and Michael John Gorman) have been unable to resist picking apart his 'facts' and double-checking his footnotes; it is no wonder that Latour regrets building a discipline with the logo 'MADE IN CRITICALLAND'.[13] What Donna Haraway has described as the perverse heroism of science studies, with all its virility - mimetic of 'the sciences' themselves - and its endless boyfighting, seems finally to be curbed; nevertheless, Latour is far from the queer academic witness, the 'self-aware, accountable, anti-racist FemaleMan' that Haraway demands.[14]

What are we to make of the post-paranoia (post-criticism?) now interlarding academia? Considering the ways democracy has failed the non-performers and the stigmatised, some of the 'enemies' in Latour's new political ecology will likely always remain appellants, outside the 'cosmogram'. An admirable version of reconciling science to 'the mob' would simply be increasing participation in the sciences, or promoting an ethos of experimentalism in the public sphere; another version of mob politics is simply US bully culture, as-is. In the 'counter-laboratories' of Latour's *Science in Action*, reality resulted from scientific controversies and competitions. In *Politics of Nature*, facts are finally *public* controversies; counter-laboratories, however, are conspicuously absent as we 'pass from a polemic of essences to a conciliation of habits' (87). Surely, with the triage involved in 'instituting essences', the composition of the common world cannot take place with universal composure.

11. Steven Shapin, 'Following Scientists Around', *Social Studies of Science*. Vol. 18, No. 3: 541. Perhaps Latour has also maintained that 'peculiar ophthalmologic condition' diagnosed by Shapin, whereby the practical details of work or technology-building are chronically blurred.

12. Bruno Latour, 'Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern', *Critical Inquiry* Vol. 30, No. 2, (Winter 2004).

13. Ibid.

14. Donna Haraway, 'Semantics', in *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan©_Meets_OncoMouse™*, New York and London: Routledge, 1997, p35.

# THE RULE OF EVERYONE BY EVERYONE

## *Jeremy Gilbert*

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire,* New York, Penguin Putnam, 2004, 427pp; US$27.95 hardback.

Marx showed long ago that even as capitalism concentrates wealth in the hands of a few, it ensures that the real work of production is done by the many, amongst whom ever-greater levels of real interdependence and silent co-operation are required. Today this means that at the level of global production, co-operative communication and networked social power are already a reality, a reality the left must learn to build on in the twenty-first century by building a movement for real global democracy. This is the basic argument made by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in their new book *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. In it they use the term 'Multitude' to name this vast creative collectivity to which we all now belong, as well as the general condition of collectivity as a fundamental fact of existence.

The term 'Multitude' is derived from early modern political philosophy, and the authors claim particular inspiration from the writings of Baruch Spinoza. In this they follow Gilles Deleuze, who once declared Spinoza the 'Christ of philosophers'. Within this philosophical current, Spinoza's rationalist pantheism is translated into a radical materialism which refuses any separation between different levels of being: 'body', 'mind', 'God' and 'world' are all placed on the same plane and understood to share the same basic substance. In developing the concept of Multitude - about which Spinoza really wrote nothing in any detail - the authors remain committed to this conceptual egalitarianism. Similarly, they take their ideal definition of 'Democracy' - 'the rule of everyone by everyone' - from a few sketchy notes made on the subject by Spinoza, but in so doing they clearly remain faithful to Spinoza's logic.

It's their utopian insistence on this ideal of democracy which sets Hardt and Negri apart from other post-structuralist, post-Marxist political philosophers. Thinkers such as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe have tended to stress the relationality and partiality of all social identities, their dependence on the shifting web of relationships in which all identities are caught up and which always leaves them perpetually unstable. By contrast Hardt and Negri, along with other members of the Italian Autonomist tradition to which they obliquely belong, stress the creative power of groups and individuals to constitute their own collective identities and material realities. This leads them, like many contemporary anti-capitalists, to worry about the compromises, power games and political limitations which any

system of representative politics necessarily involves, looking instead for a politics which works towards an ideal of fully shared sovereignty and complete autonomy. Conversely, Laclau's arguments on the logic of representation tend to imply that this is mere fantasy, as the messy business of representation is simply built into the reality of any kind of political situation, and that it is precisely the vain dream of eluding its difficulties which leads communities into less and less democratic forms of politics. While Laclau's recent work has offered a sophisticated meditation on the complex relationship between the universal and the particular in an age of postmodern differences, without prescribing particular forms of possible universality, *Multitude* puts forward a universalist politics for the twenty-first century. While the strength of this vision is its inspiring poetry, its weakness is its failure to consider precisely the relational, negotiable nature of political identities; the authors are left unable to say anything meaningful about the problem of formulating political strategies and coalitions in the new global context. Beyond shutting our eyes and wishing very hard, it's never clear how Hardt and Negri imagine that the 'prophetic' character of their work is going to manifest itself in some new political reality.

In positing 'Multitude' as a general fact of human existence, understood as inherently collective in character, Hardt and Negri are making a useful intervention into a field generally dominated by the politics and ethics of difference. It's not clear that their theorisation of collectivity gets much further than Paul Gilroy's recent calls for a 'planetary humanism'; nevertheless, in all these cases we can see that a new field of enquiry - one concerned with rethinking collectivity in the postmodern context - is opening up.

Or rather, it's becoming open to new influences and new audiences. One of the more disappointing aspects of *Multitude* is that it pays insufficient attention to the pre-existence of this field of debate and its recent history. At the philosophical level, they entirely ignore work by figures such as Laclau, despite rehearsing his arguments on the logic of representation almost word-for word. Deploying the Deleuzo-Guattarian concept of 'disjunctive synthesis', they make almost exactly the same observations as Laclau about representation's double-logic (splitting and re-defining that which it always fails adequately to represent in the very process of representing it), yet failing to get as far as he does with them. In terms of social and political analysis, while there's much that is new in *Multitude* and in Hardt and Negri's previous book *Empire*, they are also intervening in a debate that has been going on since at least the late 1950s. It was then that it began to be apparent to perceptive observers that the world of advanced capitalism was going to be a very different one to that described by Marx and Engels in the nineteenth century, or the one produced by the collaboration of industrialists, trade unionists and reformist governments in the post-war period. New electronic technologies, systems of communication and production techniques have enabled capitalism to undercut unionised labour to an extent undreamed

of since the 1930s. The power of the unions looks unlikely ever to return to post-war levels. 'Advanced' capitalist societies have freed a majority of their citizens from immediate fear of poverty, creating a whole new set of political questions about how we want to live and who we want to be, whilst leaving behind a substantial minority (and, globally, an impoverished majority) to whom the comfortable seem permanently indifferent. The combination of new life choices with the increasing uncertainty wrought by technological, economic and political change means that personal and social life is more complex today than ever before; the established institutions of representative democracy seem increasingly unable to cope, and power is left more and more in the hands of technocrats and managerial elites.

The big difference between Hardt and Negri and commentators such as Fredric Jameson, Perry Anderson and David Harvey is an almost messianic level of optimism, which is both their greatest strength and their greatest weakness. Toni Negri's distinctive contribution to the debate since the 1960s has been to pursue a line of argument which runs directly counter to those who see the rolling back of social democracy and the collapse of the Fordist social compromise simply as results of the defeat of the working class. Negri has argued, rather, that the restructuring of capitalism in the 1970s and 1980s was a necessary response to the wave of working-class and student militancy, new social demands from women and various minorities and worldwide anti-colonial struggles which characterised the late 1960s. In this, he is far less negative about the political consequences of post-modernity than are traditional Marxists, or postmodern pessimists such as John Gray. At the same time, Hardt and Negri's apparent certainty about the democratic future gives their analysis a simplistic character, lacking the sophistication of those postmodern socialists such as Stuart Hall or the authors of *Beyond the Fragments* and *New Times* who have, since the 1960s, pursued an egalitarian and libertarian politics 'without guarantees'. As Chantal Mouffe has commented on several occasions, the combination of deterministic certainty and a constitutive lack of strategic thinking can easily lead back to the political quietism of Second-International Marxism, and Negri's recent injunction to radicals to 'wait and be patient' certainly seems to bear out this view. *Multitude's* contribution is to provide a fairly wide readership with a new vocabulary, a new set of insights into the changes we are all living through, and thus a way out of the diagnosis of catastrophic defeat for the forces of progress and democracy. The claim that the self-constituting activity of the Multitude (which is all of us) is taking us towards the promised land of 'the rule of everyone by everyone' is certainly inspiring, and a true 'resource of hope', in Raymond Williams's phrase. Whether it can become anything more than that remains to be seen.

The third volume co-authored by these two activist scholars, *Multitude* is at first glance the product of an unusual collaboration. While Hardt has an admirable history as a political activist in his own right, he's best known as a professor of literature and philosophy at Duke University, one of the most

comfortably privileged academic institutions in the world. Negri, on the other hand, is the last great hero of 1968. A leading radical intellectual in Italy in the 1960s and 70s, he fled to Paris at the end of the latter decade after being falsely accused by the Italian government of playing a leading role in the terrorist activities of the Red Brigades. Imagine Stuart Hall being personally blamed for the Brixton riots and consequently imprisoned by the Thatcher government, and you have some idea of the extent of right-wing state terror in Italy during this period; the heroic status which has been accorded to Negri since is hardly surprising.

On the other hand, perhaps it's only an accident of history that their respective biographies look so different, as Negri himself has always earned his living as a philosopher; his solo work is more abstract, and less grounded in immediate political problems, than his collaborations with Hardt. Indeed, it is Hardt's familiarity and sympathy with the political and intellectual traditions of English-language Cultural Studies which really makes this work different from comparable interventions by continental philosophers, or theoretical polemicists like Slavoj Zizek. What makes *Multitude* refreshing is not just its passion and commitment, but the sense that the authors at least know of the existence of life outside the seminar room or the organisational headquarters. Hardt and Negri's commentary on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* may not be the most expert, but at least they know that there's a world out there, and at least they don't entirely despise it.

While Hardt and Negri's first book is an interesting but relatively overlooked work on the theory of the state, it was their second, *Empire*, which really set the publishing world on fire. In it, they argued that the nature of political power was radically changing in a new world of networked communications and global flows of people, money and ideas. Writing against those who saw the 'new world order' as dominated by old-fashioned US imperialism, they argued that in fact there was no actual centre to world power any more; advanced capitalism depends for its profitability on a fluid and multifarious set of relationships between economic and political institutions of all shapes and sizes. This seems like an odd idea at first, but Hardt and Negri draw attention to the fact that historically the great empires - Rome, the British Empire - did not operate as highly centralised authoritarian regimes but instead pursued a logic of endless expansion which often left real power distributed throughout a complex network of institutional relationships, much like those between national governments, corporations, and international bodies such as the UN and WTO today.

The emergence of the neocon hegemony in the US was widely seen as undermining this hypothesis, and Hardt and Negri have had some trouble in explaining how Bush's militaristic nationalism can arise in such a context. Rather lamely, Hardt suggested that Bush should have read *Empire* (presumably had he done so he would never have done anything so gauche as flagrantly to disprove its core argument). One of the key aims of *Multitude* is to deal with this problem, but it does not do it particularly well. Hardt

and Negri are brilliant philosophers, but poor theorists of international relations, with a tendency to stretch tenuous analogies well past breaking point. Their hypothetical schema dividing up the world into a new aristocracy (including those European elites alienated by US unilateralism), with an American monarchy, looks pretty clumsy, and isn't obviously useful to anyone. It doesn't fit nearly as well with their characterisation of 'Empire' as does their parallel argument that we have entered a period in which 'perpetual war' - on terror, on crime, on drugs, on the enemies of the US, on everything at the borders of Empire - has become the ordinary mode of politics. While the latter argument is compelling and persuasive, the former seems motivated primarily by an insistent desire to use Spinoza's work on politics - which is largely concerned with drawing up model constitutions for ideally-conceived 'monarchies' - as a template, even where it's patently inappropriate to do so. The attachment of a certain Deleuzian tendency to Spinoza as a sort of philosophical mascot would be worthy of a study in its own right; this book is a good example.

Personally, I think that there is a more persuasive defence of *Empire* available than that made in *Multitude*, in that it does offer a brilliant description of the type of international capitalism which Clinton and Blair were intent on implementing in the 1990s. Led by the software industry and the internet boom, infused with the Californian values of social liberalism and hedonistic creativity, committed to multilateral interventions (from GATT to the war in Kosovo) in defence of its agendas, this was clearly a new and aggressively borderless form of capitalism. However, there was very little on offer here for the industrialists and oil barons of the American South and Mid-West or those non-metropolitan US populations excluded from the new cosmopolitanism. It's they who have now formed the political alliance which underpins the Bush government. The fact that such an analysis is missing from Hardt and Negri's new work is not just incidental: their tendency is almost always to speak in terms of broad-brush metaphors and abstract generalisations, and in the process they can end up making analyses which are just not very political. Too many of their descriptions of social states and processes neglect the specific power struggles which underlie them, or which might change them.

These weaknesses are marginal, however, when considered in the light of the particular contribution that *Multitude* is trying to make. It isn't often that a book appears in English that makes a serious effort to intervene in philosophical debates while seeking a wider audience amongst political activists. This is a far less unusual event in continental Europe, where the presence of philosophy on secondary school curricula means that it isn't only professional academics who can boast a basic grounding in the philosophical tradition. However, even in France, the recent work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri has become the key reference point for one of the most dynamic groups of political intellectuals to have emerged in recent years, inspiring the title and theme of the influential journal *Multitudes*. If it

does no more in the English-speaking world than provoke similar dialogues between activists, theorists and cultural critics, this will prove to be a major contribution. Some may scoff at their romanticism, and, taken on its own, its lack of philosophical rigour would make *Multitude* a poor guide to contemporary politics. As a contribution to the general reformulation of left politics in a postmodern context, however, it may well prove invaluable. When, towards the end of the volume, the authors call for the reinvention of a premodern, republican, anti-individualist, political conception of love, writing that 'Love means precisely that our expansive encounters and continuous collaborations bring us joy'; that 'without this love, we are nothing', one can really only sneer or cheer. I'm cheering all the way.

*A shorter version of this review appeared in* Red Pepper, *May 2005.*

# FOR A PLANETARY CONVIVIALITY

*Yogita Goyal*

Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture*, Oxford, Routledge, 2004; 183pp; £14.99 hardback.

Paul Gilroy diagnoses British society as suffering from the lingering effects of its vast colonial empire, the loss of which it has never really been able to manage. British anxieties about the loss of colonial power, Gilroy suggests, have become translated as racism against post-World-War II immigrants, a hostility that is only gaining more force under Bush's global politics. Gilroy's sense of political outrage at the way the detainees at Camp Delta are being held combines with an acute analysis of the new racism of our times. *After Empire* comprises a call to re-read and understand history, to make links between an imperialist past and a racist present, and to draw useful lessons for our own times from thinkers as diverse as W.E.B. Du Bois, Frantz Fanon, George Orwell, Montesquieu, and (perhaps surprisingly) the comic character Ali G.

In Gilroy's own words, the book 'considers the plight of beleaguered multiculture and defends it against the accusation of failure' (xi). In this defence, he both offers a stinging indictment of contemporary racism and points to signs of hope in a culture of 'conviviality' in Britain's urban areas. He defines 'conviviality' as an ability to engage with racial difference beyond the dictates of identity politics, in the realm of an ordinary acceptance of cosmopolitan solidarity. Confessing that *After Empire* is the product of an 'unabashed humanism' (xii), Gilroy substitutes the more limited term, planetarity, for the much-used one of globalisation. One of the most important assertions of this book is that twentieth-century multiculturalism - both its promise and its problems - can only be understood in relation to the history of imperialism. This history, Gilroy argues, is too often viewed through the psychic lens of melancholia.

In taking up the specific instance of Britain, Gilroy tries to understand why Britain dwells so insistently upon its own fight against Nazism, and how it manages the complex of guilt, denial, anxiety, and lost pride about the empire by displacing it on to its postcolonial settlers and immigrants. Citing Matthew Arnold's imperial melancholy on viewing the white cliffs of Dover, Gilroy traces a shift to a postcolonial or postimperial melancholia, whereby the nation avoids shame over its colonial history and evades any historical responsibility. (The absence from Gilroy's discussion of any reference to similar debates in post-Apartheid South Africa and African-American struggles for reparations for slavery, however, is a significant one.) Such a process of melancholia enables Britons simultaneously to seize the

status of victims for themselves and to demonise immigrants as the source of Britain's social and economic decline.

In a departure from much of his previous work, Gilroy turns his focus to the postcolonial world - in particular, to the mechanisms of colonial rule, which define new forms of brutality, and the response to such mechanisms by national liberation movements. His particular example is Frantz Fanon's advocacy of a new humanism, which Gilroy reads as an attempt not simply to articulate the contours of a fight against racism, but to render race-thinking untenable. His attempt here is laudable, especially when viewed in light of his earlier work, which bypassed much of the work of decolonising nationalisms. In particular, his insistence on the historicity of race-thinking, as well as his demand that we historicise our conceptions of race, resonates with several critiques of his most influential book, *The Black Atlantic*. Such critiques charged that Gilroy circumvents historicity in his model of the black Atlantic world. Here, as he argues for the unmaking of constructions of race, ethnicity, and identity, he seems to be responding to those critiques - but only partially. His fundamental propositions remain unaltered. He argues that race, nation, and ethnicity are dangerous concepts by which to understand both individual and collective identities. He again rails against cultural insiderism, or the idea of ownership of culture, arguing passionately for a more cosmopolitan understanding of our place in the world. In this quest, he draws upon those parts of the work of Du Bois and Fanon that suggest a concern not simply with local or national issues, but with their own place as citizens of the world. His reading of Du Bois recuperates an impulse in his thought whereby the so-called Negro problem or the problem of the colour-line can translate into a universal humanity for the entire world. In this way, planetarity is not opposed to alterity, but a means of living with it. Just as, for Gilroy, Du Bois serves to offer signs of a universal conception of humanity via his articulation of African-American struggles, Fanon's work offers a means to replace the dualism of black and white by a concept of relation.

In his effort to recuperate a vernacular cosmopolitanism, Gilroy rightly points out that conceptions of globalisation often swing between seeing it as an inevitable process of westernisation or a despairing acceptance of inevitable cultural differences which cannot be bridged or translated, constituting separate camps. Looking for fissures within rather than between civilisations, Gilroy examines the current rhetoric of the clash of civilisations through the insights of Freud, particularly his distinction between mourning and melancholia. Finding significant links between the political climates of inter-war Europe and post-9/11 United States, Gilroy draws on the histories of Nazism, colonialism, and slavery to excavate a notion of universal humanity. He articulates an alternative definition of cosmopolitanism, one that is vernacular rather than state-centred. Calling this a 'vulgar' or 'demotic' cosmopolitanism, he defends it from charges of elitism, believing that estrangement from or even disloyalty to one's own culture is necessary in

order to carry out the tasks of translation and interculture. Reading figures as diverse as Montesquieu and Ali G., he castigates the notion of culture as property, seeking to expand it beyond claims of ownership on the one hand, and consumerism on the other, carving out a space for a postmodern planetary consciousness. Drawing on experiences of suffering rather than on notions of sovereignty or autonomy, Gilroy advocates theorising subjectivity outside of institutional politics and notions of linear progression, but in dialogue with ethical judgment. His corresponding re-imagining of the world sees it 'not as a limitless globe, but a small, fragile, and finite place, one planet among others with strictly limited resources that are allocated unequally' (83). His example for such an imagining is the human shields in various parts of the world, who direct attention to those bodies which have been stripped of value and rights, by placing their own rights-bearing bodies in the way of harm. Gilroy sees this as an example of cosmopolitan solidarity from below, outside the purview of nation-states and multi-national corporations, a present-day instance of Gandhian non-violent strategies, outside the simplistic logic of identity politics.

As he maps a topography of British culture, Gilroy further considers the role of sports and spectators, and evaluates the intertwined discourses of racism, nationalism, masculinity and xenophobia as signs of the malaise that afflicts British society. In contrast to sport, the zone of popular culture affords an ability to laugh at British anxieties, opening the door to a less melancholic reaction to British history. Attempting to move the discussion of multiculturalism beyond the worn topics of immigration control and assimilation, he highlights the vernacular culture of conviviality, where intermixture is ordinary or even banal, and race is stripped of meaning. Such performers as Mike Skinner, Ali G., and the cast of *The Office* help create a sense that racism is something on which the country has to turn its back, directing it instead to uneasy laughter and postmodern reflexivity.

This work is at its most useful and timely as an attack on contemporary liberalism for its refusal to think about race and difference in a complex - and above all - historical fashion. At times, he conflates such liberal ideologues with those who parade identity politics, or forms of racial or cultural absolutism. According to Gilroy, US anti-racism reifies race by defining it as an 'experiential and therapeutic question that identifies a zone of feeling' (160). One of his primary critiques of identity politics, for example, is that, once reified, race is impervious to translation. Exhorting Europe to follow a different path, Gilroy contends that we have 'hybrid culture on our side and postcolonial counter-history at our disposal' (163). Arguing against all kinds of attempts at cultural homogeneity, Gilroy necessarily conflates dominant and oppositional narratives that base themselves on cultural fixity. Such conflation will, no doubt, offend certain readers, while others, more familiar with postcolonial studies, will find some of his assertions routine. For instance, his contention that the colony functioned as a 'laboratory' will not come as a surprise to readers familiar

with studies of colonial discourse. Many readers will further question the enormous burden he places on figures in popular culture (Ali G., The Streets, *The Office*) to embody his notion of conviviality.

Such criticisms notwithstanding, Gilroy's central insight is both powerful and timely. Instead of organising our knowledge about postcolonial history in Europe around the figure of migrancy, Gilroy challenges us to do so around the concept of racism. This is part of his endeavour to argue that inversions of colonial and racial constructions simply do not suffice; instead we must look for alternate conceptions of morality, politics, government, sovereignty, law, and finally, of what it means to be human.

The best way to read this book, it seems to me, is to mine it for its sporadic brilliant insights, admiring the breadth of its framework, rather than look for explications of specific intellectuals, or of particular historical moments. The book's logic is expansive: it is an effort to explain how to think about not only our contemporary moment, but the history of slavery and colonialism, and the impact of those institutions on British imagined communities. *After Empire* traverses current political events, nineteenth- and twentieth-century philosophies of racial difference, popular culture (particularly sports and music), as well as the insights of influential black theorists like Fanon and Du Bois. The search for a more precise logic, or greater specificity in its links and transitions, will only prove frustrating. Gilroy's general tone is a provocative mixture of well-placed sarcasm, exhortation, analysis, speculation, and didacticism. An unabashed utopian call, shot through with outrage, disappointment, despair, and finally a measure of hope, *After Empire* serves as a fitting response to the uncertainty of our times.

# LOCATION, LOCATION

## *Ben Highmore*

Edward Dimendberg, *Film Noir and the Spaces of Modernity*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2004, 327pp; £38.95 hardback, £16.95 paperback.

About halfway through Edward Dimendberg's *Film Noir and the Spaces of Modernity*, we learn that 'where movie directors first scoured for locations, urban developers often later followed. For countless buildings and neighbourhoods of the postwar period, cinematic representation in film noir augured the kiss of death' (165). This last sentence is exemplary of Dimendberg's approach: on the one hand a descriptive style that often mimes the rhetoric of film noir ('the kiss of death'); on the other a link forged between film and city that is direct and concrete. Noir directors film a street: developers rip it up and build condos. Locations from Los Angeles and New York exemplify this process. In Los Angeles it is Bunker Hill that became a prime location for film noir on the eve of its demolition and transformation from low rent neighbourhood to its rebirth as a Gehry-built 'imagineered' district within the sprawling Exopolis mapped by LA geographers such as Edward W. Soja and Michael J. Dear.[1] Bunker Hill is crucial to the critical scenography of films such as *Night Has a Thousand Eyes* (John Farrow, 1948), Joseph Losey's remade *M* (1951) and *Kiss Me Deadly* (Robert Aldrich, 1955). In Manhattan it is Stanley Kubrick's 1955 *Killer's Kiss* that insistently trawls back and forth across Times Square and Pennsylvania Station as these sites are about to undergo transformations towards a new, shinier corporate future. Jules Dassin's 1948 filmed version of Weegee's *Naked City* concentrates on the alleys round Manhattan's East River, Turtle Bay neighbourhood as it moves from being a derelict area of abattoirs to becoming the site for erecting the United Nations HQ. Such transformations vividly render the North American city as palimpsest, conjuring images of the UN's foundations driven into blood-soaked soil. But the larger question is; what is this relationship between film genre and urban process? And to what degree is the prescient choice of location merely coincidental or a necessary outcome of film noir's approach to urban geography?

Dimendberg's fascination with the newly outmoded spaces of the city, alongside an emphasis on the uncanny aspects of the urban, puts film noir into the orbit of Surrealism. Louis Aragon's *Le Paysan de Paris*, for instance, was set in the *Passage de l'Opéra*; by the time the book had been published (1926) the arcade had been demolished. Yet film noir, for Dimendberg, offers a much more sustained attention to the processes of urbanisation,

1. Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other Real-and-Imagined Places*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1996; and *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2000; Michael J. Dear, *The Postmodern Urban Condition*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2000.

and, due to its later historical moment, an engagement with a new set of complex and contradictory urban forces. For Dimendberg 'film noir remains unique for its engagement with urban subject matter more often encountered in social and architectural histories than in Hollywood narrative film' (91). While film noir is able, like Surrealism, to register what Ernst Bloch called 'non-synchronous simultaneity' - the simultaneous existence of the newly fashioned and the age-old (and everything else in between) - film noir engages with a range of spatial dynamics that either weren't in existence or weren't so pressing at the moment of Surrealism's emergence. Evidence of this historical shift is found in the contrast between Fritz Lang's studio-shot 1931 original version of *M* and Losey's remake twenty years later. Where Lang's version has the murderer writing to the newspaper, in Losey's version (where these scenes don't exist) the power of newspapers has given way to the omnipresence of television as the police use this new medium to warn parents how to protect their children. In Fritz Lang's *M* 'the army of beggars mobilized by the underworld in Berlin is replaced in Losey's remake by a fleet of radio-networked taxi drivers in Los Angeles' (222). As newspapers are usurped by TV and professional 'loiterers' by taxi drivers, the city becomes a media saturated environment networked by freeways.

Such factors point to a newly sprawling postwar urbanism in North America signalled by the endless megalopolis of the north-eastern seaboard (Boston to Philadelphia) and that capital city of sprawl, Los Angeles. Much of Dimendberg's book is taken up with theorising these urban forces; by using a variety of writers (particularly Henri Lefebvre, but also those, like Lewis Mumford, who were nearer to the North American locations of film noir) he suggestively figures postwar urbanism as governed by both centripetal forces (pulling inwards) and centrifugal ones (pushing outward). Though it is tempting to see these as sequential forces (centripetal urbanism followed by centrifugal urbanism) - and Dimendberg suggests that such a sequence might explain differences between early and late film noir - the understanding of urbanism that is most compelling is when they are seen as simultaneous, when the city is seen as pushing and pulling at the same time. In this way suburban sprawl, crucially aided by an enormous expansion of road systems (which in the North American version often coincided with the purposeful neglect of public transport systems), doesn't result in a thinning of urban space. Rather urban space is now subject to sprawling densities that find their most symptomatic form in the clogged highways of rush-hour or the massed throngs of city workers on the streets - workers who may live many miles out of town among the manicured lawns of an up-market housing development. This constant pushing and pulling, which is also articulating a simultaneous homogenising and differentiating, is well described by Jean-Paul Sartre (another major reference in the book) and leads Sartre to say of New York that 'you never lose your way, and you are always lost' (63)

Film noir, then, is seen as uniquely poised, historically, to describe the

changing environment of the city, and its sensitivity to the uncanny and criminal aspects of the city inoculates it against the boosterism of urban developers and the celebratory claims of politicians. The result is a critical geography attuned to the dynamic rhythms of urban change, where the scars of recent history (depression, war) remain visibly on the surface. Thus, to answer the question posed at the start of this review: it is not merely coincidence that film noir should chance upon land about to go under the developer's wrecking ball, but the result of a critical reading of the social dynamics of the urban landscape.

Dimendberg's book will, I'm sure, be seen as a crucial addition to the literature on film noir. It should also, and this is a sign of its critical productivity, find a place in the burgeoning literature of cultural geography. But in privileging the urban scenography of film noir, Dimendberg necessarily de-emphasises the psycho-sociological roles of the protagonists. Thus, there is little discussion of how the presentation of gendered personas (the *femme fatale*, most obviously) relate to the changing social geography of the city. Given the gendered connotations of centrifugal and centripetal urbanism,[2] as well as the work of feminist film theorists in relating film-noir to changes in the labour market and the attempted re-domestication of women in the wake of the Second World War,[3] Dimendberg's urban geography is often gender-blind (though he has some insightful things to say about the representation of masculinity in film noir). Perhaps, though, this is just the result of tenaciously sticking to the mean streets of the city without peeping into their often hidden interiors.

2. Susan Saegert, 'Masculine Cities and Feminine Suburbs: Polarized Ideas, Contradictory Realities', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 5, no. 3 (1980), Supplement, pp96-111.

3. The best entry to this work is still via E. Ann Kaplan (ed), *Women in Film Noir*, London, BFI, 1978.

# Fear Itself

## Shelley Trower

Joanna Bourke, *Fear: A Cultural History*, Virago Press, London, 2005; 500pp; £25 hardback. Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Routledge, New York, 2004; 224pp; £16.99 paperback.

Nobody, now, is going to write about fear without mentioning terrorism. In the 1990s an increasing number of cultural theorists, historians, and literary critics argued that people in the twentieth century were *too* afraid, somewhat paranoid, even hysterical. Two of the more notorious critiques of twentieth-century panic were Elaine Showalter's *Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and Modern Culture* and Frank Furedi's *Culture of Fear*, both of which were first published in 1997 and followed by subsequent editions. Victims, it seemed, were actually persecutors. Showalter observed that damage was done to those who were falsely accused - of sexual abuse, for example - in contemporary 'witch hunts'. The most frightening people in the 1990s it seemed, were those who were, or at least claimed to be, frightened.

Since 2001, the idea that what we should fear is fear itself has become more plausible. This idea accrues massive moral authority in the wake of the war in Iraq. Joanna Bourke in *Fear: A Cultural History* observes that fear of 'the Terrorist' has resulted in 'the persecution of immigrants [and] the giddy boasting about the need for "pre-emptive" strikes', among other things. 'We now use terror-speak to justify terrorising others', writes Bourke (x). Sara Ahmed in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* provides an account of specific ways in which immigrants and asylum seekers are subject to persecution in the context of political and cultural anxiety over terrorism. She examines the assumption that people 'who flee from terror and persecution may be bogus *insofar as they could be the agents of terror and persecution*' (80). For both Bourke and Ahmed, terrorism provides a compelling background for their claims that fear is implicated in political activity.

Depending on when and where a person lives, the objects of fear, the feeling of fear, the shapes in which fear is communicated or incommunicable, vary. Bourke has written an entertaining, at times disturbing, even frightening history of the changeability of fear. The frightening things discussed in *Fear* include fire, martians, wars, pollution, cancer, rape and terrorism, as well as fear itself; for Bourke, the emotion frequently displaces and exceeds in significance the actual threat. As concern about an afterlife of hell began to fade in secular society, and as life expectancy rose and starvation became an unlikely source of death in the Western twentieth

1. For an account of the depiction of therapists as wicked Svengali figures in the controversy over recovered memory for example, see Daniel Pick, *Svengali's Web: The Alien Enchanter in Modern Culture*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2000.

century, other kinds of fear proliferated. Politicians, journalists and psychologists play leading roles, according to Bourke, in stirring up panic. Her arguments are supported by selections from a diverse array of sources, ranging from self-help manuals of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries to newspaper articles, magazines and websites, the work of psychologists, feminists, and occasionally other historians.

This raises the question of the place of emotion in the writing of history. Historians, according to Bourke, tend to see emotions as 'by-products' (6). There are some exceptions, and Bourke considers their limitations in afterwords to each chapter. The primary difficulty for the historian who seeks to deal with the emotions, it seems, is that they 'enter the historical archive only to the extent to which they transcend the insularity of individual psychological experience and present the self in the public realm'. Through her analysis of 'texts', Bourke traces the cultural variations in 'the nature of "fear"' (7). As portrayed in *Fear*, fear tends to seem excessive, influential and political, because only that which transcends individual experience - that which can be found in publications, in public libraries - is noticeable. Can emotions, for this approach, be anything other than 'cultural artefacts', or socially 'constituted', as Bourke says they are? 'Discourse shapes bodies ... bodies also shape discourse: people are "weak or pale with fright", "paralysed by fear" and "chilled by terror"', explains Bourke (8). These are descriptions of feelings of fear, but it is hard to see Bourke's point. She ignores the possibility that not every experience of fear enters discourse, or that sometimes people may have no way of putting it into discourse.

As a cultural or national characteristic, fear is construed here as potentially more dangerous and destructive than the imagined threat. The idea that fear reproduces fear - that, for example, 'terror-speak' is used 'to justify terrorising others' - becomes so dominant in *Fear* that it prevents a balanced engagement with other specific social and political situations. By citing the more excessive versions of concern over rape and child abuse in terms of 'moral panic' and its harmful effects, all sense of the possibility that the abuse in the first place may have been harmful is lost. It seems in fact that for Bourke, 'victims', their psychologists, and anyone else who might once in a while have attempted to help them, actually do the damage. This is to repeat a cycle of blame, without conceding that it cuts both ways. Undoubtedly the concern over sexual abuse has had negative as well as positive effects - including the demonization of 'the paedophile' (328) - but since the mid-1990s the backlash has constructed another set of enemies: 'so-called' victims, feminists, therapists, social workers.[1] At the turn of the twentieth century, Freud, it is well known, came to interpret his patients' accounts of sexual assault as the fulfilment of their own unconscious desires. Bourke ignores any history in which the stories of children were dismissed as unbelievable, women were accused of 'asking for it', soldiers were seen as faking symptoms of shell-shock in order to avoid fighting and shot. This is a pity, because Bourke's main hope is that instead of fearing others we might

'fear the pain suffered by others' (391), which is an argument for social solidarity rather than xenophobia, and one which sees a positive place for emotion in our relations with one another.

Like Bourke, Sara Ahmed is concerned with the construction of threatening others. The first emotion to appear in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* is 'rage' against immigrants, followed by 'love' for the nation, which is 'to feel injured by these others' (1). The British 'National Front' has used the phrase 'Soft Touch Britain', which, as Ahmed persuasively argues, imagines the nation as bodily, its borders like sensitive skin. The point is that 'emotions operate to "make" and "shape" bodies as forms of action, which also involve orientations towards others' (4). Engaging with the sociality of emotions, the circulation of feelings, Ahmed offers detailed and personal readings and responses to a variety of sources which enable her to hang onto the idea of individuals, where Bourke tends to dissolve them into waves of panic. Ahmed moves beyond the emotional construction of others to develop a more reflective analysis of its affects on these others - as subjects. In her reading of a white child's fear as described by its object, for example, Ahmed finds that the 'black body itself becomes enclosed by the fear, and comes to feel that fear as its own, such that fear is felt as an impossible or inhabitable body. In this way, fear does not simply come from within and then move outwards towards objects and others (the white child who feels afraid of the black man); rather, fear works to secure the relationship between those bodies' (62-3). Each of Ahmed's chapters concentrates on a different emotion in relations between self and other, or 'us and them': pain, hate, fear, disgust, shame and love. The final two chapters explore the role of emotions - including grief, wonder, and hope - in queer and feminist politics.

In Ahmed's three main examples of situations involving fear, versions of home are constructed as the space of safety. In the encounter between the white child and the black man, the mother's body becomes a defence against the apparent danger. In narratives of feminine vulnerability, 'the outside' is constructed as dangerous as opposed to domestic space, apparently serving to restrict the movement of women. In the case of terrorism, a government might use fear so that subjects come to seek its protection. After September 11, Ahmed observes, George Bush encouraged citizens to 'love' their home and nation, in turn to be defended in the war against terrorism. The concern with the security of home, however, clearly serves to exclude others.

The perception of immigrants as a threat to the family, the community and nation, is perhaps what enables Ahmed to see differences between the fear of terrorism and domestic abuse. If the ideal of the family home supports actions of defence against suspected terrorists, then contempt for victims of abuse within the home could be viewed as part of the very climate of fear that is critiqued by Bourke. Ahmed's account of how narratives about feminine vulnerability serve to keep women at home, provides a link to the final chapter, 'Feminist Attachments', in which the effects of 'consciousness-

raising' in the 1970s, which contributed to a rise in public awareness about violence in the domestic sphere, are discussed. This has had some positive effects. Ahmed claims, for example, that it 'allowed women to make connections between their experiences and feelings in order to examine how these were implicated in structural relations of power' (172). But it has also had some negative effects, many of which are explored by Bourke. In this context Ahmed considers 'the transformation of the wound into an identity' (173).[2] This is a recurring theme in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, and it is proposed that responses to 'wound culture' should not operate as generalised critique. No specific examples of such critique are given, but Ahmed suggests that narratives of injury - ranging from national discourses and the concern with immigrants to reports of domestic abuse - should not all be treated as equally symptomatic of wound culture. If the problem with Bourke's *Fear* is its exaggeration of the similarities between a "war against terrorism" and therapeutic discourse, Ahmed's proposition that the pain of injury should form a starting point for feminist political action seems no less problematic.

The hope, for Ahmed, that the past will not be repeated in the future, is felt in the present. She does not propose that feminists let go of the past - of pain, anger, feelings of the injustice of patriarchy, colonisation, slavery, racism - but that it should be transformed, now and into the future. This is based on the assumption that injury can only be repeated, covered over, or transformed, not 'truly' forgotten.

Ahmed and Bourke clearly hold similar views on the issue of terrorism, yet the differences in their approaches lead to arguments that, in some ways, are poles apart. This reflects a wider debate in which those who are critical of 'wound culture', or what Bourke calls 'trauma society', fail to acknowledge that the traumatised tend to be silenced, or blamed for their own injuries, or even blamed for harming others. This is in part because some people (belonging to communities of feminist 'survivors', for instance) have contributed to what can be seen as moral panics; this does not, however, mean that everyone has such ease of access to therapists or other forms of support as Bourke suggests. In fact Bourke and Ahmed, along with Showalter, Furedi, and numerous other academics and journalists, agree that there is the danger of what Ahmed calls 'therapeutic culture' (174). This is a far cry from the immediate difficulties many victims experience in escaping, recovering and leaving behind oppressive and frightening situations. On one hand it is suggested that experiences of suffering should be central to future political actions; on the other, that 'victims' are at the core of a culture that demonises and attacks others. Are these alternatives, as put forward respectively in these two books, the only options?

2. This is Wendy Brown's claim in *States of Injury: Power & Freedom in Late Modernity*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995. It is also referred to by Roger Luckhurst in 'Traumaculture', *new formations* 50 (2003): 47.

# BOOKNOTES

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Jay Prosser, *Light in the Dark Room: Photography and Loss*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2005, 248pp; £16 paperback; £48.50 cloth.

One of the most interesting features of work in the emerging field of visual studies is the connections critics are increasingly drawing between seemingly unrelated periods and texts. Two notable examples would be Marianne Hirsch's investigation in *Family Frames* into the similarities between photographic records of slavery and of the Holocaust, and W.J.T. Mitchell's comparison in *Picture Theory* of the visual poetics of William Blake and James Agee. Jay Prosser's new book admirably continues this trend. *Light in the Dark Room* offers analyses of such disparate works as Roland Barthes's meditation on photography *Camera Lucida*, Claude Lévi-Strauss's neglected photographic memoir *Saudades do Brasil*, and Elizabeth Bishop's bowdlerized photo-text *Brazil*. Prosser argues that what connects these texts is their attention to the question of loss. Reading this question within a Lacanian framework - in which the real becomes apparent only at the moment we become aware that the referent has been lost - Prosser suggests that we register loss most completely when looking at our own photographic image. As he puts it, 'When we are photographed, especially when we see ourselves in a photograph, we are at our most real. We are most ourselves and yet simultaneously we see our annihilation as subjects' (6-7). He calls this moment, rather eloquently, our 'awakening to loss' (9).

Loss is something that Prosser has written movingly about before: his first book, *Second Skins*, discussed the theoretical and psychological issues surrounding transsexuality. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, *Light in the Dark Room* is at its best in its last chapter, which examines the relationship between transsexuality, photography and mourning. According to Prosser, the transsexual is defined by his/her refusal to accept the loss of something we never had. In his memorable formulation, the 'failure to be real *is* the transsexual real' (172), making transsexuality, like photography, 'an attempt to return, to get back the lost referent' (173). Prosser's understanding of photography as a technology of loss is particularly convincing in this context, and he offers a fascinating reading of a number of contemporary photographic portraits of transsexuality. In other chapters, however, his insistence on the relationship between loss and photography becomes a little constricting. His reading of *Camera Lucida* as a kind of extended suicide note, for example, adds little to Jacques Derrida's essay 'The Deaths of Roland Barthes', which describes Barthes's life in the months after his mother's death as one 'which mimicked death in advance'. Overall, however, Prosser should be commended for shedding much-needed light on some overlooked texts.

*Stuart Burrows*

Ben R. Finney, *Sailing in the Wake of the Ancestors: Reviving Polynesian Voyaging*, Honolulu, HA: Bishop Museum Press, 2003, 176pp; US$19.95 paperback.

Thirty years ago, Herb Kane, an artist, Tommy Holmes, a paddler, and Ben Finney, a University of Hawai'i's anthropologist, established the Polynesian Voyaging Society (PVS). They built a double-hulled canoe and sailed it over 2,500 miles from Hawai'i to Tahiti, guided by one of the last Polynesian masters of traditional non-instrument navigation. Part scientific experiment and part cultural revival, this first voyage demonstrated that ancient Polynesians might have settled the Pacific deliberately and skilfully, rather than by accident as contemporary Eurocentrist historians claimed. *Hokule'a*'s success prompted renewed interest in Pacific histories and archaeology and inspired a young Hawaiian, Nainoa Thompson, to learn non-instrument navigation for a repeat performance in 1980. These voyages' stunning display of oceanic mastery re-awakened Polynesians' pride in their history and their culture, so intense that *Hokule'a* has been kept sailing around the Pacific ever since.

This book tells three stories of cultural revival around the Polynesian voyaging canoe. First, it tells of Hawaiians' attempt to build another canoe entirely from natural materials (Chapter 1). This involved the PVS in an increased - and increasingly politicised - engagement with their environment as they searched fruitlessly for native plants their ancestors had used; in new relationships with Alaska's Tlingit people and with Hawaiian diasporas in north-west America; and in research into lost cultural arts and knowledges such as sail-weaving. A second narrative of cultural revival charts the development and building of voyaging canoes in Aotearoa New Zealand, the Cook Islands, Tahiti and the Big Island, Hawai'i (Chapter 4). Besides sharing canoe-building and sailing skills, Thompson trained nine 'way-finders' from around Polynesia, including two women, so non-instrument navigation is revived and spread. Finally, Finney describes the preparations for a mass voyage from Te Henua 'Enana (the Marquesa Islands) – the leading candidate for the original Hawaiian homeland (Chapters 6, 7).

This event was not without its problems. One of the canoes became separated from the others, lost communication and dismasted. Arrangements for arrival ceremonies in Hawai'i - and the Hawaiian canoes' commitments elsewhere - meant several of the canoes had to motor or be towed through the doldrums. On the other hand, Finney tells how Polynesians devised a ceremony to heal an ancient rift and restore the 'Friendly Alliance' that had historically existed between Polynesian nations (54-74). Drawing without 'slavish imitation' on historical accounts combined with new elements, this ceremony constructed a performance genuinely expressive of contemporary Polynesian identity. Like the voyages, this project was led by Polynesians; although this is Finney's book, it is mostly an account of how the PVS has helped Hawaiians gain 'a historical sense of their place

in the greater Polynesian nation and a personal sense of being worthy heirs of a great seafaring tradition' (138).

In other disciplines, Finney's work might be called 'participatory action research', providing, as it does, a stunning account of an organic political movement, performed through sailing, and supported by meticulous anthropological and historical research. It should inspire anyone working on Pacific identities, or indeed with any group in search of a voice.

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