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○ ABOUT BORDERLANDS E-JOURNAL

...speak to me of universal law...of heroin and speed, of genocide and suicide, of syphilis and greed...speak to me the language of love, the language of violence, the language of the heart...just give me something i can believe

p j harvey

Welcome to the borderlands e-journal - a virtual intellectual space for new forms of thought and writing in the humanities and social sciences.

borderlands is a refereed international journal that aims to promote transdisciplinary work across the humanities and social sciences, work which might also intersect with diverse practices and sites in culture, policy and everyday life. Although our beginnings are modest, we hope that over time you will be able to view writings cutting across and between politics, media, literature, history, law, science, medicine, philosophy, economics, music, film and more, along with incisive debate about contemporary culture.

The founder (and publisher) of borderlands e-journal is Anthony Burke, but its origins lie in earlier collective efforts to create open spaces of dialogue and thought in the humanities.

the borderlands concept began with the seminar series *identity and governmentality* organised in 1994 by Roland Bleiker, Rod McGibbon, Simon Philpott and Paul Rutherford at the Australian National University - featuring speakers such as R. B. J. Walker, Moira Gatens, Paul Patton and David Campbell, on subjects ranging from Bosnia, postmodernism and international relations, Spinoza and feminism, to Baudrillard on the Gulf war.

The series continued in 1995 and 1996 as borderlands, the name suggested by its inaugural speaker Christine Sylvester. Organised by Kate Burton and Anthony Burke, it featured writers such as John Docker, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Julian Pefanis, Rosalyn Diprose, Klaus Offe, Lindsay Barrett, Roland Bleiker and Sasho Lambevski.

In 1997 borderlands was a conference held at the ANU, convened by Anthony Burke, David McNerney and Rebecca Stringer. It featured keynote speakers William Connolly, Susan Hekman and Katherine Gibson (as J. K. Gibson-Graham), along with a range of challenging new postgraduate scholarship.

...a few intellectual touchstones, and some humble beginnings. We hope that the borderlands e-journal will draw in writers and readers from around the globe, and speed up a democratisation and cross-fertilisation of thought from a variety of cultures, debates, conflicts and intellectual traditions, united by a dream of internationalism, a respect for difference, and a common struggle for global social justice.

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INTRODUCTION

Other Bodies: Other Lives; Other Deaths

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*There is no doubt that we have left the modern world. The certainties that informed modern life have been transformed—though many modern practices remain. However, when we left modernity depends on which factor, or factors, of the shift we emphasise. All the essays in this issue of borderlands acknowledge the move into a different discursive order—what Michel Foucault, in an earlier moment of his career, would have called a new episteme. Indeed, in *The Order of Things* Foucault notes that: ‘In fact, of all the mutations that have affected the knowledge of things and their order ... only one, that which began a century and a half ago and is now perhaps drawing to a close, has made it possible for the figure of man to appear’ (p. 386). Perhaps wisely, Foucault did not pursue this thought.*

This issue of *borderlands* includes three essays, a review essay and two book reviews. All are concerned in various ways and to a greater or lesser extent with race, the state, and the practices of (post)colonialism. As Lena Tan explains in her review essay, even today the discipline of International Relations, to which we can add Strategic Studies, has been built on a ‘profound Eurocentricity in understanding and explaining world politics’. Metropolitan power and capitalist practice continue to try to determine the global order. In the 2000s George W. Bush’s ‘Coalition of the Willing’ invaded Iraq on the pretext that that state had weapons of mass destruction while ensuring American control of Iraq’s oil reserves. As I write this Introduction at the end of August 2013, it seems that the United States is paving the way for an attack on Syria.

In the decades since *The Order of Things* was published, examining the changes wrought in the modern world has become of paramount importance. In ‘Butler Goes To Work’, Derek Ford, following Antonio Negri, Michael Hardt and others, marks the change in the shift from

industrial capitalism to a capitalism founded on immaterial production. Immaterial production refers to the transition in economic importance where value is now placed on such non-material entities as knowledge, which is sold as information, and culture, which, as Ford tells us, is appropriated and given exchange value. Ford argues convincingly that the form of subjectivity detailed by Judith Butler is the expression of life in an era dominated by immaterial production. Ford briefly defines this subject as 'radically dependent, relational, and opaque' (this issue). There is a connection here with the new understanding of identity that Stuart Hall talks about. He tells us that, now, 'identities are never completed, never finished; that they are always as subjectivity is, in process' ('Old and New Identities; Old and New Ethnicities', p. 47). Harkening back to Foucault, Hall discusses one aspect of the change that has generated this new way of thinking as 'the relativisation of the Western narrative itself, the Western episteme' ('Old and New Identities; Old and New Ethnicities', p. 44).

Ford discusses the movement towards immaterial production as the consequence of capitalism's crisis of over-production and the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. Capitalism is an economic system that is fundamentally unstable. Driven by the requirements of profit, the solution, as Karl Marx recognised, is expansion. New markets absorb the over-production whether that be increasing consumption, which in turn leads to a dependency on credit, itself a form of temporal expansion which can be thought of as a way of colonising the future, or finding new geographical parts of the world to incorporate into the capitalist system.

It is in this context that Mark Munsterhjelm examines cases of what he describes as 'racist genetic research' as exemplifications of the practice of authoritarian liberalism. Munsterhjelm's concern is to critique Nikolas Rose's argument that in advanced liberal democracies 'the defining feature of contemporary biopower is governance through freedom within a political economy of hope' (Munsterhjelm this issue). Munsterhjelm provides analyses of four cases in which geneticists from the metropolises have investigated colonised peoples. In each case, the consequences have been far from benevolent for the people whose genetic material has been appropriated by the scientists. As Munsterhjelm explains: 'These cases from the USA, Canada, New Zealand and Taiwan demonstrate how political economic pressures to commercialize research, patent law, and researchers' effective legal impunity contribute to such violations' (this issue). What we find here is an entanglement of scientific research with economic demands, the consequence of which is the sidelining of ethical constraints and the commodification of the genetic research. Rose's political economy of hope is revealed as an ideological misrecognition of what is actually an expansion of capitalistic practice.

We should remember Richard Titmuss' study, published in 1970, *The Gift Relationship*, in which he argued that the British National Health

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System donor practice of giving blood to be used for transfusions was preferable to practices where donors were paid for their blood because the latter commodified an essential bodily requirement and led to people selling their blood because they needed the money. This, Titmuss argued, would decrease the quality of the blood available. If, for Titmuss, capitalism stopped at the surface of the body now that body has itself been commodified. Catherine Waldby and Robert Mitchell tell us that:

Often the transfer of tissues from one person to another follows the trajectories of power and wealth, as the poor sell their body parts to those with more wealth. The increased mobility of people and money has seen the growth, alongside carefully regulated national systems for organ donation, of transnational black markets in human organs, sold by the urban and rural poor of the developing nations to aging, wealthy buyers in the industrialised world. (*Tissue Economies*, p. 8)

The individual of industrial capitalism was literally embodied, their individuality expressed in that body which marked the limit of commodity exchange. Ford (this issue) argues that:

The changing economic relations brought about by the transition to the immaterial economy produce new norms through which the subject is constituted. The norms that established the subject as an individual, which is to say an autonomous, sovereign, and self-contained subject and body, are increasingly contested by norms that establish the subject as opaque, contingent, and disembodied.

As the individual is increasingly reconstituted as a Butlerian subject so the body and its constituting elements, including its genetic make-up, become subject to commercial exchange relations.

At the same time, those people marginalised by the dominant order are identified by those very bodies which are the subject of capitalist exploitation. Thus, Munsterhjelm's essay considers 'several instances of authoritarian liberalism in scientists' conduct of genetic research involving Aboriginal peoples that differentially allocated rights, risks, duties and obligations, including racist stereotyping and mass violations of informed consent and dignity' (this issue). It is, in the first instance, the racialised body which identifies the indigenous people on whom the geneticists seek to carry out their research. Ford provides a context for this commodification. He argues that 'the development of the productive forces has meant an increase in the exploitation and oppression of certain bodies, those rendered unintelligible, deviant, unproductive, or undisciplinable. There is still a drive by capital, for example, to super-exploit the labor of nationally-oppressed peoples' (Ford, this issue). As those at the economic centre of immaterial capitalism understand themselves increasingly in the terms of Butlerian subjects so those on the economic periphery, a periphery which is not necessarily geographic or, rather, has geographies within the traditional metropolises of economic dominance

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as well as on the traditional colonial periphery, are seen more and more as bodies that can be economically exploited.

And that economic exploitation is deeply imbricated with death. Death sailed with European expansion. David Stannard writes that: 'Just twenty-one years after Columbus's first landing in the Caribbean, the vastly populous island that the explorer had re-named Hispaniola was effectively desolate; nearly 8,000,000 people—those Columbus chose to call Indians—had been killed by violence, disease, and despair' (*American Holocaust*, p. x). This was, as Stannard remarks, just the beginning: 'Within no more than a handful of generations following their first encounters with Europeans, the vast majority of the Western Hemisphere's native peoples had been exterminated' (*American Holocaust*, p. x). Many of them had been worked to death in the mines extracting the precious metals that would provide a foundation for the economic take-off of capitalism in Europe. In *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man*, Michael Taussig discusses the depredations visited upon the Putumayo during the rubber boom in the years around the turn of the twentieth century. The Putumayo live on either side of the border between Peru and Colombia. Lifting off from the narratives of torture, murder and violent forced labour, Taussig develops the idea of the space of death. He argues that: 'With European conquest and colonization, [the] spaces of death blend into a common pool of key signifiers binding the transforming of the culture of the conqueror with that of the conquered' (*Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man*, p. 5). Another space of death was the Congo, the African colony of King Leopold II of Belgium, where during the same rubber boom which had such murderous consequences for the Putumayo an estimated 10 million people were killed and men had their hands or their genitals severed if they did not meet the daily quota of rubber sap (see Adam Hochschild *King Leopold's Ghost*). Capitalism and death are deeply imbricated together.

After the devastation of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, the Atlantic slave trade provided new workers to continue the process of primitive accumulation. Robin Blackburn argues that 'profits from the slave trade and the American plantations [contributed] to British industrialization' both 'because these profits were large enough to affect the prosperity of the economy as a whole' and 'because they eased the financial or credit problems of the technically progressive sectors [of the economy] in particular' (*The Making of New World Slavery*, p. 532). European colonial expansion was based on a dual system of local population clearance and enslavement.

Genocide, as Rowan Savage reminds us, is a comparatively new term. It was defined by the United Nations in 1948 after Raphael Lemkin had introduced it in his book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* published in 1944. Much of the understanding of the meaning of genocide derived from its close relationship to the Holocaust. Some of the difficulties in the use of the term come from claims to the apparent uniqueness of the Holocaust. Savage's specific concern is with the

resistance in Australia to describing the taking away of indigenous children and their placement in care facilities as genocide. After all, as Savage explains, the forced removal of children from one group to another is even included in the United Nations' definition. Savage argues that the problem lies in the acceptance of the Australian state as legitimate. States may retain their legitimacy while enforcing capital punishment for specific crimes but the murder of entire groups within the state has the effect of making the state illegitimate.

In his essay, where he discusses how indigenous peoples are able to become the focus for genetic research, Munsterhjelm refers to Foucault's understanding of racism in which Foucault 'argued that racism is central to how the sovereign function of taking-life is deployed within a matrix of biopolitical relations' (Munsterhjelm, this issue). David Theo Goldberg has argued convincingly that 'race is integral to the emergence, development, and transformations (conceptually, philosophically, and materially) of the modern nation-state' (*The Racial State*, p. 4). Racialisation is a way of excluding a certain group from the state or marking them out for special treatment within the state.¹ Nevertheless, and this is a point of Savage's, 'if the charge of illegitimacy is to be deflected—if the perpetrator community is to survive in its own eyes—death must be employed as a definitional aspect of genocide' (this issue). Savage argues that this is the reason that Australians are so determined that the abduction of Aboriginal children should not be understood as genocide. If genocide is limited to death then Australia can escape the label of being a genocidal state. We must remember that the practice of abducting indigenous children was not confined to Australia. Both the United States and Canada had similar policies. The purpose of these abductions was to speed the disappearance of the indigenous people. While the adults were expected to die off as the primitive, colonised races were supplanted by the civilised colonisers, the children were forced to assimilate into the settler population. In many places, as Stannard describes, on the edge of the metropolitan state system, on the periphery of the civilised world, less subtle means were used to destroy indigenous peoples as, in the past, had been the case in Australia.

After the conquest of Poland, representatives of Nazi Germany examined Polish children and decided which had Aryan traits that made them racially valuable. These young people were transported to Germany to be placed with families. No one knows how many Polish children were adopted into German families in this process. The best estimate is about 250,000. Children were also taken from other nationalities considered by the Nazis to be sub-human. The Nazi expansion into Poland was driven by the ideology of *Lebensraum*, the idea that Germany needed more land for the increasing German population. Germany was lacking in settler colonies though we need to remember that the Nazi genocide of the Jews was foretold in the extermination of the Herero in German South-West Africa in the first decade of the twentieth century (Madley, 'From Africa to Auschwitz'). The Nazis argued that Poland was not a part of Europe therefore they

were able to rule it as a new settler colony. It is possible to understand the Holocaust as related to a broader genocidal clearing of peoples from what the Nazis considered colonisable land.

Savage refers to Zygmunt Bauman who, discussing how survival works as a form of 'common cause' in nationalism, '[d]rawing on Elias Canetti, ... argues that the very survival of the imagined perpetrator community as such is premised on the successfully-achieved death of the Other' (Savage, this issue). This obtains especially in the case of settler societies where the eradication of the indigenous people produces a land apparently ready for colonisation. The use in Australia of the legal myth of *terra nullius* is an example of the desire for the absence of an already existing population (see Henry Reynolds *The Law of the Land*). It is, Savage writes, the finality of death that is its most characteristic feature in the definition of genocide. This experience of death as final is what characterised the genocidal elimination of indigenous peoples as the post-Columbian European expansion spread across the world.

The state abduction of indigenous children has a continuity with the murderous destruction of indigenous societies as part of metropolitan expansion. Ironically, the denial that the abduction of indigenous children was genocide itself marks the illegality of the Australian state. Maria Giannacopoulos argues that: 'Contemporary Australian law signifies as *the law*, precisely because of what it excludes. When *law* signifies as being neutral, as being one and as mystical in its foundation it hides the violence of its origins as well as the violence involved in its continuing operations' ('Mabo, Tampa and the Non-Justiciability of Sovereignty', p. 46 Giannacopoulos's italics). Specifically, what law excludes is the violence of the appropriation of the land from the indigenous people on which the state exists and claims legitimacy through the naturalisation of the law. The law is erected on the space of death to which, in this case, the conqueror has given the name Australia.

Commenting on the destruction of indigenous societies, Stannard writes that, 'the important question for the future is not "can it happen again?" Rather, it is "can it be stopped?" For the genocide in the Americas, and in the other places where the world's indigenous peoples survive, has never really ceased' (*American Holocaust*, p. x). This is a point made clear by the three essays in this issue of *borderlands*. In Australia the policy of the abduction of Aboriginal children, the creation of the Stolen Generations, was abandoned, as Savage reminds us, as late as the 1970s and 1980s, but, as Ford and Munsterhjelm explain, this has not been the end of the genocidal treatment, the special treatment, of indigenous peoples. In this, postmodern time, we have a name for the destruction of peoples though, as Savage argues, some people would prefer to limit its use. Today, genocide operates in tandem with new forms of capitalism, with immaterial production and with neoliberal policies. It remains genocide.

Notes

ⁱ Special Treatment is a term with a history. In German *Sonderbehandlung* was used by the Nazis as a euphemism to describe many aspects of the Holocaust. In Australia it has sometimes been claimed that Aborigines have received special, that is preferential, treatment. This usage has been turned on its head in, for example, the documentary titled *Special Treatment*, released in 1991, which examines the incarceration of young Aborigines in juvenile detention centres and makes the connection with that earlier 'special treatment' when indigenous children were taken from their parents. In 1992, the Australian folk-rock singer Paul Kelly released an album titled *Hidden Things* which included the track 'Special Treatment'. The first person lyrics are sung as if by an Aborigine and provide a sketch of the singer's grandfather's life, being put in chains and taken from his land, and his father's life as a stockman working long hours for little pay and then tells how he, himself, is one of the Stolen Generation. All this, Kelly tells us, is the special treatment given to Aborigines. In her review of *Hidden Things* for *Green Left Weekly*, Deb Sorensen writes that 'Special Treatment' 'was composed in response to claims by a Western Australian pastoralist that Aborigines receive better treatment than other Australians. Kelly's song wryly spells out what that special treatment has actually meant' (Deb Sorensen 'Hidden Things Worth Waiting For' at: <http://www.greenleft.org.au/node/3657>).

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