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Introduction

Cristina Beltrán and Kennan Ferguson

Like so much of 2020, this fall issue (Volume 23, Number 4) reflects a moment of loss and possibility - of entrances and exits, beginnings and endings. And so too with *Theory & Event*. In this issue we bid farewell to our co-editor Kennan Ferguson, whose astute judgment and capacious approach to political theory has shaped the journal since 2015. Kennan's commitment to a political theory that takes pleasure in careful textual engagements alongside an insistence that knowledge is revealed in everyday enactments of the political has served as a touchstone for the journal during his tenure. During his time as editor, these conjoined interests have been critical to making *Theory & Event* a home for authors working in indigenous studies, black feminism, and other areas where theorists are doing some of our most exciting and necessary work.

As the journal continues to both captivate and discomfit, we are thrilled that this work will be carried forward by Elisabeth Anker, who will be taking over as co-editor along with Cristina Beltrán. Libby's background in critical and cultural theory, feminist theory, film and media studies, as well as her abiding interests in aesthetic and affective investments in state violence, freedom, and domination will no doubt move the journal in exciting directions. With their shared grounding in political theory and American studies, Cristina and Libby are looking forward to growing the journal in ways that meet the political and intellectual moment we find ourselves in.

This issue spotlights yet another theme that has come to dominate the political landscape of 2020: law and order. Taking up questions of violence, policing, protest, and the law, these articles each explore the affective mechanisms of violent state action and how such practices engage with specific bodies and places. In "Law, Police Violence, and Race: Grounding and Embodying the State of Exception," Inés Valdez, Mat Coleman, and Amna Akbar advocate for a corporeal and grounded account of the relationship between law and policing. Exposing the limitations of Giorgio Agamben's generalized understanding of the state of exception, the authors argue that this underspecified notion of violence fails to account for how and why such exceptional conditions often only apply to specific bodies and places. Turning to Saidiya Hartman and Walter Benjamin, the authors contend that engaging

questions of anti-blackness and embodiment shows how law is created in the racial state.

In "Blood from a Turnip: Debt, Race, and Expropriation in Penal Capitalism," Michael Feola critiques the racialized predatory state by analyzing penal debt and its relationship to questions of mass incarceration and racial capitalism. Exploring how the interests of capital overlap with the coercive powers of the racial state, Feola's account considers debt as a form of governance, invested in extracting value from historically abject populations. Revealing how indebtedness engenders different forms of power for different constituencies, Feola highlights how specific strains of debt have become increasingly prominent in the carceral state.

Michel Foucault supported lawbreaking, argues Delio Vásquez. Foucault's early work is often read as a critical intervention in the practices of punishment and control, as if those techniques of power constituted people from thin air. Against this assumption, Vásquez traces how Foucault celebrated political contra-orderings which challenged state governmentality. This was based in part on his admiration of the Black Panthers and the ways in which the Black Liberation Army fully understood their actions as necessary for the community yet also criminal (in other words, against the laws of the state). Similarly to what he noted with Maoists in France, Foucault saw in *illégalisme* a tactic of infra-power, of a collective anti-law social organization.

The "Yellow Vest" movement in France, an uprising by mostly rural, auto- and truck-dependent actors against the exclusionary form of what the Macron government advanced as a "pro-environmental" taxation and penalization, became a nationwide event in late 2019. Sophie Wahnich investigates the implications of this spontaneous protest, finding in it the joy of unexpected solidarity, the efficacy of the rural, and escape from party and procedure. Rather than a tool of the extreme right, as the media too often presented them, the Yellow Vests reclaimed the political from the pretend populism of Presidential politics, demanding a parliament of the streets. From these highly visible protestors, Wahnich finds an emergent process, a reminder of the abilities of organization to arise from disorganization and for a people to reorder politics.

The remainder of the issue consists of a symposium which displaces the European settler imaginary of space in favor of indigenous experiences. "LandBody: Radical Native Commitments" theorizes the relations of place, space, and identity from various Native perspectives, decentering the settler-colonial presumptions of empty homogenous geography. To the nation states which claim to represent the indigenes of North American, assumptions of place neutrality and meaning-

lessness go hand-in-hand with dispossession and acquisitiveness. From its roots as a conference at the Center for 21st Century Studies at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee to emerging discussions of Latinx/Chicanx studies and indigeneity, the editors—Diana Rose, Robert Geroux, and Kennan Ferguson—have gathered political theories of Native, First Nation, and other Abya Yala peoples which each transform the conceptual relationship between living and location.

Issue 23.4 concludes with four book reviews. Lorna Bracewell reviews Lida Maxwell's *Insurgent Truth: Chelsea Manning and the Politics of Truth-Telling*; Kathy E. Ferguson reviews Eli Meyerhoff's *Beyond Education: Radical Studying for Another World*; Elaine Coburn reviews Gabriel Levine's *Art and Tradition in a Time of Uprisings*; and John Zarobell reviews AbdouMaliq Simone's *Improvised Lives: Rhythms of Endurance in an Urban South*.