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Elisabeth Anker, Cristina Beltrán

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Elisabeth Anker and Cristina Beltrán

The art of protest and the longing for authoritarian rule. Political subjects forming acoustic communities through different experiences of shared silence. The many ways in which Black aesthetic production redefines the very categories of public and private. While considering a wide variety of topics and themes, the essays in the April issue of *Theory & Event* share an interest in theorizing questions of political action, art, desire, and legibility.

Reflecting on the nature of the Black public as an aesthetic community, Rhana Gittens explores how Black subjects challenge the hegemonic logics of public and private, creating deliberative spaces of speech and action that theorists of the public sphere often fail to see. Analyzing rapper 2 Chainz's Pink Trap House, an Atlanta landmark that brought together a global community of hip-hop enthusiasts, Gittens draws on theorists of Black aesthetics to reveal how the Pink Trap House became an example of Black aesthetic community, characterized by forms of networked publicity, stranger sociability, and aesthetic abundance present in Black working-class life.

Turning to a very different form of networked publicity, Ashleigh Campi's "Cultivating Authoritarian Submission: Race and Gender in Conservative Media" explores how the last four decades of conservative media has cultivated the desire for command-based forms of political rule on the part of its listeners. Approaching authority as a relational practice, Campi argues that Christian and secular redemption narratives allow subjects to experience conservative media as a space that invites listeners to partake in projects of self-help, submission, and self-fashioning.

An alternative account of listening is present in Naveed Mansoori's account of the perceptual politics of sound and the ways in which political subjects are constituted through different experiences of shared silences. In "Things Unheard: Popular Silence and the Popular Voice in Revolutionary Iran," Mansoori analyzes the aural ecology surrounding the 1979 Revolution, exploring how contestation over the popular voice exposed the limitations of a state logics that operate under the assumption that "the people" are intelligible.

Stefan Jonsson also examines the formation of revolutionary political events in "The Art of Protest: Understanding and Misunderstanding

Monstrous Events.” He argues that collective protests for political reform often emerge outside democratic institutions before they register historically as events. In film, poetry, fiction, and other media, aesthetic knowledges register the political emergence of collective protest in profoundly affective and experiential ways, which allows them to represent how the “monstrous” power of collective protest ruptures expected historical trajectories.

Mikkel Flohr examines political action by reinterpreting Marx’s critique of political theology in “From the Critique of the Heavens to the Critique of the Earth: A Contribution to the Reconstruction of Karl Marx’s Unfinished Critique of Political Theology.” Arguing that Marx inverts Hegel’s transcendent interpretation of political theology as omnipotent state sovereignty, Flohr argues that political theology constitutes the *material* conditions of the modern state. In Flohr’s novel reading, the state has a social and material existence that takes shape as the alienation of society from itself, which for Marx allows state institutions to function as if they actually are sovereign.

This issue also features two symposia. The first reproduces Kennan Ferguson’s 2019 Maxwell Lecture delivered at the University of Utah. “Beholden: From Freedom to Debt” makes the provocative assertion that we ought to let go of our political and affective attachments to freedom; arguing that our love of freedom obscures our ability to consider alternative possibilities, Ferguson turns to feminist accounts of indebtedness, exploring how the recognition of mutual debt might offer a better model for collective flourishing. With an introduction by Steven Johnston, the symposium features responses by Kouslaa Kessler-Mata and Shadee Malaklou. The second symposium, organized by Andrew Dilts and Perry Zurn on “Affect, Affective Intolerance, and Abolition,” asks how affect invigorates desires to transform the world and work for social justice. Examining how oppression feels, they also examine what feelings motivate resistance to it, with a focus on how people come to feel intolerance for prison systems that propels them into abolitionist movements. The intersections of affect and abolition take shape in essays by Andrea Pitts on Frantz Fanon’s writing on trauma and oppression, by Stephen Dillon on Audre Lorde’s affectively charged poetry of police violence, by Joel Michael Reynolds on how carceral systems name ability and madness, by Zurn on curiosity as an effect of resistance, and by Dilts on the intersections between feminist killjoys and Du Bois’s question, “How does it feel to be a problem?”

And finally, we are excited to announce that *Theory & Event* is expanding its book review section! We all love to talk about intelligent media with our friends and colleagues – and we’ve come to value such conversations even more during this pandemic lockdown year. So now, we are seeking reviews that involve sharp engagements with

the compelling media of our time, less thumb's-up/thumb's-down judgments than pieces that resemble the lively discussions you might have with a smart friend about a film or TV show. Cross-pollination is highly encouraged, so go ahead and talk about books, thinkers, and ideas that connect to your chosen media. And of course, we continue to feature traditional reviews of recently published works of theory. To pitch an idea for any and all reviews, contact *T&E* book review editor Keally McBride at kdmcbride@usfca.edu.