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Introduction

Elisabeth Anker and Cristina Beltrán

Marking the start of a new year, this January issue of *Theory & Event* is animated by questions of history and how the legacy of past actions and events continues to shape our present.

In their symposium “2020 Keywords,” authors and editors Jennifer Nash and Samantha Pinto take us back to the extraordinary year whose events continue to cast a shadow over our daily existence. Offering readers a glossary of COVID-19 keywords—from Asynchronous and Essential Worker to Social Distancing and Zoom—Pinto and Nash examine the many ways in which 2020 has itself become a kind of keyword. Exploring how some neologisms that emerged last year are now part of our collective vocabulary while others reflect a moment in history, this symposium offers T&E readers a rich and insightful index for describing our immediate present-past, one that continues to feel both long ago and never-ending.

Exploring the question of time in a different register, Janice Feng turns to the theoretical legacy of Thomas Hobbes to explore how the logic and rhetoric of *Leviathan* articulates an idea of civil peace among individuals that seeks to domesticate collective resistance, particularly acts of indigenous political resistance. In “Domesticating Political Resistance: Rhetoric, Time, and (the Limits of) Settler Sovereignty,” Feng avoids the pitfall of merely seeking to “apply” Hobbes’ political thought to questions of settler colonialism. Instead, by reading the book *as* settler colonialism, Feng exposes both the impossibility of limitless settler sovereignty and the justificatory apparatus that seeks to bring indigenous peoples and nations into the very “civil” order their actions challenge.

Turning to a different iteration of how reading and writing practices shape settler colonial projects, “Treaty and the Problem of Colonial Reification” examines what Corey Snelgrove calls “the treaty turn” in Canadian political scholarship, the call for non-indigenous people to organize political relations through treaty-making. Snelgrove asks how scholars position the “settler treaty tradition” as an alternative to a naturalized settler colonial relationship, and queries how the work of treaties are meant to undo colonial modes of domination. He argues that treaties reify forms of social relation by naturalizing them—and posits ways that treaties can challenge that reification. Ultimately,

Snelgrove contends that treaty-making can become relevant work for radical theory and practice in settler colonial contexts.

Questions of legacy are also central to Iain MacKenzie's essay "Critique in the Age of Indifference." Addressing ideological dogmatism and skeptical fanaticism, MacKenzie turns to the work of Quentin Meillassoux, Giorgio Agamben, and François Laruelle to take up the problem of critique in what he names "the age of indifference." Arguing that indifference is the result not of apathetic disengagement but of a relentless engagement with "self-knowledge" that nonetheless fails to find a secure footing in anything other than one's own beliefs, MacKenzie asserts that the task before us involves embracing the absolute necessity of contingency alongside any account of the transcendental conditions of what we know about the world we inhabit.

The political implications of history and infrastructure are at the center of Selin Islekel's "Building Anew: Spaces of Grief and Memories of Death." Extending Achille Mbembe's work on necropolitics to examine how political death-making happens not only by destruction of space but by building anew over destroyed spaces, Islekel focuses on the rebuilding of Turkish towns destroyed by urban warfare. Interrogating how reconstructed spaces also reconstruct residents' collective memories of devastation and death, Islekel argues that in building anew, the deathwork of necropolitical power targets memory as much as space.

Questions of space, place, and memory are also central to Rajbir Singh Judge's "Formations of the Corridor: Toward a Reading of Limit and Border." Focusing on the new Kartarpur corridor between India and Pakistan, Judge analyzes the many ways in which corridors are used to shore up the instability of sovereign borders. Although ostensibly created to smooth Sikh connections across India and Pakistan, Judge argues that the Kartarpur corridor is structured by Christian rationalities that organize secular space by creating allowances within expanding state jurisdictions. Turning to Sikh ethical practices, Judge asks readers to see the corridor not as an opening but as a limit, one that unsettles and cracks open the relations that borders aim to both cross and secure.

This issue concludes with three reviews. David W. McIvor reviews Jason Frank's *The Democratic Sublime: On Aesthetics and Popular Assembly*. Saswat S. Das and Guhan Priyadharshan P. review Elisabeth Paquette's *Universal Emancipation: Race beyond Badiou*. And Jaeyoon Park reviews Amy Sullivan's *Opioid Reckoning: Love, Loss, and Redemption in the Rehab State*.

In thinking about issues of legacy and how our past has come to shape our present, we at *Theory & Event* are also mourning the loss of William Chaloupka, one of our founding editors. The journal began as

the brainchild of a group of critical political theorists—organized in no small part by Bill—who were concerned that political theory journals focused too heavily on canonical texts at the expense of rigorous interrogation of the contemporary world. Over (many) drinks and discussions, Bill motivated the group to create *T&E* as an experimental journal not only in content but in form, becoming the first solely online academic journal with ProjectMuse. He served as the third co-editor of the journal and helped to shape its current structure. An outstanding scholar, Bill penned one of the first political theory books examining the political discourses upholding nuclear war. Many credit his book on cynicism, *Everybody Knows*, with moving theory beyond the morass and exhaustion of late-'90s Left conservatism toward lively engagements with political struggle. Bill was perhaps best known for his work in environmental political thought, and his edited volume with Jane Bennett, *In the Nature of Things: Language, Politics, and the Environment*, contained some of the germinal work for what is now known as New Materialism. Incredibly supportive of graduate students and junior scholars throughout his career, Bill Chaloupka will be remembered for his impact across the discipline of political theory, as well as his founding work at *Theory & Event*. He will be missed.