

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

Transitions, Revolutions, and Reinventions: Discourses on Human Capabilities and World Configurations

This issue of *SPECTRA: The Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Theory Archives* features original essays, book essays, and artwork by our contributors, on the theme of transitions, revolutions, and reinventions: discourses on human capabilities and world configurations. Using a wide range of scholarly strategies, the contributors raise questions on topics as diverse as political subjectivity, the power of material commodities to bring normalcy to international relations, and the possibilities of fostering changes to capitalism from within the very fields of management studies that have long advocated the economic model. We consider ourselves fortunate to have these scholars share their work with our readers.

Claudio D'Amato draws on various facets of social contract theory, namely the work of John Rawls as well as Charles Mills's theory of racial contract, to raise questions about certain proceduralist and universalist preconditions for the critique of racism. In his essay, "Human capabilities and the racial contract," he contends that a capabilities approach, notably the ideas developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, support and advance Mills's original arguments.

In "Reflecting on the Politics of Piety" Michele C. Deramo applies the works of Michel Foucault and Judith Butler to questions of self, agency, and configurations of political subjectivity among women in Muslim society, predominantly in Egypt. Deramo makes a comparative analysis to two 19th century case studies in the United States: the Christian Patriarchy movement and the emergence of Women's Clubs. In both of these cases, Deramo argues, movements have been catalysts for social reform.

Throughout "Iranian Energy Policy towards the South Caucasus from the Perspective of Neo-Liberalism Theory," Arman Gasparyan argues that the commodity status of energy takes priority over religious ideologies in Iran's diplomatic relations with neighboring societies. As Gasparyan explains, the material value helps meet the nation's achievement goals in a way that transitions power away from the commonly shared religious convictions and, in turn, fosters so-called normal relations with other countries.

Eli C.S. Jamison aims to introduce an interdisciplinary audience to the critique of capitalism emerging out of Critical Management Studies (CMS), a field of thought described by the Academy of Management as a resource for fostering environmental and social welfare. Here, Jamison contends that CMS holds potential for reinventing scholarly attempts to de-center economic capitalism and, therefore, to challenge social/cultural structures of domination.

One of the ongoing conversations engaged in this issue is the importance of international and particularly geopolitical constellations. In this vein, SPECTRA hosted a conversation with Harry Gould, Professor for Politics and International Relations at Florida International University, and Brent Steele, Professor for Political Science at the University of Utah. In the interview conducted by Francine Rossone de Paula, Jennifer Lawrence, Kent Morris, and Anthony Szczurek, Gould and Steele followed up on several issues raised previously in a symposium on "Thinking and Writing Critically in International Relations." During the conversation, reprinted here in full length, particular emphasis was put on questions of state responsibilities and their privatization, accountability and its conceptual and practical alternatives in the field of international relations, as well as national and international security in the 21st century.

We present two book reviews, each addressing human capabilities and world configurations, one in the context of Olympic athletes and Cold War politics, and the other in terms of human-cyborg technologies. In "Where are the Laughter and the Tears," Anthony Szczurek review's Philip D'Agati's 2013 *The Cold War and the 1984 Olympic Games: A Soviet-American Surrogate War*. The book explores an alternate explanation for the Soviet boycott of the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, California, differing from traditional "retaliation" arguments made in most analyses of these games. Instead, D'Agati, employing game theory, argues that the 1984 boycott was a rational, strategic decision on the part of the Soviet Union to cause as much damage to the Los Angeles Games as had been wreaked upon the 1980 Moscow games. Szczurek offers a counter-opinion, calling the reader's attention to the importance that emotions play in the political, and the implications for the decisions of states acting on the world stage.

In "Donna J. Haraway's *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature, Reinventing Nature as a Revolutionary Re-appropriation of Knowledge*" Melissa R. Schwartz focuses on two main contributions within Haraway's 1991 text: objects of knowledge and situated knowledges. Schwartz's review is not only a critical analysis of Haraway's main theses and arguments but also shows careful attention to the style and structure of the book itself. Haraway uses a strategy of interconnectivity to place her thesis throughout the book: that socialist-feminist scientists have a responsibility to recreate the categories in which Western science has divided the world, often based on a Western, male-centric, earth-as-instrument beliefs. Instead, Haraway believes that these binaries must be stricken from science, as these categories have led to the shaping of how female scientists now interact with their own world.

Finally, the editorial team invited Alec Clott to contribute his photograph entitled “Luminescence” as the cover art for this issue. This photo contains a scene taken just after nightfall in the old medina of Marrakech, Morocco in September 2013. Here, an adult and child arrange and light lanterns with the hope of selling them to throngs of international tourists, most of whom come to Morocco from wealthy, industrialized nations. Many consider Morocco a “developing nation,” and yet the nation is a major player in the economic, cultural, and political dynamics of the region -- and also home to the oldest university in the world. As we compiled the contributions to this issue under the theme, we felt that the photograph provides a moment to consider how human capabilities and world configurations may take people down different paths of transition, revolution, and reinvention. Wherever the lanterns started out, which hands made them, and wherever they go next, they hang for just a moment here in the care of these two people who share our world.

We thank the contributors for expanding the scope of analytical, literary, and artistic topics at play in SPECTRA. Likewise, we thank our reviewers and the editorial team who have helped to bring this issue to life. As always, we welcome feedback and suggestions and will gladly put readers in contact with authors and contributors.

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