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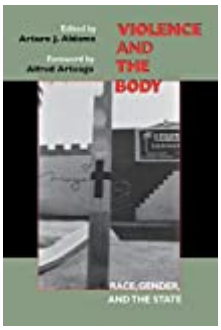

Arturo J. Aldama, ed. *Violence and the Body: Race, Gender, and the State.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003. 452 pp. $65.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-253-34171-6; $29.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-253-21559-8.

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Specters of Derrida: Citizenship Tattooing Bodies

Derrida's recent death marks the beginning of the controversy on Derrida's life (and work), in the absence of the very subject of this controversy. Appearing this past year, *Violence and the Body* bears the mark of Derrida's name that traverses, sometimes as an absent referent, the texts gathered together in this volume edited by Arturo Aldama. The volume's second, explanative, title is "Race, Gender, and the State," an all-inclusive invitation to lecture for those who are theoretically and practically involved in research on these topics. The overarching question traversing this volume may be: "How do state technology (or governmental ideology apparatuses, to paraphrase Althusser, I will explain in a minute) create and rearrange racial and gender borders and how are these borders branded on bodies practicing subjectivation?"

De Certeau's observation that any law is inscribed upon the body constitutes the argument for collecting a wide variety of texts in reference to modalities in which law marks bodies, and ultimately, I would argue, how bodies are designed and subjectivities informed through legal practices and the correlative resistance. The political stakes of the volume are high: "To resist the violence of predatory capitalism, we must learn to forge transnational and transethnic opposition coalitions that are fluid, multilevel, and sustained without being autocratic" (p. 5). *Violence and the Body* proposes a global mapping of legal and representational technologies that shape body conduits and reinforce structural inequalities, sometimes offering alter-natives to "discourses of otherization ... reinforced and interanimated through violence on ... 'intensities' and 'flows' of the body" (p. 7).

The three-sequence face of violence as identified by Derrida is discussed by Elizabeth Grosz in its relation with temporal structuring of the social dynamic and may constitute the grid of lecture for the entire volume. The sequences are: the passage from the fluid existence of the thing in itself to the representation and fixation of the thing through "writing/violence" that takes away the "thingness" of the thing. "This violence is the containment and ordering of the thing to give up its 'thingness' and to submit itself to the leveling of representation, a mythical and impossible leveling that assumes a self-identity the thing itself never possessed" (p. 137). In sim-

pler words, the formation of any meaningful representation (the basis of culture in its anthropological sense) constitutes the primordial violence. The second sequence is the violent erasure of the traces of this primordial violence, and it is usually called "law," "reason," or "right." This counter-violence asserts itself as non-violent and gives itself the power of qualifying subsequent violence. It rules over the third type of violence, the "mundane and viscerally horrifying" violence (p. 137). The axiologic relation between these three sequences of violence is capital in understanding why some "horrifying violence" is deemed horrifying, while other is lawful, reasonable, or even *not* perceived as violence but as normal (f)act–in conformity to the norm.

All chapters of this volume are in a more or less explicit manner involved in the critique of the articulation of representation formation, violence, and subjectivation. The volume is divided in four parts addressing, from various perspectives, the technologies of body inscription and subject formation. *Violence and the Body* may be read as an(other) argument that the body is the subject, argument emphasized in chapter 18, "Re/membering the Body," which analyzes from a psycho-therapeutic perspective the traces of domestic violence on Latina women. The selection is eclectic, inviting readers from a wide range of disciplines. However, not all essays stand on the same theoretic standards set by the editors, nor are they necessarily "grounded in U.S./Mexico border and Latin American cultural studies" as the back cover would have it.

The first part, "Global Crossings: Racialized and Sexualized Conflicts," gathers together seven essays that analyze the display of conflicts on bodies, the global perspective being conveyed by the geographic variety of the topics' location. Chicana/Chicano subjectivity formation is the editor's opening chapter that emphasizes United States institutional technologies deployment that undermines attempts to imagine and represent Chicana/Chicano subjects as fully constituted persons. From INS and border patrol officers' practices to cuts in educational support and opportunities for 'minorities' in the United States, these are as many ways to designate "subjects as abjects" and to ascribe them into the space of otherness. Fear of (sexual and ethnic) otherness emerges in Catherine Raissiguier's chapter on PaCS (the national form of domestic partnership in France). This form of legalizing couples is open to same-sex and different-sex persons deciding to share daily life together for a while. It gives rights of residency to foreigners "pacs-ing" French citizens. For these two reasons, i.e., the attempt to legislate (legitimate) same-sex couples and to give inclusive rights to those who are not fully fledged citizens, biting rhetoric mechanisms have been deployed in order to demonize this initiative, and to conflate in one overarching threatening identity those who decide to "PaCS." The author finds the expression of this rhetoric branded with graffiti on a city wall: Islam=SIDA. The chapter approaches the texts of the parliamentary debates preceding the voting of PaCS law, and shows how the terrain for this populist and discriminatory rhetoric is already is incumbent in some parliamentary addresses. Far from celebrating this new legal form of subjectivation, Raissiguier warns us against "its many flaws and the differential forms of exclusion they are bound to engender" (p. 108).

Under the same umbrella of "Global Crossings," the reader may find a richness of reflections and well-documented research. Aniko Imre writes about the difficult translation of feminist theory in Eastern Europe, approaching the question of "Poetic Nationalism" and/as pornography in Hungary. In her chapter, based on textual analysis of male poets writing in cross-gender voices, the author shows how the "compassionate" male-disguised-in-female literary voices perpetuate representation of women as exotic, over-erotic others portrayed against the non- marked self of the "Hungarian Woman" serving national reproductive interests. Aniko Imre's essay is compelling, bringing to public attention the way in which post-colonial theories, post-third worldism feminist theories, and women of color writings might be employed in an effort to understand gender dynamics in Eastern Europe. The author sees Eastern European transition (as any transgressing instance) as a moment that "provides an opportunity to foreground the discursive tools of oppression, which national political and intellectual elites inadvertently expose in their increased effort to maintain the status quo" (p. 53).

Literary text analysis is replaced with image and text analysis in Yamuna Sangarasivam's research on "Militarizing the Feminine Body [and] Women's Participation in the Tamil Nationalist Struggle." The incorporation of women in the military body fighting against Sri Lankan government subverts gender expectations in the villages from which the new recruits come. However, a new gendered inscription is visible in texts and representations of women's militarized bodies. Military incorporation transforms women's bodies (subjectivities) from passive victims to active participants in organized resistance against an occupying state. A different form of gendered resistance is discussed in Leila Neti's chapter

on "Blood and Dirt." In the 1980s, Irish women prisoners started a protest against their loss of status of political prisoners. Bodily secretions spilled on the walls of prison inscribed their protest. The author uses Mary Douglas's structural approach on dirt in order to emphasize the disruption of British modern systemic order the menstrual blood on the prison's wall introduces. Blood traces on the prison's wall indicate gender matters there where it should not, because ideally the processing of bodies by the modern prison machine is un-marked by gender (or it relates to the standard un-marked gender/race category, the white male).

This first part of the book also contains the analysis of representation of presidential body in the Philippines during Marco's regime. The over-signified, hypersexualized presidential couple in the media is contrasted with the citizen body represented through lack of valorizing characteristics.

Grosz's essay on "Time for Violence" ends this section only to open the next one dedicated to colonial advent and the consumption of the other: following Derrida's lead, Grosz observes that the violence of coloniality "rests upon, indeed is made possible by, the logically prior two senses of violence" (p. 138). Each of the following three parts of the book tackles the three sequences of violence as coined by Derrida. Hayes's reflection on cannibalism proposes the deconstruction of one of the "favorite" metaphors of colonialism not as "a process of reducing everything to words, as if this will eradicate the metaphysical, but [as] a reading of the stratification of metaphors and metaphysics and a criticism of the reason why some metaphors gain dominance" (p. 155). Thus, the Western moral economy (the second level of violence) is both the generator and the justifier of marking the other as (solely) cannibal.

The colonial encounter proves rich in material for analysis and critique of violent inscription on the body–read violent subject re/formation. If up to this moment the eclectic rather than the unity seemed the underlying characteristic of this volume, an attentive reading would recover the threads linking chapters among them. Thus, Margarita Saona's critical study of Carmen Boullosa's novel that is organized on three levels of translation and spread across three timeframes (the American colonial past, the failed utopia of the present, and the projected speechless future) reveals the successive inscription of law on the body through language (or its absence for that matter). In Boullosa's novel, the inscription through Latin language learning replaces the inscription of the law through tongue piercing in the life of Hernando, a colonial subject of America's conquest; this sends us back to Derrida's discussion about the margin of violent traces of the legal or moral justificative (but unjust) system. Dennis Childs's essay on Angola (an ex-slave plantation turned prison in the United States) recalls into question the racial body and its reinscription into the space of otherness. Slavery is replaced with imprisonment while the rhetoric of the slave body is turned into the fear-based rhetoric of crime that relies on the same type of signifier: the skin color. The black body is covered in a process of semiotic layering in which metaphors of abnormality look like tectonic plaques of subjectivity: "what is clearly at issue is the degree to which the trusty's possible homosexuality is linked with abnormality and added to the normative grid that projected guilt onto the victim of violence" (p. 202). A trace comes to mind: "Islam=SIDA." Markovitz's analysis of Goetz trial (Goetz, a white 37-year-old man shot four young black men who asked him for five dollars in a subway ram in New York in 1984) shows how the "normative grid" projecting guilt on victims functions in the legal system. Black bodies are always already marked as criminals in the signifying system of the United States, a socially accepted and significant metaphor. Bearing the trace of the crime to which they have been subjected (the crime of being signified as other), black bodies are called upon to legitimize an already existing verdict of law against them. Fear is racialized and justifies crime in the process of metaphoric creation of the criminal other.

The abstraction of bodies to signs (the DNA code) is the theme of Guerrero's essay on "Biocolonialism and Global Genocide" (pp. 171-188). Biotechnological projects encode bodies and populations in amino-acid sequences, "a eugenistic assumption that genes equal people, an assumption that threatens the self-determination for survival among these groups. Also inherent in this scientific jargon is the blatant disrespect for human life by implying that these indigenous peoples are already on their way out as soon-to-be-extinct cultural entities and therefore warrant this kind of commercial exploitation" (pp. 178-179). While using promising material that point to racist theories bordering Nazism that are "taken for granted" in biotechnological research, this essay does not engage (but should it?) with theorists like Paul Rabinow or Bruno Latour who have a "long record" of analyzing biotechnologies and ethics.

The multiple facets of contestation of the concepts of "truth," "reasonable," or "normal," in other words, the resistance to the second sequence of normalizing violence,

appear in the third part of the volume, "Performing Race, Gender, and Sexuality." Rimke's opening essay on the constitution of interiorities during the development of psychiatric sciences in the nineteenth century tackles the issue of normality and abnormality, the standards against which the "deviant" classed, gendered, and exotic bodies are judged. The author identifies the social genealogy of interiority that echoes Derrida's sequential view of violence, in that it does away with ontological non-violent existences: "Instead of presuming the a priori existence of interiorities and the meanings of bodies as prediscursive, the interiorization thesis emphasizes how the interior, as a distinct characteristic of human beings, is itself a product of cultural and historical forces warred upon the body" (p. 248). Madness and abnormality describe the "normal" middle class bourgeois subject, but also pathologize the lower classes (see pp. 254-255). Thence the author's proposal for an "[a]n alternative understanding of the normal and pathological emphasizes not 'the social control of deviance' but rather the cultural production of difference as pathology through the practice of reading the body" (p. 257). While rich in references of nineteenth century textual production, the essay, surprisingly (or intentionally) avoids any reference to Foucault and his history of madness; I prefer to think that this is done in the Foucauldian spirit of continuation of an intellectual project (as Michel Foucault himself avoided references to Marx's writings). The section continues with the exploration of forms of "deviance" as forms of resistance to the dominant discourse on sexuality, gender, race, and citizenship.

Sel Whang's "Double Cross" is a deconstruction of the hetero-normative mapping of the social space in the United States (including the designation of homosexuality and transgender as fixed, and thus manageable, categories). The hetero-categories are based on mono-axial genetic assumptions, as the author argues, under which "transsexual bodies are conveniently elided. Thus, according to this logic, a person who was born a genetic female, for instance, and is attracted to males must be heterosexual. This kind of limited erotic system cannot take into account that perhaps a genetic female identifies as a gay man, and so desires men as a gay man–and does not desire men as a heterosexual woman" (p. 291). Wahng explores the kaleidoscopic variety of sexual and gender practices starting from the analysis of a FTM (female to male) film director's documentary *Trappings of Transhood* (1997). Mapuche shamans also challenge Chilean-state hetero-normativity (as argued in the essay by Anna Mariella Bacigalupo) who sail among gendered identities and confront thus Chile's modernizing project. Posing as non-governable bodies, they offer social and spiritual healing to indigenous bodies hurt by state representations of the "un-civilized," and dispossessed of land in the name of progress. Following the Foucauldian understanding of power, the author shows how "power lies not only with those who impose gendered structures but also with those who creatively transforms them" (p. 339), an argument that is reworked by Elaine H. Kim in her essay on Korean American women (pp. 311-321). Elaine Kim problematizes the subject position of Korean American women feminists, questioning their favorite subject choice: the supposedly non-voiced subaltern Korean woman. "Just as it may not be useful to think solely in terms of class consciousness leading to class struggle leading to structural change along a linear trajectory, Korean American and Korean women's identities may overlap in many places, making it difficult to place one as the sovereign and opportunistic voyeur and the other as idealized or victimized and completely without agency" (pp. 316-317). Identification in front of the sexual moralism of the "fatherland" is the link between the Korean American women derided as "Western Princess" or "whores of the West" and their fetish "object of study," that is the military prostitution.

Deviation from morality and normality, deviation from standards of governable subjectivities is also what justifies "lawful" violence against these subjectivities. The essay that reveals the violence of the making of "normality" in its connection with visual technologies explores Rita Hayworth's road to stardom. The landmarks of her strenuous path to glory are marked upon her body by medical technologies used to transform her image from a "latina" to an "all American woman" "so 'American' [that] her image graced the first atomic bomb" (p. 271).

Part four of the book deals with violence in its mundane understanding, sanctioning at the same time the previous pages of the book. With the exception of Peacock's essay on domestic violence among South Asian immigrants in the United States, all other essays in this section revolve around Latin American and Chicana/Chicano studies. The same variety of topics, ranging from state violence in Latin America and the response of victims' mothers, to constricting hetero-normativity as depicted in Arturo Ripstein's film El Lugar Sin Limito offers a fertile ground for reconsidering theories of violence. This last section starts with a welcome article from an "academic clinical psychologist," Yvette Flores-Ortez who presents the clinical path to healing from the trauma

of domestic (and domesticated) violence among Mexican families in the United States. In one case, metaphors of colonialism equate a victim of domestic violence with *Malinche*, the "presumed collaborator in the conquest of Mexico" metaphor that "situates the narrator as one of the countless women, who according to Mexican history and popular culture, have betrayed her race," and that justifies violence in the eyes of the male perpetrator (p. 355). This moment resonates with the text analysis of the relationship "between language, violence, and the entire American continent as utopia" (p. 227) from "Pierced Tongues" (see above) by Margarita Saona. State violence in dictatorial regimes and its perpetuation through technologies of governance (human rights discourses and/or medical complex of managing population) are the foci of Lessie Jo Frazier's essay.

David William Foster's analysis of Ripstein's film serves as support to challenge the binary upon which Queer theory is based, that is, the marked/unmarked binary questioning the logic of this "logic" organization of thought. This is in fact one of the issues that gives unity to this otherwise eclectic volume. Technologies of governmentality (a post-nation-state echo of Althusser's Ideological State Apparatuses) combine the management of signs with their inscription on bodies practicing subjectivation, and creating marked/unmarked bodies and consequently docile subjects. While thinking through governmentality and the inscription of the law on the body, one cannot help but be reminded of Giorgio Agamben's philosophical inquiry in his three volumes generically entitled *Homo Saccer*.

As this collection shows, the state does not magically disappear from the global scene but may be conceptualized as an actor among others that violently inform subjectivities in terms of race, gender, or class scripted (tattooed) on the body. An important point is the emphasis put on the body not as a possession of an ontologic subject, but as coincident with the subject, thus opening up the possibility of understanding subject formation through body practices. A "big absence" in this volume is Marcel Mauss, whose essay on "Techniques of the Body" and on personhood might have provided an even more solid ground for these explorations. While bridges between Anglo-Saxon and French theories are sometimes difficult to bridge (with few notable exceptions), I would signal Jean Pierre Warnier's work on material culture as presented in his book *Construire la culture materielle: L'homme qui pensait avec ses doigts* (1999) as a starting point for the re-problematization of the relationship between body conduits (fluid bodies) and practices of subjectivation.

While Judith Butler is widely quoted in the essays pertaining to gender, and Derrida's theory on violence is the organizational backbone of the volume, Foucault's approach on body and subjectivity is almost neglected. Might it be because many readings of Foucault strip him of his deeply engaged position and imagine resistance as a futile action? However, many spaces of resistance depicted in this volume are congruent to what Foucault imagines as practices of resistance in the system based on capillarity of power. As Foucault put it: "In this central and centralized humanity, the effect and instrument of complex power relations, bodies and forces subjected by multiple mechanisms of 'incarceration', objects for discourses that are in themselves elements for this strategy, we must hear the distant roar of battle."[1] *Violence and the Body* is a volume that brings to the front and makes audible, in different intensities and sound qualities (if I am allowed), the "roars of the distant battle" of resistance and subjectivation.

Note

[1]. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), p. 308.