

Furthermore, there are a few factual errors in the text. First, a few times Loyd represents the U.S. as a geographic binary of either North or South, which completely omits the West as a region. For example, she wrongly identifies the people of Los Angeles as “Northerners” (37) and her discussion of segregated hospitals in Los Angeles appears under a subheading about “the North” (38). Los Angeles is not a northern city within the nation, or among other U.S. western cities, or even within the state of California. Second, the correct name for the research center at Howard University in Washington, D.C., is the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center. Third, it was Medicaid not Medicare that changed federal health policy for the poor in the 1960s (49). Medicare extended health care benefits to seniors and people with disabilities, while Medicaid was intended to provide health benefits for people with low incomes.

Nonetheless, *Health Rights Are Civil Rights* is a valuable study of social justice activism in Los Angeles from 1963 to 1978. Historians and other scholars will learn something new from this book. Jenna Loyd makes a convincing case that welfare rights, peace, and civil rights were not always separate and discrete social movements but at times converged. Her study of Los Angeles adds a key locale to the growing body of scholarship on the connections among social movements. In sum, this comprehensive study reminds us that the Left in all of its various configurations had a profound impact on American history. Through collective action, ordinary people engaged in the ongoing effort to build a just city.

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**Bruce Robbins, *Perpetual War: Cosmopolitanism from the Viewpoint of Violence* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012). 256 pp. \$23.95 Paperback.**

Bruce Robbins has long been an authoritative voice in the humanities articulating the case for cosmopolitanism. *Perpetual War* brings together various recent pieces by Robbins into a form which distills his renewed commitment to this project. A commitment which salvages for, and from, cosmopolitanism a purposeful Left *politics* equipped to contend with the inequalities and state violence which, in spite of the putative ordinariness of various *everyday* cosmopolitanisms, seem only to be intensifying.

Herein lies a move central to the question which Robbins feels compelled to address, and even responsible for – given his earlier academic championing of the everyday “cosmopolitanisms from below”(11). Whilst it might well be the case that everyday forms of cosmopolitan identification, interaction and cultural consumption do “actually exist”(12), Robbins asks whether this is at all consequential in realising the normative content of cosmopolitanism – the reali-

sation of an “internationalism”(96) which surrenders the self-interest of local attachments in preference for the alleviation of inequalities as globally constituted (34). Robbins’ claim is that the humanities’ fashion for “descriptive cosmopolitanism” – tied to various adjectival constructions such as “rooted, vernacular, discrepant, and patriotic”(12) – becomes primarily a matter of aesthetics if the circuits of oppression which play out across global relations of interdependence continue undeterred. Worse still, cosmopolitanism might become amenable to purposes of consumer capital (simulation of commodity difference) and hubristic foreign excursions (under the banner of humanitarian intervention). And in insightfully issuing this question – why all the bluster about everyday cosmopolitanisms and its matrices of partial and overlapping multiple identities if it does little to disrupt the broader play of inequality – Robbins’s intervention becomes vital for those who continue to contend with the possibilities of “cosmopolitics”(25).

The form which Robbins’ discussion assumes is entertainingly ambitious, wherein each chapter works directly through the argument of a select canonical theorist: ranging from the titular head of cosmopolitanism, Anthony Appiah, to various stalwarts of Left commentary on the systemic ills of global capitalism and American militarism respectively (e.g. Chomsky, Klein, Said, Wallerstein), whilst elsewhere engaging the often ambivalent reflections of publically prominent essayists (e.g. Sebald on Dresden and mourning). His close textual engagement of these interlocutors is exacting, sympathetic but also lively as Robbins has impressively little patience for the more reductionist disavowal of humanism as well as the totalising accounts of Western omnipotence characteristic of some post-structural and/or post-colonial critique.

This theorist-by-theorist form does however pose certain difficulties. As is often a shortcoming of retrospective collections, the book’s introduction and indeed title promises an extended account of cosmopolitanism within the context of US led ‘War-on-Terror’ militarism; but many of collected articles often only obliquely bring this into play. This will frustrate some readers, expecting a more focused recuperation of cosmopolitanism within the context of contemporary violence and all that is unique about it: the legitimating discourse of humanitarian intervention and its unsettling proximity to ideas of cosmopolitan humanism, global governance through increased recourse to state of exceptions, emergencies and surveillance; the representational premium placed on the demotic Muslim; and the full historical realisation of the fantasy that is long-distance, stealth warfare. This understatement of war as theorised by the likes of Butler, Chamayou, Gregory, Kundnani, and Mamdani is however only an issue as far as the book’s initial *presentation* is concerned; and the chapters do engage other equally important realities which a case for normative cosmopolitanism must reckon with.

One of Robbins' recurring concerns is that the allure of thick belongings has become all the more ascendant today. Its triumph confirmed in the truism that even cosmopolitanism has had to adopt the grammar and symbolism of community belonging – but as *multiple* belongings (31-32). Robbins is right to observe, echoing certain recent notes sounded by Paul Gilroy, that this is no radical break. Circumventing this dead end of identity making, Robbins approaches the place of the intellectual and the commitment to *politics* itself as one basis by which cosmopolitanism might be situated in fields of affective belonging. Robbins looks to actualise here an intriguing reconciliation of national detachment with the daily substance of situated affect. Chomsky and particularly Said, who was Robbins' teacher, become exemplars of this belonging *in* politics, though Robbins is far from hagiographic in his modelling of them.

The dilemma of avoiding the quietism which eventualises in the unfor- giving “conceptual rationalism (96” fashioned in Kantian workings of cos- mopolitanism is brought into stronger effect in chapter four: ‘The Sweatshop Sublime’. Robbins takes seriously the charge that cosmopolitanism too presumptuously issues impossible imperatives of global justice, unanchored in established circuits of “habitual desires, fears and anxieties, embarrassed perceptions and guilty pleasures”(96). But crucially, he does not revert to a reformulation of patriotic local attachments as compatible with a commitment to a global “ethical grounding”(13). Instead, he redeploys the Gramscian concept of the national- popular – a “historically determined common sense” – in exploring the possibili- ties of a *global* common sense: “the international-popular”(96-97). Whilst this will “fall well short of any ideal action-oriented solidarity”(97), it can lead to important intuitions that the conditions of my own privilege and vulnerability alike are directly implicated in relations of oppression globally constituted. This exciting revitalisation of a Gramscian orientation successfully moves the argu- ment away from the Herculean cognitive detachment which liberal renditions of cosmopolitanism require – by returning to cosmopolitanism the figurations of culture, imagination and messy compromises.

The inadequacies of liberal cosmopolitanism play out at other levels too. Apart from underplaying the common-sense cultural imaginaries which are up for capture, Robbins notes that it also remains unaware of the implicit nationalisms which it revitalises. Not only in allowing Western aggression to dress itself in the niceties of humanitarianism, but also in engendering counter- productive economic and activist protectionisms. For instance, Robbins argues that anti-sweatshop and environmentalist (8-9) campaigns often carry a troubling intimation that ‘we’ will buy local (“The Made in America’ progressive capitalism) but continue to dump our goods and engage in other forms of surplus extrac- tion when advantageous (103-113). This contradiction is well noted.

But perhaps more importantly, a liberal cast of cosmopolitanism proceeds from a curiously flattened survey of global power. Apparent in the rooted cosmopolitanism vision of Appiah, patriotic and cosmopolitan aspirations are increasingly seen as unproblematic bedfellows. Robbin's simple reminder amidst this all-inclusive rendition of cosmopolitanism is that not all patriotisms – and analogous communitarian attachments – are created equal. Put simply, the attachment to American or European nationalisms risks endorsement of the exercise of global power that is already bound up in the very constitution of that nation-state's socio-economic realities and its mythopoeic symbolism.

Robbins reserves particular reproach here for those theorists who frame cosmopolitanism as a political ideal to be offered to a global humanity *already level* in their dealings with each other. A flattening of global constituencies leads to a complacent account of what cosmopolitanism looks to address (39–42). Robbins notes that cosmopolitanism is only worthwhile because it recognises the world not as isolated pools of humanity who enter into volitional encounters with each other, but rather, as interconnected systems of inequality and coercion. He rightly maintains that cosmopolitics must be responsive to the contingencies of an uneven global field. For instance, in his defence, via Said, of the nation-making projects mounted by postcolonial peoples, Robbins argues there can be no moral equivalency when the effects of American or Israeli nationalism are qualitatively and quantitatively so much more vested in existing power relations than, for instance, the liberation struggle of Palestinians (123).

How far we should actually go in rejecting communitarian attachments when issued from positions of privilege is not however a question that can be easily resolved and Robbins does leave this tension open. But Robbins does emphatically sire in these various chapters a timely reminder that a normative cosmopolitanism must be squarely situated within the murky circumstances of power and inequality, globally construed.

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