



Letter from the Editors

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On the one hand, we did not set out at the start of this issue looking for a particular theme. We wanted to take stock of the breadth of possibilities that emerge when engaging with interdisciplinary work. Despite these beginnings, we have found a kind of unity in these pieces, one that we feel is worth highlighting. This issue engages a wide range of interdisciplinary topics and methods, from more traditional political theory, to autoethnographic feminist approaches, to critical archival work, to deep textual analysis of religious texts. Each piece, despite their distinct methods and backgrounds, expresses common questions and themes: What is our relation to structures of domination? What are the possibilities within such structures? How might we use interdisciplinary work to challenge and clarify relations of domination?

It is unsurprising that these crucial questions are being asked by such a wide range of scholars in a time when we are constantly reminded of the weight of structures. The timeline of this issue, from our initial call for papers in October of 2023 to the issue's publication, has mirrored the ongoing genocide in Gaza, accompanied by a revitalized energy in academia that asks its participants to consider their role in empire. Aline de Souza's evocative art pieces, "We need more anti-war songs, thoughts, words, and feelings" directly asks us to think about the possibilities of a world without imperialism, without domination. While the title of de Souza's pieces suggests a negation of war, it is her affirmative hope for the world that finds an opening as she quotes Winona LaDuke: "It is possible to imagine and live a life without imperialism." De Souza, as with many of the authors of this issue, point to such possibilities.

Our issue consists of two pieces of artistic work, a critical book review, an interview with scholar Vincent Lloyd, and four articles. Opening with "Radical Acts: Enslaved Practices of Care and Slavery Archives" by Filipe Robles, the reader is encouraged to consider the possibilities and limits of care practices implicit but obfuscated by archival editorial decisions. Robles' work pushes the reader to consider the persistence of a "critical consciousness" among enslaved peoples in the US and Brazil which enabled practices of care conditioned by extreme relations of domination and particular geographies. This is followed by Tirna Chatterjee's, "Wars have Gotten Boring: The Affect of Watching Everything All the Time." Chatterjee turns us to theories of boredom and spectacle and considers the effect of contemporary technology/media practices on our relationship to war and genocide. Chatterjee considers both the theoretical implications and affective experience of witnessing mass violence as shaping and reshaping our subjecthood.

Our issue then moves to "Challenging Distance: Reframing the Subtle Violence of Biblical Interpretations" by Elhom Gosink, pulling the reader into a temporal journey of biblical interpretations and reinterpretations that obfuscate, smooth over, or justify violence. Gosink

INTRODUCTION



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examines how such interpretations allow us to distance ourselves from liberal violence by supplying justificatory strategies that allow us to feel non-complicit or legitimized in our proximity to such violence. In this way, Gosink and Chatterjee's articles highlight different perspectives on the normalization of violence and war. Our final article is an autoethnographic theoretical reflection entitled "aura" by Maddie Tepper. This piece takes the reader on a journey with the narrator as she details her lived reality of marginality and disability in a world structured by global capitalism. Tepper ponders the moments of emulsification that point to others, alternative "we"s, and prospects of life beyond dominating structures. Elena Roe also enters the conversation with a book review entitled: "Fear, Hierarchy, and Violence: The Global Racial Imaginary in Barder's Global Race War" where she considers alongside Barder the role that a 'global racial imaginary' has played in the constitution and functioning of a deeply hierarchical international system. Thus, the story of international relations, often historically written in civilizational terms, still underpins the logics and actions of the contemporary global order.

The interview section features our conversation with Dr. Vincent Lloyd, Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at Villanova. Lloyd is affiliated with the Africana Studies program as well as directing the Center for Political Theology at Villanova, the interdisciplinary research hub in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Our conversation with Lloyd primarily focused on his most recent book, *Black Dignity*, the role of Black Studies in the university, and what academic engagements with Political Theology and Black Studies open up in terms of understanding relations of domination and resistance. Lloyd was also the keynote speaker at the 2024 ASPECT Conference, where graduate students from Virginia Tech and across the United States presented their work.

After the publication of issue 11.1, Hannah Gignoux and Luther McPherson will officially conclude their term as co-editors of SPECTRA. We are proud to have Elhom Gosink and Chris Smith assume leadership of the journal. We want to thank all authors, peer reviewers, the SPECTRA advisory board, the newly formed editorial board, ASPECT, the Virginia Tech Library, and VT Publishing for their contributions to this issue.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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