lating under the official radar, from illegally copied university texts to scientific reports on new AIDS drugs, and her enthusiastic prose evocatively captures a tactile sense of inky materials being passed from hand to hand. If the book risks repetition at times this might be attributable to the endlessly reproductive technology under discussion.

Eichhorn concludes by pointing out the almost total replacement of xerographic machines with digital photocopiers by around 2000, an occurrence 'most people didn't even notice'. This, she contends, is significant because the original machines enabled replication without a master copy, whereas the new technology consists of a scanner and data bank: 'While people no doubt continue to use copy machines in subversive ways, in the digital era they can no longer do so with a guarantee that they won't leave a trace.' A visit to a technology museum in Berlin reveals that, as objects, copy machines are 'bereft of design considerations'. As such, unlike the stylish typewriters, turntables and Polaroid cameras that continue to change hands as desirable retro commodities, these machines have been completely abandoned. However, the technology lives on in what Eichhorn calls the 'xerox effect', a DIY aesthetic that is digitally reproducible and functions in dialogue with new forms of social media. As she puts it: 'If photocopied posters, flyers, and zines still quickly found a place in Occupy, it is because the aesthetic of these forms continues to signify something that exceeds a method of document reproduction.' The significance of the photocopied aesthetic is that it 'is anarchic and punk, radical and queer', a bold claim that needs, possibly, to be situated in relation to less optimistic readings of analogue media and nostalgia, as discussed, for example, in the 2014 collection *Media and Nostalgia* edited by Katharina Neimeyer.

Eichhorn's lucid 'media archaeology' persuasively situates the photocopier as a new technology essential to the production of alternative communities in late twentieth-century North America. In this it achieves the outcome of good material culture research by taking an object of such ubiquity that it had become practically invisible and rendering it fresh again. As in her previous book, *The Archival Turn in Feminism: Outrage in Order* (2013), Eichhorn weaves insightful cultural analysis with personal and practical observations, treading a line between scholarly and activist registers. Although her celebration of radical xerographic practice flirts with hyperbole, the tone is exciting. The clean design of the book itself remains thankfully free of 'xerography's gritty aesthetic', but it also hints at the inherent contradiction of writing a scholarly-press history of activist materials. The copyright page clearly states: 'no part of this book may be reproduced'.

Victoria Horne

Smart writing

Sarah Kember's new book positions itself in a field of theory dominated by an often masculinist discourse that privileges conceptualisations of its research objects as things or environments in-themselves, instead of as the conflicted and hypermediated objects-in-time that they are. Im/mediacy is a recurring theme throughout the book, which bears both a political and conceptual charge. In particular, Kember targets the theoretical practices stemming from Object Oriented Ontology (or OOO), arguing that disavowing processes of mediation and problems of subjectivity leads to a disturbing complicity between the media industry and iMedia theorists. Her contention is that if we stop asking the question 'who writes?', while positing a flat ontology as the ground on which materials, environments and objects appear as equal, undifferentiated and neutralised, then we run the risk of erasing the structural and epistemological hierarchies which constitute those objects. This negation can do little to counter the current post-political, neoliberal consensus, especially if it goes hand-in-hand with a dismissal of critique as something outdated and redundant.

The task of *iMedia* is to unpack and undo such covert complicities between theory and the post-political. She does this in a skillful, albeit sometimes

frenetic manner, by assembling the work of a variety of scholars and storytellers. The book deploys critique, humour and ambiguity to offer a decisively feminist perspective on the stakes involved in mediating and narrativising the 'i' in iMedia. Storytelling and writing, as practiced by writers such as Donna Haraway or Hélène Cixous to whom Kember often returns, can become methods for reclaiming territories which are already seemingly lost to the post-political world of the iMedia industry. Writing is deployed as a 'queer feminist praxis' and simultaneously as '*the* deconstructive mechanism' that pertains to movements and displacements, while also being always both mediated and situated. I am wary of attempts to envisage any technique as somehow positioned on a priviliged level of criticality by virtue of its adherence to a supposedly inherently subversive set of practices (in this case, deconstruction). Nonetheless, in the feminist setting within which Kember operates and positions herself, writing can indeed only ever be conceived as a *practice*. As such, it cannot claim a privileged access to worlds and situations with which it is not already in a tenuous relationship. Instead, it must acknowledge its responsibility in the co-creation of these (i)worlds.

Kember performs the heterogeneity and partiality of writing by experimenting with different genres such as the manifesto, the sci-fi novel and the monograph. She inserts disparate fragments into her text, including a somewhat confused debate on an Apple forum, a detailed description of a Corning glass promotional video and a diagram that refigures the conceptual points of the book. These techniques seek to demonstrate that there is no writing in-itself just as there are no objects or environments-in-themselves. Indeed, it becomes apparent that being a skillful storyteller does not necessarily imply an ethical or politicising position. As the case of the materials manufacturer Corning makes apparent: it 'subsequently reveals its own own effectiveness as a storyteller and how effective stories themselves are at in-forming their audience, writing them into the futures that are told.' Her intention is to unscrew and loosen the mechanisms that secure this efficacy, a political practice which, Kember insists, can and should be performed by means of writing: 'this ques-

tion of "what should we do as citizens" has an answer: "write".' The industrial logic that is behind the narrative mode of promotional videos of companies such as Corning and Microsoft demonstrates its preference for neutralised, naturalised and loosely sexed protagonists, at the same time as it reinstates a traditionalist vision of gender roles, offering a vision of the future that looks more like the past. A feminist reading of these stories aims to reclaim the 'i' in iMedia, in its necessary ambiguity, and to shift attention towards the processes of constitution and erasure of political subjectivity.

According to Kember, glass is the *i*material which most persuasively demonstrates the tension between mediation and immediation, transparency and ambiguity. She argues that glass has always worked 'towards the endpoint of mediation', but in the present moment, imbued with its own future fantasies, it is starting to become information technology itself, and, via a ubiquity akin to plastic, now acts as an intelligent skin, becoming one with human bodies. Glass' transparency and seeming capacity to present 'the world as if it just is' is, however, not neutral but complicit with the neoliberal fantasy of an invisible information infrastructure that negates its own 'contribution to the world'. Here equality is understood in terms of access to the market. As Kember puts it: 'Glass itself might make everything clear to everybody equally, but its design and architecture, its cultural and technological working is never neutral but rather imbricated in power and social divisions.' In this discussion, expressions like 'glass itself' sometimes give the impression that we are being transported into the realms of ontology. Kember, however, decisively aligns herself here with Ezio Manzini, who underscores that the question at stake is not what glass *is*, but rather what it *does*. He consequently argues that what is needed is an onto-epistemology of the material. Cinderella (with her glass slipper) becomes Kember's way of approaching the problems associated with the gendering of this increasingly smarter material and the ways in which it is co-opted by tales of the iMedia industry about the future.

The book is ambitious in its attempts to enter and problematise a number of seemingly disparate

theoretical fields and to orient them around its main concern: the question of mediation and subjectivity in iMedia, and the political implications of their erasure or reinstatement. With the exception of Cixous and Jacques Derrida, there is barely a thinker who is not subjected to critical scrutiny by the author. Moreover, the adoption of such a stance is the practice Kember envisions as a means of situating herself in the quest of producing and diffracting iMedia knowledge. The polemical tone of the book, however, sometimes leads to imprecision and obscurity, as in the discussion of the tension between *potentia* and potential in the end section of chapter three. Kember criticises vitalist feminist thinkers Rosi Braidotti and Elizabeth Grosz for their reinstatement of oppositionalist logics and utilises their discussion to introduce the question of time as a ground for a feminist political intervention and story-telling. Yet it remains unclear how her own distinction between potential (the 'finely grained and ingrained clock time that carves out women's work') and *potentia* ('the life-times of women's diverse becomings') can provide an alternative.

If Kember's argument about the politics of time(telling) remains underdeveloped, its charge can nevertheless be retraced by attending to her preoccupation with the way in which the book is crafted and structured. The publication consists of a montage of disparate parts, including a sci-fi novel in progress (in which the implementation of Global Democratic Capitalism has resulted in the perfection of citizenship as defined by people's actual and potential capacity to consume) and a two-part iMedia manifesto. These different genres convey their own temporalities and velocities, their own fidelities to the contemporary and the future. Perhaps then the book performs its most enigmatic point formally, by navigating different ways of organising and experimenting with time in writing. The book invites its reader to rethink the future of critical praxis and of feminist media theory and to explore their potential to create iWorlds. Their protagonists would actively undertake the task of politically and materially refiguring the current neoliberal, masculinist logic of iMedia theory and industry. It becomes apparent that the politico-theoretical project for a *movement towards* a post-dialectical feminism as proposed by Kember would go hand-in-hand with the development of a writerly praxis which acknowledges its own responsibility in matters of decision-making or 'cutting'. It is precisely this commitment to experimentation which transmits a sense of urgency to the reader to adopt practices of threading, storytelling, parody and cutting.

Neda Genova

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