

squaring it with a gender abolitionist position. As has been widely noted in reviews, her (at best) confused approach to trans lives is disappointing at a time at which feminist solidarity with trans people, particularly from figures of her stature, is acutely needed. Nevertheless, the book does offer – perhaps in spite of itself – starting points for answering these questions within Federici’s model. Her emphasis on ‘a *common terrain of struggle for women*, even if it is one in which contrasting strategies may develop’, suggests a broader and more inclusive approach to identity and strategy, as does the claim that “‘woman” is not a static, monolithic term but one that has simultaneously different, even opposite and always changing significations’. Federici’s efforts to resignify the meanings of body parts seem as applicable to trans and gender-nonconforming people as to the cisgender women who are Federici’s primary concern. At times Federici makes claims for the resistant potential of trans lives. While her comment that trans and intersex people offer a way to ‘recognize the broad range of possibilities

that “nature” provides’ derives from her antagonism to modifying bodies, we might also read this line as congruent with queer ecology’s challenge to any notion of ‘natural’ sexual dimorphism. Her description of trans people as offering a model of the body that is ‘nondependent on our capacity to function as labour power’ similarly points towards a potential trans-inclusive reorientation of Federici’s work.

The most promising part of the book is the Afterword. Federici argues for ‘joyful militancy’, or the principle that ‘either our politics are liberating, either they change our life in a way that is positive, that make us grow, give us joy, or there’s something wrong with them’. Joyful militancy rejects a notion of activism as heroic self-sacrifice in service of the future, prioritising instead ‘the reproductive side of political work’ that transforms our lives and our selves in the present. This final chapter, which is evocative, illuminating and strategically astute, is a reminder of what Federici, at her best, can do.

Hannah Boast

Precarious euphoria

Tina Managhan, *Unknowing the ‘War on Terror’: The Pleasures of Risk* (London: Routledge, 2020). 132pp., £120.00 hb., 978 1 35104 860 6

It is a wild adventure we are on. Here, as we are rushing along through the darkness, with the cold from the river seeming to rise up and strike us; with all the mysterious voices of the night around us, it all comes home. We seem to be drifting into unknown places and unknown ways; into a whole world of dark and dreadful things.

Bram Stoker, *Dracula*

Dracula may seem like a strange place to start a review of a work primarily concerned with the global War on Terror. But, in the same way Tina Managhan walks us through the ‘excesses and uncanniness of this war’, so Bram Stoker’s novel lays bare the libidinal urges haunting imperial Britain. Stoker tells a tale about the eternal return of the supernatural (racialised) ‘other’ embodied in Dracula and his voluptuous undead ladies, whose nightly visitations and seductions of virtuous Victorians serve only to reveal the impotence of ‘science’ in the face of

other-worldly attacks. While conventional accounts of Dracula focus on the fight between good and evil, science, superstition and female sexuality, it is the unbridled *enjoyment* or *jouissance* experienced by Van Helsing and his cohort in battling the Count which drives the novel forward. From illicit sexual encounters and amateur detective work, to the joy of driving a stake into the heart of one’s enemy and, most of all, the sheer thrill of the pursuit of Dracula, an obscene light is shed upon characters we are invited to think of as the pinnacle of civilisation and modernity.

If dominant ways of theorising the War on Terror have been rooted in ideas of precautionary risk logics or the understanding that ‘we act *not* on the basis of knowledge, but on the basis of “catastrophic contingency” – on the basis that the slightest conceivable risk of the absolute worst that could happen’, then Managhan implores

us to heed the pleasures we take in such risks. Drawing on Lacan, psychoanalysis, phenomenology and affect theory, the book points to the anxieties, fears and desires which animate and circulate notions of risk and the practices which ostensibly seek to manage these: ‘The repressed of precautionary risk logics is the pleasure of risk – the pleasures of a world inhabited by monsters and ghosts and, with them, all the archaic passions that have always haunted Enlightenment reason’. It is precisely these *pleasures of risk* with which Managhan is concerned and which in their uncanny fashion echo the spirit of Dracula. The book details how the War on Terror is littered with phantoms, monsters and ghosts who offer an insight into what makes ‘the West’ tick.



The two spectacular contexts that are subjected to sustained analysis are the 2012 Olympic Games in London and the hunt for the Boston Bombers. Managhan situates the London Olympic Games in a longer imperial history of World Exhibitions and Expos, whose staging served to produce narratives about Western progress vis-à-vis the ‘backwardness’ of colonised subjects whose presence was the source of fetishised titillation. What would the 2012 Olympics Games ‘tell’ about Britain today? The games unfolded in a wider context of the

2011 London riots, the austerity-induced immiseration of working class populations and the ongoing War on Terror. The Prime Minister at the time (the cataclysmic David Cameron) had pronounced the death of multiculturalism in the UK, as in his view it was akin to ethnic and racial separatism and the excesses of cultural difference, and its accommodation by the state was causing terrorism. Although all was clearly not well in this green and pleasant land, the news that London was awarded the Olympic Games on 6 July 2005 was met with celebration across the capital. The following day on the 7th of July, however, London was the scene of multiple suicide attacks which targeted the transport system. The breakneck shift in public mood from jubilation to horror in those two days served to underscore the tension between the harmonious imagery of multicultural youth exemplified in London’s Olympic bid and the deep fault lines rippling under the surface.

Managhan explores how in this context of overarching security risks and crisis, the Olympics Games offered an opportunity for the enjoyment of ‘precarious euphoria’. The heightened sense of risk served to deepen the pleasures of the games which included awesome displays of sovereign power embodied in the triumphant militarisation of the Olympic Games. Even Danny Boyle’s production of the opening ceremony – which ostensibly offered an inclusive vision of Britain where the NHS, factory workers, women and immigrants featured heavily – ‘worked to consolidate hegemonic power relations’. Boyle’s potted history of Britain as the home of harmonious race relations, tolerance and fairness was premised on the ‘absent present’ British Empire whose afterlives are central to making the inequalities experienced by the very same black and brown bodies vaunted in the opening ceremony. Furthermore, the spectacles of military force, of missiles placed on rooftops and snipers in helicopters circling events under the aegis of the War on Terror, revealed Britain’s undimmed appetite for violence and the ‘exaltation of community’ formed through this: ‘Under the auspices of risk and the Olympic Games, the British public could enjoy the transgressive pleasures of Empire while officially leaving Empire, racism and “the island story” of Little England behind’. Ultimately, the Olympic Games in London offered an opportunity to retell the story of Britain in which Empire was formally disavowed but reared its head through awesome displays

of nationalistic military power ushered in by the War on Terror.

An analysis of the hunt for the Boston Bombers – the two young men responsible for killing 3 and injuring a further 260 people at the Boston Marathon on Patriot’s day in 2013 – offers insight into the context of US politics and its risky indulgences in the War on Terror. In light of the mobilisation of overwhelming militarised state power in pursuit of the 26 year-old Tamerlan Tsarnaev and 19 year-old Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, Managhan demonstrates how the blurring of fantasy and reality generated a surplus *jouissance* culminating in the death of the former and capture of the latter. The cinematic quality of the hunt itself is thrown into sharp relief through the countless pre-existing imaginings offered by film and literature about what the hunt would look like and how it would be felt. Ultimately, attention to the uncanny yields something which should have stayed out of view: the hunt itself echoed the historical lineages of (racial) violence which have been integral to the formation of the United States. Managhan argues that nation-states are more than simply vessels for the provision of security or public goods, and that they are made and sustained through a politics of *jouissance*. Moving from the transgressive pleasures of risk, to the wider question of the libidinal investments which inform and direct ideas of who ‘we’ are in opposition to who ‘we’ are not, the politics of *jouissance* is a window into the rewards of being part of a nation. Drawing on Lacan and Žižek, it is the constitutive lack which generates desire manifest in the form of questions like, ‘who am I’ and ‘what do you want from me?’ The fantasy of the nation generated by the constitutive lack provides answers to these questions. Through the hunt for the Boston bombers, the American nation found itself through a combination of the pain of the violence directed at fellow Americans and the pleasure generated by the hunt itself.

Managhan details the pleasures taken in punishing the transgressor and his subversion of ‘our’ way of life. She notes that had the bombers been white their pursuit and punishment would not have carried the same pain or the same pleasure. This is where mapping the ‘racialised contours of *jouissance*’ allows us to grasp a much big-

ger argument about the relationship between nations as fantasy and the violence directed at ‘outsiders’. Namely, that in this US context, Managhan is able to draw a convincing line from the lynching of African Americans to the torture of Iraqi prisoners in Abu Ghraib and white nationalist marches in Charlottesville. All these ‘hunts’ allowed for the consolidation of white community fully backed by the power of the law and the sovereign power lurking therein. The War on Terror and its many and shifting faces rest on this one disavowed premise: that of white superiority.

In this present moment, the book contributes to an ongoing critique of the complicated disavowal of ‘race’ and racism as constitutive forces in global politics plaguing the discipline of International Relations (IR). While there is a wider disciplinary critique emerging along these lines from scholars such as Meera Sabaratham, Robbie Shilliam and Robert Vitalis, there is something similar happening in what we can loosely describe as the sub-field of critical security studies. Critiques of critical security studies have focused on the way in which this scholarship inadequately, if at all, engages with (racialised) imperial and colonial histories and consequently with what Derek Gregory has dubbed ‘the colonial present’. *Unknowing the War on Terror* shows us how the ‘precautionary risk logics’ literature evacuates the concept of risk from its racialised historical provenance and from its neo-colonial present, thereby unwittingly reproducing ‘the West’ and what it calculates to be risky as logical and rational. This scholarship more or less elides any meaningful engagement with the racial animus haunting the risk society. Racism is not an unfortunate by-product of risk, a matter of ‘stereotypes’ or ‘bias’ or generic ‘othering’ but a constitutive, foundational aspect of what is considered to be ‘risky’ and ‘at risk’ in the War on Terror. In my view, this is Managhan’s most powerful move not least because this point of departure allows her to develop a reinvigorated engagement with the idea of risk – via Foucault, Lacan and Žižek – and invites us to take race seriously when exploring the underside of the War on Terror and the manifold pleasures it has afforded those who have been living in it and with it.

Nadya Ali