

film *A Clockwork Orange*, in a reflection on the recent rise of injuries, faults, and accountabilities that can only be disclosed (and hence experienced) through the deployment of statistical analysis.

Ordinary ethics is an important and welcome addition to the growing literature building the bridge between anthropology and philosophy. The ethnographic sweep is considerable in both range and detail. The theoretical ground covered is extensive. The syntheses attempted and achieved are worthwhile and should prove durable.

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LATOUR, BRUNO & VINCENT ANTONIN

LÉPINAY. *The science of passionate interests: an introduction to Gabriel Tarde's Economic anthropology*. 100 pp., Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, 2010. £9.00 (paper)

Gabriel Tarde was an unflinching adept of what Everett Hughes has termed 'theoretical fantasy' ('Tarde's *Psychologie économique*: an unknown classic by a forgotten sociologist', *The American Journal of Sociology* 66, 1961, 553-9). In the fourth chapter of his massive opus *Psychologie économique* (1902, 26-9), Tarde pauses briefly to consider quite seriously the potential long-term trends in international political economy ... if the earth were flat! His surprising conclusions I leave to the interested reader. In *The science of passionate interests*, Bruno Latour and Vincent Antonin Lépinay consider a slightly less implausible counterfactual: what if Tarde's *Psychologie économique* had been taken up by practical and theoretical followers and had shaped the history of political economy, while Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* fell into oblivion, only to be rediscovered today by sceptical or amazed readers? This 'little essay in historical fiction' (p. 1) gives an inkling of how Tarde's forgotten opus might be read today if – as has in fact happened with *Das Kapital* – it had benefited from generations of admiring commentators to smooth out its rough edges, extend its concepts through new theoretical language, and retrospectively highlight its prescience. In the process, Latour and Lépinay have succeeded in that most anthropological of tasks, namely to make strange what we thought we knew: about 'political economy', first of all, and more generally about 'everything that has happened to us in the past two hundred years and that we have far too hastily summarized under the name of "capitalism"' (p. 5).

This orientation explains why, while the book offers a thought-provoking introduction to the substance and concerns of the century-old treatise in economic sociology, its aim is not primarily to give a critical contextualization of the book or of Tarde's work more generally. While the authors contrast Tarde to Polanyi, Bourdieu, Marx, or Adam Smith, and connect him to Darwin, Leibniz, Sahlins, or Deleuze, their introduction is not seeking to 'situate' and thereby tame the majestic weirdness of Tarde's *Psychologie économique*, but, on the contrary, to highlight the 'strangeness of a book which will allow [the reader] to gain a new grasp on economics' (p. 67).

And Tarde's 'economic psychology' certainly proves to be productively strange. Part I of Latour and Lépinay's book, entitled 'It is because the economy is subjective that it is quantifiable', outlines the Tardean challenge to the economic science of his day, and in particular his heretical proposal to decouple quantification from objectivity and distance. Tarde sees economic notions of value as metonymic of the more general phenomenon of 'interpsychological' give and take of 'passionate interests' (pp. 7-13, 24). In this respect, the authors argue, Tarde went much further than later attempts to 'embed' the economy in the social, or to add 'extra-economic' factors as modifiers upon the rational, calculating individual: *everything* in Tarde's economy is 'extra-economic' (p. 24), passionate, irrational, (inter-)subjective. And economics must, paradoxically, become more quantitative and more scientific by getting closer to, not further away from, these passionate interests (pp. 20-32).

Having disposed of the 'discipline' (p. 32) of economics, the second part of the book traces Tarde's substantive re-theorization of the economy itself. In elucidating his counterintuitive account of capital and labour (for Tarde, 'conversation' is an essential production factor, and the essence of capital lies in the 'inventions' of which material objects are but an auxiliary, albeit useful, outcome – pp. 46-56), the authors show convincingly that what looks like a strange 'idealism' when read through the old dichotomy of infrastructure and superstructure seems strikingly prescient in the redistributed material-semiotic world of hardware and software, biotechnology and viral marketing. The authors trace Tarde's similarly counterintuitive way of 'naturalizing' the economy while 'socializing' nature (pp. 42-6): in Tarde's political economy as in his version of

Darwinism, the immanent hope of symbiosis replaces the transcendent law of improvement through 'vital conflict'.

This theme forms the centrepiece of the third part of the book, 'Economics without providence', in which the authors contrast Tarde's approach to political economy with the providentialism inherent in both liberal 'laissez faire' – with its crypto-religious belief in the Invisible Hand (pp. 71–4) – and the all-too-visible hand of state socialism (pp. 74–9). By contrast to both of these beliefs in a transcendent harmonization, Tarde is presented here as an 'agnostic' (pp. 5, 81). Not a postmodern apostle of chaos, but a cautious proponent of the immanent powers of harmonization present in every entity's artifices and interventions. The book's final sentence sums up the simultaneously methodological, ontological, and ethical/political import of Tarde's economic anthropology, as rendered by Latour and Lépinay: '[I]t is from the free play of passionate interests that [Tarde] expects more quantification, which is to say more social connections, to "card chaos into a world" ' (p. 87).

The formulation also gives a sense of how much the Tarde we encounter today owes to the current of thought characterized as Actor Network Theory – just as anthropology students in the 1990s encountered Marx through practice theory. 'No one seems to have chosen Tarde as his sociological ancestor', wrote Everett Hughes in the 1961 article cited at the start of this review, adding, 'I recommend him as at least an uncle who is generous with his ideas'. Four decades later, Bruno Latour claimed Tarde as the grandfather of ANT ('Gabriel Tarde and the end of the social', in *The social in question: new bearings in history and the social sciences* (ed.) P. Joyce, 117–32, 2002). It will fall to readers to decide, in the light of this captivating and provocative little book, whether the real, spherical world would have been a better place, and political economy a better science, had Tarde's unbroken lineage, rather than Marx's, presided over the twentieth century. Either way, the great merit of Latour and Lépinay's introduction is to give us a glimpse of that conceptual generosity, at a time when anthropology and the social sciences more generally are greatly in need of new 'theoretical fantasies' to help unsettle the vocabulary of contemporary political economy, from 'global capitalism' through to 'neoliberalism'.

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Urban anthropology

BIRON, REBECCA E. (ed.). *City/art: the urban scene in Latin America*. x, 274 pp., maps, illus., bibliogr. London, Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2009. £59.00 (cloth), £14.99 (paper)

This edited collection gathers an eclectic, multidisciplinary range of scholars and practitioners (cultural and literary critics, anthropologists, an architect, a philosopher) to contemplate dimensions of contemporary urban life in Latin America. The book adds to the surge of recent literature on urbanism inspired partly by intensifying urbanization and the emergence of megacities. Its authors examine huge, sprawling metropolises such as Rio de Janeiro, Mexico City, and São Paulo, and other urban centres (Brasília, Santiago de Chile, Montevideo, Havana – even Miami) that define in various ways the dense, dynamic cultural texture of 'Latin America' today.

Analysing cities through a single urban planning or social science lens might limit recognition of vital yet less obvious forces shaping the city as it is lived and experienced by its inhabitants. Contrasting such approaches, the essays aim – as editor Rebecca Biron states – to present the cities foremost as 'sites of creativity' (p. 2), thereby allowing an 'affective understanding of the lived city' (p. 3). As such, the book investigates diverse 'arts', from official and commercial modes of expression (urban plans, formally staged performances, shopping malls) to more popular ones (performance art, graffiti) reckoned to reflect but also inform the 'urban scene' in today's Latin America. The refrain running through the collection is the tension contained within the region's primary cities between the city as a real, concrete, physical entity and the abstract city as imagined, fictionalized, or idealized.

Moving across Latin America, the collection situates the reader right in the heart (and, arguably, in the soul) of the various cities explored. The book is divided into three parts, each of which encompasses a small cluster of essays grouped thematically. In part I, 'Urban designs', cultural studies guru Nestor García Canclini critiques basic definitions of a city that have been used in urban studies, privileging instead how Mexico City residents perceive and experience their city. Adrián Gorelik teases out the contradictions within *porteños'* views of Buenos Aires, and their ambivalence about being (Latin) Americans. James Holston contributes