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Citation: Healy, C. and Schlunke, K. 2018. Editorial. *Cultural Studies Review*, 24:2, 1-2. <https://doi.org/10.5130/csr.v24i1.6320>

ISSN 1837-8692 | Published by UTS ePRESS | <http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/journals/index.php/csrj/index>

EDITORIAL

Trouble

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5130/csr.v24i1.6320>

Article History: Published 28/11/2018

Last year, in the wake of the election of Donald Trump, Michael Taussig's contribution to *Cultural Anthropology*, claimed:

An entirely new, language-busting cultural change is taking place beyond good and evil, wherein Trump Tower displaces the White House as the new normal, only there is no normal anymore.¹

As intellectuals, such pronouncements have been our stock-in-trade, at least since a ghost was heard wandering around Europe rabbiting on about the end of holy fixity and the airing of profanity. What might be newer is a sense that in the face of contemporary troubles, many habitual scholarly responses seem inadequate. Today, the willingness to say that we now live in 'troubled times' has everything to do with locally distinctive articulation of global predicaments such as climate change, provincial fault lines such as Trump and complexly specific flows and articulations such as the violence done to displaced peoples. This edition of *Cultural Studies Review* trials some less-than-conventional scholarly responses to a diverse array of troubling cultural moments. Tara Brabazon, Steve Redhead and Runyararo Chivaura raise the possibility of 'Trump Studies' in a polemic that seems both mimetic and supplementary. Their persistent attention to race, and whiteness in particular, as a point of connection between Brexit and Trump usefully reminds us of the enduring historical dimensions of these times while not ignoring the unpredictable effects of Trump's transformation of conventional alliances.

Francis Russell's essay elegantly queries the neoliberal logics of self-care as 'the solution' to mental illness. Drawing on diverse resources, from affect and labour theory, and refusing to adjudicate as to which particular modes of therapy might be more or less neoliberal, Russell instead argues the case for thinking about self-care as reproductive labour riven with normative contradictions, but work none the less. He wonders whether, if individuals were

paid for attending to their own mental health, this would expose and politicise what is often silenced, singular works. He notes that self-care includes techniques for individual survival but also labour that sustains cultures and society at a particular price to those individuals and their communities.

Rebecca McLaughlan is also concerned with questions of mental health, primarily through her analysis of the archival ‘voice’ of Janet Frame and the remnants of the buildings in which Frame was institutionalised. How, she asks, might we constitute an ethical relationship with historical figures who we act with, obey and simply use in our research. What ethical form, beyond the footnote, honours the work done with the dead who also live on in their writings and material traces?

Karina Horsti takes us to the paths used by travellers, migrants and refugees travelling from Italy to France. Traversing those spaces and various temporalities, Horsti’s writing is both ethnographic and experimental. These pathways are full of hopes and fears such as one pass known by the names, The Pass of Hope and The Pass of Death. These routes are independent of those who travel them but they are also marked by graffiti from Jewish, Italian, Arabic and African peoples who have created a ‘vernacular transnational memorial, a trace to be read by those who walk by’. Lucy Tatman wonders about the diversity of silences, and how silences can produce fear and weariness within institutional cultures but also offer moments of communal grace. She both worries individual instances of silence and connects philosophers and thinkers across time through their thinking within silence. For a piece dedicated to silence this is a disquieting and moving essay.

Our special section, ‘The Ethics of Troubled Images’ showcases critical work on ‘troubling’ images and we thank its Guest Editors, Bruce Buchan, Margaret Gibson and Amanda Howell, and the authors of the essays within; Grant Bollmer, Katherine Guinness, Larissa Hjorth, Kathleen M Cumiskey, Wendy Keyes, Barbara Pini and Anna Reading. As this section explores, troubled images are those that provocatively depict violence, marginality, dehumanisation, public death and mourning but these ubiquitous images are also troubling in their invitation to accept, normalise, or legitimate violence, suffering and victimisation.

Through a diverse set of texts our reviewers weigh up current contributions to our fields. Jolynna Sinanan considers the importance of ethnography for engaging with people’s everyday mediated worlds, Stehen Umbrello provides a compelling case for, and deliciously clear summation of, the major contributions Object Oriented Ontology while Peter Hobbins decisively surveys aerial surveillance.

Endnotes

1. M. Taussig, “Trump Studies,” *Cultural Anthropology*, 18 January 2017, <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/1046-trump-studies>