

of time being stopped altogether. It can hardly be expected that someone who spends years isolated from society will be able to cope with the hectic pace of, for instance, technological development. It is in these more personal notes that some of Wang's most inspiring glimpses of formal innovation come into play.

While most of the chapters in the volume read as conventional essays, Wang innovates through carefully thought-out and aptly placed inserts that, in what seem to be excerpts taken from some sort of personal journal, read very much like poetry (another medium the author explores regularly). In what is perhaps the less usual of all the essays, chapter five (titled "The Cybernetic Cop: Robocop and the Future of Policing"), Wang adapts for example "*a multimedia performance originally conceived for the L.A. Filmforum's Cinema Cabaret*" (p. 253; italics in the original) into a somewhat lighter chapter that follows

a highly expositive essay on predictive and algorithmic policing.

As a whole, by placing her work in a thoroughly researched cross-section of post-marxist economic theory and analysis – prison abolitionist thinking framed by great bastions of African-American thought such as W. E. B. Du Bois, and something approaching the realm of poetry and performance that gives the volume a more human and perhaps more real and concrete reality, without ever facilitating the appropriately serious nature of her subject matter – Jackie Wang has succeeded in crafting an inspiring set of essays that shed light on some of the society's most pressing concerns that, as of late, have rightly begun to seep into public consciousness and that, aside from deserving everyone's undivided attention, proves yet again that, yes, the game is rigged.

João Gabriel

**Giuliani, Gaia (2016), *Zombi, alieni e mutanti. Le paure dall'11 settembre a oggi*. Firenze: Le Monnier, 200 pp.**

**To Live with the Monsters**

In this world that lost its utopias and their projection of perfect and (im)possible worlds into the space-time continuum, dystopian narratives are the representations and the key to understand contemporary time and its fears. In this age devoid of a world order, political directions and, after 1989, temporal perspective towards the future, natural and human catastrophes, "internal" and "external" monsters, as well as the thinning of the borders between natural and artificial besiege our imaginary and define outlines, meanings and references. The obsession with security in a time without future and dreams, through the continuous

production of threatening diversities, identifies and constrains the political objectives with the sole task of protecting and preserving the human species, the nation, the community, the family, private property; protecting the circulatory system of the social structure – that is the capitalist system of private production and consumption – from potential and imaginary pathogenic germs. A system, by its nature based on the competitive principle of inclusion/exclusion, that at the same time protects, nourishes, consumes, devours and destroys human life. In this political and social scenario, an evident shift in social attention towards the

visual media sphere – due to its “ability to arouse strong emotions” (p. 3) and its “very high commercialization” (*ibidem*)<sup>1</sup> – makes this dimension not only the main space of construction of collective imagination, but even the space where reality itself is produced; its hyper-realistic dimension arises from the confusion between real content, representations and media aspects, as Gaia Giuliani highlights in this book on the monstrous figures of otherness: *Zombie, alieni e mutanti*.

The references to gender studies, post-human feminist philosophy and race studies of the last years – particularly to whiteness studies – provide key tools and work materials for the intersectional approach chosen by Giuliani, in this and other researches, to develop her articulated and comprehensive criticism of the current system of global domination.

With this critical interpretation of the present times, Giuliani’s research reconstructs the visual archive of contemporaneity, accessing this extreme space of representation of nightmares and real distortions of our imaginary: an exciting journey through science fiction, horror movies and TV series produced in the Western world in recent years.

It is a work of semiotic deconstruction of movie language, and at the same time a philosophical-political text. It is an interpretation of the present contextualized with the history of the last two centuries. Giuliani’s point of view is crucial: the ghosts summoned in our confusing time to terrify us and to close ourselves to diversity actually come, like every good nightmare, from our past. This horizon is clarified and reconstructed with great analytical ability in this book.

It focuses above all on the colonial past, its semantics and image repertoire as a space where the West has built and fed from its heritage of monstrous *others*. Current visual literature thus draws on the cultural heritage of a system of domination, which Giuliani analyzes with special and constant attention in her philosophical investigation on the production of racisms. Despite the gigantic work of historiographical revision of the last decades that has brought to the surface all the “barbaric” violence carried out by the conquerors in the colonial past, living dead, anthropophagous monsters and insidious aliens continue to emerge from the past, sprung from racial genealogies; from that far world they rise to come and threaten and devour the “innocent” peace of our families and society. A continuous narrative of violent scenarios emerges, and so a political and social clash, vital and relevant, between civilizations and for civilization breaks out, the same one that fueled Western expansionism in the world for two centuries. Once more the national community, as an imagined community, is rebuilt through the monstrification of the *other* and the confirmation of its own endeavor towards progress, peace, and civilization. But, in this visual patrimony, the neocolonial representation of monstrous otherness also takes the form of the attention to physical and psychic alterations until one can identify a post-human dimension in the relationship between the human being and nature, and the human being and technology. Once more, the political objective is to take control over mutations, diversities, racial mixings, and indistinctness.

The careful analysis of movies production, on which this research is based, shows that

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<sup>1</sup> Translations by the author.

the visual material examined is not only the expression, but rather the live food, so to speak the active and socially performing element of a view of the present world and the future of humanity that is clearly claustrophobic and apocalyptic, and that in the

end seems to want to leave us without any chance for social change.

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