

**Steyn, Juliet and Nadja Stamselberg (eds.). 2014. *Breaching Borders: Art, Migrants and the Metaphor of Waste*. London, New York: I.B. Tauris. 298 pp. Hb.: £58.00. ISBN: 9781780762593.**

What borders do authors have in mind when discussing the metaphor of waste? Where could the intersection between art, migrants and “waste” be? Is the metaphor of waste really just a metaphor? What or who is being wasted? These are just a few questions that might rush through readers’ minds before starting to read this excellent collection of articles entitled *Breaching Borders: Art, Migrants and the Metaphor of Waste*. The book, edited by Juliet Steyn and Nadja Stamselberg, is a collection of eleven essays written by leading scholars and also less well-known researchers in political philosophy, post-colonial and cultural studies, art, translation, policy making, and sociology. Social scientists, including Zygmunt Bauman and Nikos Papastergiadis, or art theorists like Marina Gržinić, Charles Green, Anthony Gardner and others, translator Karen Seago, or Christian Sørhaug, who based his essay on a recently completed PhD on globalisation, are all committed to deconstructing conventional notion of borders, to thoroughly rethink migration and identity theories, to reflect on ‘waste’ and discourses of art, politics, nationalism and belonging.

In the *Introduction* to the book, editors Steyn and Stamselberg describe in a very intense and compact manner the main aim of the book and provide a background for this uncommon set of topics. In *Breaching Borders*, authors ‘explore figurations and re-articulations of migration to unpack assumptions of migrant identity as “waste” that go undeclared at the borders of discourse.’ (p. 1) One common feature of this collection of articles is that they try to shed light or provide fresh insights into the ‘potential catastrophe of wasted human existence’. They are focused on ‘the marginal, the migrant and the impact of policy at the core of European dysfunction’. (p. 1) To make a point, authors are intentionally depicting migrants unilaterally, as homogenous masses destined to be wasted/become waste in the centre or at the verges of Fortress Europe.

As the central metaphor, waste provides several starting points for discussion. The authors, using different approaches, explore challenges of migration, modernisation, integration, identity, belonging and history. Editors reveal that the inspiration or initial idea for the *Breaching Borders: Art, Migrants and the Metaphor of Waste* came from two different, though related sources: a book (Zygmunt Bauman, *Wasted Lives: Modernity and its Outcasts*; worth considering as excellent further reading) and an art exhibition (*Raising Dust: Encounters in Relational Geography*, curated by a novelist and editor Richard Appignanesi). Both distinguished authors contribute to *Breaching Borders* by shaping the discussion on waste in connection to politics and art. Bauman writes of wasted lives as modernity’s collateral casualties. His philosophy gives the current “migration crisis” in Europe yet another perspective. Human talents, skills and eventually lives of many are wasted in the nowadays current global problem of human redundancy, and people are indefinitely kept in refugee camps or ghettoised in the name of order building and economic progress.

Looking at art and artistic expression, Nicos Papastergiadis calls attention to a new paradigm on mobility and writes about the role of art in imagining multicultural communities. Starting from the notion, that art ‘always plays a critical role in our understanding of politics and ethics’ he presents two case studies on recent art projects where artists address ‘the extreme points of mobility and territory in the construction of agency’ (p. 57).

Due to this review’s space limitations, all papers cannot be taken into account. For that reason, I will point out only two more papers included in the *Breaching Borders* anthology. In first, Europeanness or European identity, as pictured in twenty-five short films in the project *Visions of Europe*, is revisited by Nadja Stamselberg. In the other, Christian Sørhaug is focusing on the consumption, waste, and identity of indigenous Warao people of the Orinoco Delta in Venezuela.

Stamselberg, questioning the existence of ethics behind the aesthetics of *Visions of Europe*, carefully analyses, categorises and interprets all 25 films with the aim to ‘challenge the relations of belonging that exclude’. (p. 73) Using Derrida’s notions she questions the established concept of belonging and calls for the reinterpretation of European identity. Sørhaug’s paper is worth mentioning for two reasons: placed at the very end of the book it is in juxtaposition to all previous articles in the book not only by the perspective it takes on waste, but also by the title, *Foraging for Love*. By showing that consumption of foreign goods by the Warao people is connected to the ideas of the self and also that garbage has value, Sørhaug argues against the traditional interpretation of indigenous peoples as passive victims of globalisation. Instead, he sees them as active participants in the process in which garbage/foreign goods are appropriated to fit their everyday lives. With the words of editors: in his argumentation “‘waste’ is transformative and translated into an active force of self-identity’. (p. 21)

The authors in *Breaching Borders: Art, Migrants and the Metaphor of Waste* are actually ‘breaching borders’ in several aspects. They are breaching arbitrary borders between social sciences, humanities, and arts; they study and discuss unconventional interrelations between different discourses, notions, and challenges; and confront the reader with (to some extent) disturbing political and cultural meanings of migration. Additionally, their argumentation is breaching even those thin and resisting lines between migration and mobility, arts and politics, local and global, modernism and post-modernism.

This collection of essays is richly illustrated with black and white photographs taken from different art projects dealing with migration, identity, belonging and other related subjects. It is a welcomed re-evaluation of “les grand concepts” in contemporary migration and identity studies, and therefore a must-read material for the students, activists and academics alike.

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