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Review editor: Dawn Paley (and Alexander Waters)

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David Farrier. 2019. *Anthropocene Poetics: Deep Time, Sacrifice Zones, and Extinction*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (164 pp; \$23.00).

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Review Essay: *Neoliberalism, Labour governments, and working-class power-resources: a tale of the tape*

Jason Schulman. 2015. *Neoliberal Labour Governments and the Union Response: The Politics of the End of Labourism*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (172 pp., hardcover, €88.39).

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Book Review: Todd Miller. *Storming the Wall: Climate Change, Migration, and Homeland Security*

Review author: Beth Gaglia

Todd Miller. 2017. *Storming the Wall: Climate Change, Migration, and Homeland Security*. San Francisco: City Lights Publishers. (272 pp. Paperback \$12.00).

“More dangerous than climate disruption, was the climate migrant. More dangerous than the drought were the people who can’t farm because of the drought. More dangerous than the hurricane were the people displaced by the storm.”

-*Storming the Wall* (p. 67)

One cannot read Todd Miller’s *Storming the Wall* without thinking immediately about the concentration camps forming at the U.S.-Mexico border, the enlistment of facial-recognition software from companies like Amazon and Palantir to track down and criminalize immigrants, and the “migrant caravans” that confronted the violent repression of security forces from three countries (Guatemala, Mexico, and the U.S.) as they pushed past checkpoints and border crossings for a chance at asylum in the U.S. All these things have happened since Miller released *Storming the Wall*, which was written as Trump was coming into power. The kind of escalation of xenophobic state violence¹ we are seeing today was something we could only imagine on the horizon in 2016.

The crisis that the U.S. is currently facing on the border is of its own making. This is true in two senses: first, the influx of migrants arriving from Central America and seeking asylum are fleeing desperate conditions shaped by U.S. policies, and second, inhumane government “deterrence” strategies are forcing immigrants into overcrowded detention facilities and subjecting them to grave abuses. As the U.S. military, Customs and Border Patrol (CPB), and private companies continue to fortify the U.S. Southwest border, grassroots groups are struggling to coordinate an opposition to the anti-immigrant machine and shed light on the root causes of the crisis. In *Storming the Wall*, Miller focuses our attention on one of the root causes rarely discussed - the growing impact of climate change on global displacement and migration. His exposé takes a deep and broad look into the “worldwide border regime” that is being consolidated to enforce global climate apartheid.

There are over 700 million low-elevation coastal dwellers at risk to rising sea levels around the world. Floods are now impacting 21 million people worldwide, a number expected to double to 54 million by 2030. The United Nations

¹ The violent “deterrence” and deportation policies exacerbated by the Trump administration were started under the Obama administration, as Miller points out.

projects that 250 million people will be displaced globally by 2050. An average of 21.5 million people were displaced every year between 2008 and 2015 from the “impact and threat of climate-related hazards.” These are just some of the harrowing statistics cited in *Storming the Wall* that demonstrate the imperative to see climate change among the many compounding factors fueling mass migration today, but also as a factor that will take on greater significance into the future.

Miller is careful not to isolate climate change as a factor, but to instead understand it as part of a “catastrophic convergence” – the economic, political, and ecological factors that compound each other to create unlivable situations across the globe. In some ways, Miller’s book picks up where Naomi Klein’s *This Changes Everything* leaves off. While Klein calls on us to understand climate change as a systemic problem of neoliberal capitalism, Miller shows us how border militarization and anti-immigrant authoritarianism have been, and will continue to be, a consequence of both of these systemic failures. While three decades of neoliberal restructuring have generated new levels of inequality, climate hazards will only exacerbate such inequality as the world’s poor will be the most vulnerable to its effects. The militarization of borders, Miller argues, the predominant response to the influx of human displacement around the world, is incapable of reaching the root of the problem because it serves to further perpetuate the status quo. As he states, “Just like super-typhoons, rising seas, and heat waves, border build-up and militarization are by-products of climate change... the theater for future climate battles will be the world’s ever-thickening border zones and not, as national security forecasts constantly project, in communities where individuals fight each other for scarce resources” (27-30). To demonstrate these links, Miller takes us to the main sites where struggles over climate change, migration, and militarization are playing out.

Storming the Wall is not intended to be social movement theory. In contrast, it provides insights into how the military apparatus has co-opted the concerns of climate change and the language of sustainability to further a project of U.S. military domination. First and foremost, Miller explains how global elites are organizing themselves in response to pending climate catastrophe in order to reinforce the status quo. For example, Miller takes readers to the Defense, National Security, and Climate Change conference to show how the U.S. military, fully aware of the reality of climate change and the climate refugees it will produce, has deemed climate change a “stresser,” “threat multiplier” and “accelerant of instability.” The climate security doctrine, as Miller calls it, uses this impending threat to bolster border security operations and push forward a project of “sustainable national security.” While the U.S. military is one of the largest greenhouse gas emitters in the world, “greening” the military apparatus by transitioning to so-called renewable energy sources, is not being done principally to mitigate climate change but instead to maintain a comparative military advantage as the world moves further into climate chaos. Technology developers and contractors have eagerly seized the opportunity to profit in the emerging climate-security business.

The conversion of a humanitarian crisis into a security threat and then into a business opportunity has led to a build-up of mass surveillance on the border, an expansion of constitution-free zones, and a “prevention through deterrence” strategy that has turned the borderlands into a deathscape. Around 6,000 bodies have been recovered in the U.S. side of the desert since the mid-1990s (The International Organization for Migration reports that 40,000 people have perished crossing borders worldwide from 2000-2014). Miller takes us along the migrant routes through Mexico and Guatemala to show how such spaces of exception and “prevention through deterrence” strategies implemented at the U.S.’s behest, have pushed south. Stripping migrants of their rights and forcing them into the most dangerous forms of passage, such as hopping cargo trains (known as *la bestia*) has led to countless deaths and loss of limbs.

One of *Storming the Wall’s* most compelling chapters takes us to rural Honduras. Many of the bodies maimed and violated on the grueling trip north come from here. In 2015 and 2016, Central America experienced one of the longest droughts in history and farmers lost entire seasons of crops. The farmers Miller talks to about their state of calamity did not find solutions with their government. Rather, they’re still dealing with the fallout from 2009, when the U.S. tacitly supported a military coup that ousted the elected President and allowed a right-wing military regime to take over. Since then, violence and drug trafficking have become rampant, poverty has risen, and rural farmers, including Indigenous and Afro-Indigenous communities have faced dispossession of their lands for african palm production, mining, and tourism. The “solutions” to these crises from above have been two-fold: further disenfranchisement through the creation of privately-governed cities/territories (called ZEDEs), and an elaborate system of check-points throughout the country, or in other words, increased border militarization with funding and training from the U.S.

While more focused on the global forces of militarization, *Storming the Wall* is very-much told through the voices of those directly impacted around the world, and through grassroots groups fighting for both human mobility and planetary survival in places like Honduras, the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Arizona. Miller provides a conceptual roadmap for understanding the links between climate change, migration, and border militarization, as well as clues for a greater integration of disparate struggles and broad-based solidarities.

Storming the Wall ends on a hopeful note. Written as a beautiful message to his unborn son, the last chapter invites us into imagination, reminding us to, in the words of poet Mary Oliver, “always leave room in (our) hearts for the unimaginable.” The call is more than a sentimental pick-me-up at the end of a devastating exposé. Given the enormity of the existential threat that is climate change, a fundamental shift in consciousness and the ability to imagine alternatives to our current model of development are essential to seeing past false solutions and militarized responses to climate change.

Miller calls for change from the grassroots, an economy “based on ecological function” instead of growth, a re-directing of border resources and labor to

grassroots ecological restoration projects that would transform devastated areas. Above all, Miller argues that this must be combined with cross-border solidarity, in particular, cross-border mutual aid. Such work challenges the very paradigms of the nation-state and its borders that will, in coming years, uphold and enforce global climate apartheid, unless we do something about it. The kind of borderless aid Miller is calling for is the kind we are currently seeing criminalized at the U.S. Mexico border and in the Mediterranean Sea. Lawyers, journalists, and NGO workers are being harassed and barred from international travel. The cases against Carola Rackete, Pia Klemp, Scott Warren, and other humanitarian aid workers with No More Deaths, further demonstrate Miller's point that the border regime will use state violence to enforce its classification of which human lives deserve saving, and which do not.

In our present moment, *Storming the Wall* is nothing less than a gift. Miller's poetic writing, unapologetically humane and injected with raw emotion, presents an antidote to the extreme dehumanization that is the topic of much of the book. *Storming the Wall* shares the first and last names of those profiting off of impending ecological collapse and the punishment of those most vulnerable to it. It also arms us with a language of urgency against the humming-along of business-as-usual.

About the review author

Beth Gaglia is a filmmaker and a PhD candidate in anthropology at American University, where she researches new corporate enclaves in Honduras. Prior, she studied documentary film at Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies. She is co-director of the film *Revolutionary Medicine: A Story of the First Garifuna Hospital*, and has produced short films with grassroots groups in the U.S. and Central America. [bgeglio AT gmail DOT com](mailto:bgeglio@gmail.com).

Review Essay: *Posthumanities*, Environmental Activism, and Anthropocentric Terminology

Review essay author: Andrew Kettler

Nicole Seymour. 2018. *Bad Environmentalism: Irony and Irreverence in the Ecological Age*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (306 pp; \$26.95).

David Farrier. 2019. *Anthropocene Poetics: Deep Time, Sacrifice Zones, and Extinction*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (164 pp; \$23.00).

There is no better academic imprint for the ongoing environmental moment of repetitive, numbing, and everyday crisis than the University of Minnesota Press. Within their prized *Posthumanities* series, or as part of the general run of the press, the monographs that arrive from the printers in Minneapolis are consistently the most attractive, engaging, and dialectically important works for modern conversations of eco-criticism. Two recent works from the press continue to offer this level of excellence through engagement with socially active narratives on the proper use of complex language within environmentalist movements.

Nicole Seymour's *Bad Environmentalism* (2018) is a new and volatile addition to Minnesota's eco-critical canon. The book explores how irony and transgression can be used to expose spaces where modern environmentalism has left itself open to critique from the Right due to an often sentimental, demanding, and pedantic tone that creates vast emotional paralysis for the general population, who are tired of being shamed for their imperfection. Applying both queer theory and affect theory, Seymour's book searches these arduous and perfectionist requirements within modern environmentalism that harm the movement by limiting how actively ecological narratives can be mobilized within multivalent classes of the public sphere.

Through a tone of personal self-critique that Seymour offers as a new paradigm for environmental movements, *Bad Environmentalism* suggests modern environmentalism is not appropriately self-reflexive. This lack of awareness allows the political Right to repetitively define many activists through singular hypocritical actions. Generally, to explore these concerns, Seymour searches how some visual media about the environment uses irony, perversity, and camp, and suggests we approach environmentalism as a performance that should apply affect over class and expertise.

Essentially, *Bad Environmentalism* argues that environmentalism can better engage more diverse class and racial groups through appealing to emotions rather than to socially constructed forms of expert knowledge that can easily be dismissed as pedantic, austere, and hypocritical.

The first two chapters focus on eco-cinema and television programming. Together, they offer a valuable contribution that should be read by any academic

who is concerned with anti-intellectualism, environmentalism, and narratives surrounding expert knowledge. The first of these chapters engages a narrative of pedantic eco-cinema, focusing on Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006). Films like that award-winning documentary, Seymour argues, burden the environmental movement with demands for an unattainable and easily critiqued form of perfect environmental morality.

Rather, as *Bad Environmentalism* unswervingly proposes, environmentalists do not need to be perfect. Demands of flawlessness often allow those who deny climate change to consistently define activists as hypocritical when those campaigners drive gas-powered cars to protests, use jet fuel to fly to movie premieres, or load trash bins with protest signs.

Seymour suggests environmentalism should take on more ironic, sarcastic, or benign messaging strategies, as with the narrative of anti-intellectualism within Mike Judge's film *Idiocracy* (2006) and the anti-narrative aspects of Hannes Lang's *Peak* (2011). *Idiocracy* has specifically become a cult phenomenon and sub-textually important eco-cinematic film that is being read ironically as a pseudo-documentary which presaged the coming of Trumpian fascism, dipshittery, and environmental foolhardiness.

The next chapter focuses on how the carnivalesque and the transgressive are being used to create forms of non-knowledge that may better introduce audiences to narratives of environmental care. Rather than teach directly through demanding language, the texts chosen for this chapter work through acceptance of non-knowledge to engage audiences through irony, comedy, and a focus on the queer, refuse, genitalia, and sexuality.

Focusing on the progeny of the *Jackass* (2000-2002) television and film franchise with *Wildboyz* (2003-2006), and the absurd imagery of Isabella Rossellini's *Green Porno* (2008-), Seymour highlights how environmental programs that provide the transgressive absurdity of nature and joke about the genitalia and sexual behaviours of animals can offer anti-expert non-knowledge for audiences that do not wish to be spoken to through pedantic or scientific language. Such shows can help to remove a reverence for nature that often prevents many from participating in environmental movements due to fears of being shamed as hypocritical or as not living up to the class standards of the many public forms of upper-class, settler, or book club environmentalism.

The third chapter, which comes from Seymour's earlier articles, provides a direct analysis of spaces where queer culture and camp are used to offer similar narratives of engagement that do not need expert knowledge. This investigation looks at Idyll Dandy Arts (IDA) and the Eggplant Faerie Players in Tennessee, the Lesbian National Parks and Services (LNPS), and Queers for the Climate to portray the performative nature of environmentalist discourse.

Seymour shows how the inherent bourgeois performances of environmentalism that occur when shopping at places like Whole Foods or speaking to friends about veganism can be queered and sneered at in environmentally positive ways that explore class bias within green discourse. Seymour's analysis of the "It Gets

Wetter” movement by Queers for the Climate specifically shows how disrupting the narratives of masculine expertise within climate science can provide more inventive and productive spaces for environmental engagement through the emotions.

The penultimate chapter summarizes concerns that the central aspects of the modern environmental movement are based on choosing to become an environmentalist rather than being subjected to environmental degradation. Thus, the chapter centres on questions of race and class by showing how many modern texts question the still prevalent and static categories of the Ecological Indian who respects the environment inherently and the Urban African American who could care less about environmental issues. Focusing on the literary works of Sherman Alexie and Percival Everett, this chapter shows how performativity can be used to question these false categories through the application of self-critique and humour about the very categories that subjugate and other minority populations through environmental discourses.

Bad Environmentalism offers a final chapter that specifically focuses on class and environmentalism through a direct exploration of the phenomenon whereby environmentalists are held to an impossible standard of perfect behaviour and are consequently considered immoral for breaking a single environmental code that they may espouse as important for others to follow.

Articulating an ideal of “aspirational environmentalism” and “trashiness” within environmental literature, this chapter depicts narratives that critique the impression that environmentalists must follow upper-class identities of environmentalism.

From among tropes within *Kath and Kim* (2002-2012), *The Goode Family* (2009), and *The Simpsons Movie* (2007), Seymour locates spaces where lower class heroes critique narratives of environmental perfectionism. She argues these criticisms can help the movement through exposing where settler colonial behaviour within the environmental crusade has reached places worthy of review. The conclusion uses the campy vegan film *Carnage* (2017), by comedian Simon Amstell, to further highlight spaces where scholars can apply forms of bad environmentalism to critique aspects of the environmental movement that have become overly doctrinaire.

Reading *Bad Environmentalism* allows the reader to see sub-textual, often ironic, and sometimes campy narratives in many spaces of the public sphere. For example, *Aquaman* (2018) offers a type of bad environmentalism where the ecological narratives are sub-textual and penetrate by osmosis rather than through the perfectionist hammer of the modern environmental movement. Within the film, the desire of the leaders of Atlantis to attack the surface world comes partly from a hatred of the trash that enters the ocean, an emotion that is relayed to the audience as an obvious fact that needs no more justification within the campy and queer narrative of royal warriors who ride on lighted and large seahorses.

For another example of such bad environmentalism, akin to Lang's *Peak*, the Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) movement, which offers often confusing and heterogeneous imagery and music to elicit biological responses, frequently delivers films of the environment and sensory engagements with nature that do not meticulously teach or depend on reverence. Rather, these films repeatedly offer images and sounds that can be both revered or considered repulsive, as with pictures of insects or penetrative natural sounds.

Posthumanities and Anthropocene poetics

Bad Environmentalism is a strong example of how the University of Minnesota Press continues to take risks with their eco-critical texts that few other presses would provide. By comparison, David Farrier's *Anthropocene Poetics* (2019) is a more academic treatment of similar topics related to language, textual diffusion in the public sphere, and modern environmental dialectics. Farrier's work examines poetry that uses environmental language to explore different temporalities of the Anthropocene.

Farrier's work fits nicely into the tradition of exceptional editions that arrive from the celebrated *Posthumanities* series. Each monograph from *Posthumanities* reads like a new album in an intellectual discography. Knowing about each work, admiring the cover art, and being excited when each new edition arrives distinguishes the entire series as innovative and eye-catching. Like any good discography for a favourite band, each work in *Posthumanities* does not stand alone, as the series consistently builds upon a conversation with earlier editions.

Edited by Cary Wolfe, the *Posthumanities* series provides leading scholars a relatively uncluttered outlet to offer developing theses on cutting edge humanities scholarship related to understanding how humans interact with objects and animals in the environment. The series includes works from Michel Serres, Jacques Derrida, Isabelle Stengers, Donna Haraway, Timothy Morton, and Julian Yates.

The focus that the series provides upon an internal academic dialectic offers that *Posthumanities* is partially an experiment in collective modern problem solving, whereby quick engagement between authors within the series drives important conversations for an academy that is otherwise woefully slow to engage with the social problems of modernity.

Engaging these problems through reading a *Posthumanities* edition offers scholars a sense of academic pride, jouissance, and intellectual freshness, often akin to the impressions gained from accessing works from similar series in presses like *Prickly Paradigm* or *Open Library*. This theoretical intensity, whereby the academic reader can engage through a commonly used and complex intellectual language without the projected or performed confines of

ivory tower pomposity, is an important aspect of creating new languages that can alter public sphere sympathies about environmental activism.

Editions from *Posthumanities* frequently use this common jargon to walk a fine line between activism and the academy, while habitually blurring this boundary through honest forms of self-reflexivity that implicitly teaches readers to think like both an academic and activist in the same moment. *Anthropocene Poetics* continues these traditions of critical dialogue, activism, and the use of a conversational academic tone even when engaging complex languages and important modern issues of environmental survival.

Anthropocene Poetics starts from the visual, providing signifying artworks to begin each chapter. For the introduction, Farrier chose Alex Chinneck's *A Bullet from a Shooting Star*, an industrial sculpture in London. He uses this image to portray how the questions of temporality, meaning, and conversation can connect with poetics to better understand, engage with, and assist in reversing the degradation of the modern Anthropocene.

In *Anthropocene Poetics*, poesis is positioned as a novel pathway for accepting the temporal variances of the Anthropocene, as defined by a human population whose spatial and linguistic relations are partly demarcated through how the meanings of the Anthropocene consistently shift.

The first chapter in Farrier's short publication offers readings of intimate poems that show geologic connections to a deep time that creates awareness for the place of humans within broader temporal scales. The use of poetry to disrupt human understandings of temporality, space, and measures of size arise, for Farrier, from understanding intimate relationships with these mineral objects.

Sensory engagement with these geologic forms, especially through the tactile, can provide a way for humans to understand their place within a longer lithic history of the universe. Partly through queering the ideas of geology within the works of Elizabeth Bishop and Seamus Heaney, whereby rocks and minerals explored within poems have agency to speak of their temporal existence, Farrier guides the reader through a new sensuality of deep time.

Borrowing from Jason Moore's *Capitalism in the Web of Life* (2015), *Anthropocene Poetics* next looks at how plastic remnants will live forever, and what that understanding of permanency does to human understandings of time and the environment. These death-less objects are accordingly used by poets to show how human connections to a new understanding of deep future can portray the various entangled relationships of objects and living beings in a currently threatened world. Farrier expands into discussions of these resources that Morton calls "hyperobjects," like Styrofoam and marine waste. He then provides that poets can help us understand that spaces on the globe are already considered what Naomi Klein has termed "sacrifice zones," or spaces that are forfeited to allow for the fetishized lifestyles of neoliberalism.

The third chapter of *Anthropocene Poetics* engages the work of Haraway through exploring the importance of kin-making within poetic narratives. This

chapter sifts through the complex scientific and humanities representation of the clinamen, the frequently random, often connected, and difficult to analyse swerving of atoms understood often through ideas of free will. Farrier looks at this ideal through the writings of Mark Doty, Sean Borodale, and Christian Bök to show the importance of merging literary and living conditions into knotted narratives for a better understanding of deep time.

Important in this discussion is the creation of the *Xenotext*, a poem fashioned through combining human language with the agency of micro-organisms within set literary and biological limits. These knots between humans, nature, and language, whether written with jellyfish, bees, or micro-organisms as *Xenotext* within biological confines, are also essential in the Coda that ends *Anthropocene Poetics*, which analyses the rise of industrial forests to again question the use of different terminology to define the Anthropocene.

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of environmentalist language

What terms should scholars use to define the eco-critical moment humanity now faces? In *Bad Environmentalism*, Seymour suggests that the use of seemingly positive but often pedantic language from environmental activists falsely shames many away from ever pursuing environmental causes. She consequently affirms why the public hates the very people that are aiming to save humanity from environmental degradation.

Her solution is to make academic choices that raise narratives which engage the environment without expertise, as expert knowledge frequently cordons off those who either cannot understand advanced environmental information or see experts as overly educated, hypocritical, altered by funding, and falsely magnanimous. Affect consequently takes centre stage in *Bad Environmentalism*, whereby environmental narratives that arrive through comedy, sub-textual osmosis, and catharsis should be pursued above those that speak through expertise, sentimentalism, and pontificating and ugly forms of shaming.

Within *Anthropocene Poetics*, Farrier answers similar questions through offering that the language scholars choose to use within the academy is also often important for determining the efficacy of environmental causes within the public sphere. The nominal and significant choices made by activists and academics are not only important for how audiences receive eco-critical information, but also are active enough to alter understandings in random and often unassuming ways.

Both of these books from the University of Minnesota Press point to understanding the careful expenditure of language and texts within eco-criticism as vital for the future of environmentalism. Whether for messaging to disaffected working class populations or speaking with academics about abstruse topics like queer mineralogy, clinamen, or the Capitalocene, language

remains an important structure for coming to terms with how humanity has altered the earth to a space possibly beyond repair.

These and other texts from the North Star State offer the finest academic treatments for understanding the difficulty of coming to terms with these environmental sins. *Posthumanities* continues to drive these questions for the broader academy through engaging questions of language and survival in the new technological and literary spaces of the Anthropocene, and her many different terminological and natural iterations.

As human populations are facing a problematic and emotionally taxing moment of environmental concern, scholars must remain vigilant about their linguistic choices and the affect their studies may place upon different populations. Hopefully, with time, more people and communities will be able to access come-to-Gaia moments, through either the irony of bad environmentalism or a new intellectual poetics of kin-making with an interactive Anthropocene.

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About the review author

Andrew Kettler is Assistant Professor and Early American History Fellow at University College, University of Toronto. His research specifically focuses upon investigations into the sensory prejudices that justified the profits of the Atlantic Slave Trade. [andrew.kettler AT utoronto.ca](mailto:andrew.kettler@utoronto.ca)

Book Review: Jaume Franquesa. *Power Struggles: Dignity, Value, and The Renewable Energy Frontier in Spain.*

Review author: Alexander Dunlap

Jaume Franquesa. 2018. *Power Struggles: Dignity, Value, and The Renewable Energy Frontier in Spain*, Bloomington, University of Indiana Press (236 pp; US\$ 35.00)

The future is renewable energy. This, according to various NGOs, corporations and governments, who claim “clean” renewable energy will triumph over “dirty” fossil fuels, saving global capitalism, industrial patterns of consumption and, consequently, humanity from the onslaught of ecological and climate catastrophe.

Anyone looking, feeling and, often—but not always—living in close proximity to industrial-scale renewable energy projects knows this is patently false and only justifiable through the narrow and abstract economic gymnastics of carbon accounting. Jaume Franquesa’s *Power Struggles: Dignity, Value and the Renewable Energy Frontier in Spain* takes on these questions head on, revealing the harsh realities that arise from the renewable energy economy.

Franquesa is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the State University of New York at Buffalo, and *Power Struggles* is his third book, but the first published in English. Based on “eleven months of discontinuous fieldwork between 2010 and 2014” in Southern Catalonia’s Terra Alta (High Land) county (p. 12), *Power Struggles* offers a rare, comprehensive ethnography and history of the development of a mixed energy regime over a period of fifty years.

Situating his inquiry in post-Spanish Civil War political tensions, Franquesa takes readers on a journey to Terra Alta, documenting local opposition to hydroelectric dams in the 1960s, nuclear plant development in the 1970s-1980s and, finally, natural gas, wind power and corresponding infrastructures into the present. *Power Struggles* maps shifting and complementary energy regimes, and the corresponding local contestations, while providing analysis supported by a breadth of critical theory, from Walter Benjamin, to eco-Marxism, through to energy anthropology and critical agrarian studies. Franquesa used archival research, oral history interviews, and participant observation to understand the process of social and energetic change.

Charting an enormous amount of energy development projects taking hold in Terra Alta, *Power Struggles* “challenges the idea that renewable energy necessarily involves a stark rupture with former modes of energy production” (p. 9). Franquesa documents the arrival of various hydro, nuclear, natural gas and wind energy projects, the political factions responsible for promoting these projects, as well as the social discord they produce. *Power Struggles* demonstrates that “energy transitions are not technological shifts, they are

sociopolitical processes fraught with conflict” (p. 131). On display here is the continuity between energy regimes and, perhaps surprisingly for some readers, the “extractive character” of wind energy development in the region (p. 131).

Franquesa offers a sense of place through an ethnographic account, and proceeds to review the literature and terms —“periphery,” “dignity” and “waste”— as well as the key theories and arguments of the book. He then lays the socio-political foundations and dynamics engulfing the agrarian Terra Alta region. This leads into a discussion of the onset of hydroelectric dams, the energy politics of Spanish fascism and its fixation with nuclear power.

Franquesa documents how nuclear power was militantly resisted across various sectors in defense of the territory, but also to avoid becoming relegated to a peripheral “wasteland”—a landscape devalued for profitable development. *Power Struggles* then examines in greater depth the “morality of *la nuclear*” (p. 87) which threatened local livelihoods and agrarian culture for many, while arousing interest and opportunity for others. The transition between nuclear, natural gas and wind energy development is then explored, with a discussion on the internal colonial relationships enacted through energy development as well as the policies that made this situation possible.

Power Struggles then delves into the history, politics and hopes of wind energy development from within and from without. The book affords privileged testimonies of wind energy development from multiple and often hard to access perspectives from within the wind industry. After discussing the collisions and contradictions between “developers” and “developed,” Franquesa digs into the politics of land grabbing and control. Land control for wind energy was accomplished by various means, which accompanied inadequate public consultations and concerted efforts at widening and/or manipulating social divisions as well as enrolling “mainstream environmental organizations in a media campaign to improve the image of wind energy development in Terra Alta” (p. 182).

In conclusion, Franquesa revisits and analyzes the dignity expressed by inhabitants who refuse to be relegated to becoming an “energy sacrifice zone” for Barcelona, or other city centers in Spain. The author successfully makes distinctions between indignation, resistance, livelihoods and the revitalization of space undergoing processes of devaluation/revaluation. The reader is left with a fuller understanding of how people cope with the reality of infrastructural colonization.

The depth and breadth of this book is astounding, even exhausting. The interweaving of critical theory, academic literature on energy and development, and intense ethnographic detail with secondary research is a monumental accomplishment. Examining the relationships, shifts and ethos between multiple energy regimes—and their continuity—in Terra Alta makes *Power Struggles* a foundational contribution not only to the anthropology of energy or to critical agrarian studies, but more widely. It allows us to understand the

reproduction of ecological catastrophe and its forced—or structured—composition.

Power Struggles comes in light on the destructive impacts of industrial-scale wind energy development. While understandable, this raises larger issues with the hegemonic politics situating and conditioning the book.

While the book begins to unravel the distinctions between dirty fossil fuel and clean renewable energy, wind energy exists next to nuclear power in the Terra Alta (and elsewhere). Beside nuclear, wind energy appears clean, friendly and ecologically sustainable, and this is apparent in a subtle way in the book. Readers are taught to accept the development documented by the author, but also implicitly and explicitly asked to forget about the mining necessary to manufacture and build energy infrastructure systems.

Once placed next to nuclear, it is easy to forget the (serious) socio-ecological impacts of wind parks, as they appear negligible in comparison. In reality—depending on geography, quantity, turbine placement and energy use/consumer policy—they are not. There is a lack of questioning regarding the large quantities of raw materials mined—iron, copper, cement rare earth minerals and more—processed and manufactured for wind energy infrastructure. All of this happens before we enter the phase of wind energy extraction exposed so well by Franquesa. This is compounded by the popular imaginaries and hopes regarding renewable energy, many of which have been co-opted by corporations and dysfunctional governments, as *Power Struggles* discusses in Chapter 5. Advertising campaigns, public relations firms and half-hearted environmental policies continually reinforce the green washed (and nuclear conditioned) perception of wind energy.

Though it is perhaps outside of the scope of Franquesa's book, there is an urgent need to acknowledge the first wave of natural resource extraction and refinement that is also associated with land grabbing, ecological destruction, labor, systemic repression and human rights abuses. Acknowledging this reality is the first step to beginning an honest conversation about renewable energy systems. *Power Struggles* is an exceptional inquiry into energy transition suitable to anyone interested in the politics and conflicts surrounding energy development projects. This book helps move toward a more honest conversation regarding the reality of energy development and transition, and it deserves a place on classroom syllabi.

About the review author

Recently awarded post-doctoral research fellow position at the Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM), University of Oslo, Alexander Dunlap's previous research examined the social impact and conflict generated by wind energy development in Oaxaca, Mexico. Other Publications by Alexander appear in *Anarchist Studies*, *Geopolitics*, *the Review of Social*

Economy, Journal of Peasant Studies, Human Geography, Capitalism, Nature, Socialism and Political Geography. alexander.dunlap AT sum.uio.no

Book Review: John Agbonifo. *Environment and Conflict: The Place and Logic of Collective Action in the Niger Delta.*

Review Author: Samuel Udogbo.

John Agbonifo. 2019. *Environment and Conflict: The Place and Logic of Collective Action in the Niger Delta*. London & New York: Routledge (137 pp., hardcover, £92.00).

Despite the existence of varying theories and discussions by scholars on the Nigerian Niger Delta issue, the Ogoni struggle has remained a major topic of debate on the global stage. In *Environment and Conflict*, John Agbonifo, a Nigeria born scholar and a senior lecturer at Osun State University, gives a contextual analysis that clearly defines the Ogoni struggle. He explores the environmental history of conflict and collective action in Ogoniland (p. 3) and looks at the damaging legacy of environmental degradation through oil exploitation by Shell Oil, supervised by the Nigerian State. The brutality meted out on the Ogoni people and society has found a concrete expression in *Environment and Conflict*. Decolonizing the environment, as Agbonifo suggests, is key to what it means to be an Ogoni. This is an intellectual insight into the colonial oppressive establishment perpetuated by Shell and the Nigerian state. *Environment and Conflict* argues that the long-time resistance to oppression and exploitation of the Ogonis be understood from various contexts, from national and regional to cultural.

Agbonifo's analysis is rooted in a decade of personal experience and extensive empirical research on the Ogoni people and society. It draws from in-depth conversations and interviews with social movement activists in Ogoniland. An interest in the environmental history of conflict and collective action in Ogoniland is apparent in this well researched book, which makes an immense contribution to our understanding of the Ogoni struggle to transform their lives and society and in making social change driven from below. There is no doubt that the social movement approach *Environment and Conflict* contributes a great deal to movement scholarship in Africa.

Environment and Conflict begins with an overview of different theoretical perspectives on the Niger Delta conflict, drawing substantial evidence from social movement theory. Agbonifo draws from several literatures on the Ogoni conflict, which "...underlined the causative role of environmental crisis, economic crisis, and political instability" (p. 4), while the role of culture in the emergence of the conflict is neglected and "treated as insignificant background"

(p. 4). Although the Ogoni struggle is shaped by global factors, Agbonifo argues that there is continuity between the Ogoni mobilisation and its institutional context.

The challenges the mobilisation generated and the frames it deployed emerged from within its own particular cultural universe (p. 4). Agbonifo demonstrates this by using a place-sensitive social movement approach to examine the Ogoni conflict. *Environment and Conflict* analyses how place and environment can be understood from the perspective of local communities. It offers the reader an idea into why and how community mobilise. “It is more than a question of why the movement emerged; but more of why specific people decided to join the movement in particular places and time” (p. 6). This requires us to understand the environment from a decolonised perspective, and place is significant because it shapes the structure and dynamics of a movement.

What follows is a contextual analysis of the Ogoni people in terms of its geographical location and the formal and informal settings where the everyday social interaction are constituted. The author argues that land and culture for traditional communities are the most valuable possessions and one cannot exist without the other; to separate the two is a modernist thing. It is therefore important for any analysis on the Niger Delta and the Ogoni show “how human culture shapes biodiversity and the transformation of the Niger Delta landscape...” (p. 16). Despite the colonial obstruction of cultures and environments in Nigeria, Agbonifo argues that it is of great importance to note that the relationships between communities and nature determine how we see and exist in the world.

Environment and Conflict explores the formal national political space the Ogoni found themselves in during the colonial and post-colonial eras. The new postcolonial formation of states, which lumped several ethnic groups within one state, exposed the Ogoni to numerous ethnic groups, necessitating their struggle against ethnic domination both regionally and nationally (p. 38). The violent subjugation of the African people by the British propelled a political competition amongst Nigerian political elites, who engage with whatever will satisfy their objectives rather than deliver what benefits the people.

It is important to note that regionalisation politics is the foundation of the unending struggle between the three ethnic majority groups who think that Nigeria is a natural tripod (p. 29). Interestingly, well over two decades into colonial rule a pan-Ogoni consciousness did not exist due to communication difficulties between the Ogoni cultural zones. However, Ogoni contact and interaction with common institutional settings and processes organised by the colonial government deepened the critical need for an Ogoni identity. The discovery of oil was initially a big hope for the Ogoni. However, this hope was soon dashed due to the massive environmental degradation that came with oil exploitation (p. 38).

KAGOTE, which is an abbreviation for the four clans (Khana, Gokana, Tai and Eleme) in Ogoni, was an elite group established in the early 70s. Its

organisations and clientelistic ties with the state and multinational oil corporations allowed them access to juicy political positions and wealth. These elites did not defend the interests of the ordinary Ogoni people; youth and women had no place in KAGOTE, and the pre-colonial Ogoni system of self-governance, called the *Yaa*, was excluded (p. 37). The exploitative relationship between Shell-Ogoni led to the construction of an Ogoni identity by the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People.

Agbonifo then goes on to examine landscape, capital and violence. The author looks at the relationship between the Nigerian state and the Niger Delta. He shows how the arrival of the “oil firm led to the transformation of socio-physical space and the emergence of a new socio-environmental landscape” (p. 39). Agbonifo states that “mega-development projects, such as pipelines, petrochemical plants, roads and ports are inherently displacing” (p. 39), and a “...ruthless attempt to destroy the cultural, ecological and cultural differences intrinsic to a place and embodied in local practices” (p. 39). Furthermore, he argues, “oil development in the Niger Delta is a geographical project embodied by intense spatial transformation” (pp. 39). Hence, the alteration of nature and society reflects the inherent contradictions of development.

On the idea of ‘Clash of Logics’, Agbonifo shows how the Western models and approaches differ from African understandings of the environment. Whilst the Western worldview is “...predominantly anthropocentric and individualistic” (p. 45), the African perspective is what he calls eco-biocommunitarian, which is “...not metaphysics of domination, consumerism or greed, but ideas and claims rooted in myths and taboos that serve to conserve ecological balance” (p. 45). Though conflicting actors do exist, there is also collaboration amongst elements of conflicting groups of actors; to understand these dynamics, *Environment and Conflict* uses the metaphor of development as trans-local strategic action field.

Agbonifo acknowledges that development is inherently conflictual and as a result, the best approach to such development is not as impersonal phenomenon or structure but as a process involving identifiable actors and associations amongst people and places where expert knowledge is required (p. 50). “The conflict in the field is conceptualised as social conflict defined by three elements: identity of the protagonist, the opponent and the stake over which both struggle” (p. 51). Here, Agbonifo clearly presents the relationships between the Nigerian state, the Ogoni people and the oil. The idea of development, which is expressed in the context of oil extraction, resonates with the problem of socio-economic marginalisation and poverty.

Environment and Conflict then looks at the factors that shaped the Ogoni mobilisation: elements such as place, location, locale and sense of the place. Agbonifo goes beyond meta-narratives to look at ideational factors and micro-mobilisation activities of activists in order to understand the emergence of the conflict. He uses the idea of *framing* to explain the Ogoni conflict. Framing deals with how actors read and define a situation, apportion blame and advance arguments for change; Agbonifo argues this is a worldview that mobilises inactive groups. He shows how literatures on the Ogoni issue have ignore this

dimension and instead paid so much attention to the external orientation and roots of the Ogoni frames. Instead, Agbonifo explores locally informed and oriented frames, of which there are three.

First is the oppressive order master frame, in which conscious and strategic efforts by a group of people with shared understanding of their world and themselves form a clear understanding of the reason for collective action. It explores Ogoni grievances in structural terms and places them "...in global frames as a marginalised powerless minority group at the receiving end of the powerful State and Shell whose actions are to blame for Ogoni environmental and social problems" (p. 79). Second is the *miideekor* frame: by using everyday Ogoni vocabulary, the *miideekor* allows every Ogoni to understand the rationale behind their participation in the protest. Third are the otherworldly frames, which capture the Ogoni traditional religious beliefs. *Bari*, the supreme goddess, offers the Ogoni support in their struggle against oppression. These provides insight on how the Ogoni combined various frames to mobilise themselves and external support simultaneously.

Environment and Conflict goes on to focus on the challenges that are involved in understanding the role of culture in the Ogoni struggle. Analysing scholarly views on the issue of what defines the Ogoni sense of mobilisation, Agbonifo contends that the Ogoni pre-existing cultural codes and structures, Christian and traditional religious cultures shaped the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). This expresses the ordinary Ogoni cultural life, including constraints that come from Nigerian society's rules of democratic participation, equality and federalism.

Thus, the "long acquaintance with oppression and the untouchability of the elites which concretise the culture of silence and difference" (p. 89) was met by MOSOP's method of inclusiveness, opposing KAGOTE's exclusive ethos. The inclusion of all Ogoni in decision making characterised MOSOP's *modus operandi*. Hence, the Ogoni struggle is approached in this section from the point of view of cultural challenge than a reaction to systemic dislocation.

Agbonifo then examines the moral basis of the Ogoni struggle as opposed to those literatures that looks at selfish provincial interests or materialistic considerations as factors that facilitate the conflict. Exploitation of oil and destruction of the environment is an offence against the Ogoni, their land and deities. The Ogonis sees this act as ahistorical and out of place and it is therefore necessary to fight in favour of re-establishment of what constitutes the Ogoni.

Amongst the literature on the Ogoni struggle, is Ike Okonta's *When Citizens Revolt*, which re-examines the evidence concerning the Ogoni struggle for self-determination and raises questions about its origins and implications for a postcolonial Africa still grappling with the persistence of ethnic identities and the communal politics they engender. Agbonifo's *Environment and Conflict* is the best-structured and down to earth analysis on the Ogoni situation to date. The contextual analysis presented gives a substantial view of what constitutes the Ogoni people and demonstrates how social protest is at the heart of Ogoni

culture. It is difficult not to like Agbonifo's style. Most importantly, *Environment and Conflict* is a major contribution to knowledge, especially on the Ogoni space in the Niger Delta region and Nigeria as a whole. The place-sensitive social movement theory adopted by the author provides a clear understanding of the Ogoni conflict, capturing its uniqueness and capacity to mobilise.

It would have been more beneficial to African readers to have had the Ogoni metaphors adopted so as to speak to other socio-cultural movements in Nigeria, like the Movement Against Fulani Occupation (MAFO) in Benue and the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) in Igbo land, which have thus far lacked the stark social force of the Ogoni. Similar knowledge lies hidden in so many social movements in Africa, and it would do us good if African scholars address this practical lacuna in order to put in context the aspirations, grievances and worldviews of African people. In addition, such an approach would have contributed to the current debate between global south and north social movements (Dwyer & Zeilig, 2012); strengthening our understanding of activists and movements on the African continent.

Social transformation will not take place in a vacuum but in a society, and employing an empirical image from below shed light on the Ogoni social world, which has an impact on their action. Hence, an analysis of grassroots struggle needs a more robust and ambitious account that clearly presents the tension between culture and movement. The author fails to examine this crucial point and I urge that this be looked at in the next edition of the book.

We ought to challenge the Afropessimists (Dwyer and Zeilig, 2012), by critically presenting the role of African grassroots social movements on the world stage in order to address the rival narrative of failure that is unleashed on Africa by scholars from the global north. Collective action is inevitable. Hence, in order to achieve impossibility collectively, the starting point must be of people's interests and identities (Neocosmos, 2016). Hence, the Ogoni struggle is sustained by their collective interest and identity; it tells us about why and how the Ogoni struggle started and it is going on (Polletta and Jasper 2001).

Though Agbonifo referenced a number of social movement theories, there is no clear evidence of any interaction with ideas from below. It must be clear that activists' actions are informed by theories since activists know how to theorise their own actions. Using the idea of framing, the book demonstrates how the Ogoni mobilised. However, the author uncritically romanticised the Ogoni socio-cultural context and failed to recognise the complexities that exist amongst the Ogonis, which is a major obstacle to their movement: internal grievances are a major *bête noire* in the Ogoni struggle. Finally, since colonial politics is a major factor in the Ogoni issue, subsequent editions should suggest strategies for political and economic alternatives against the policies that the oppressors have created.

Environment and Conflict: The Place and Logic of Collective Action in the Niger Delta provides a valuable and absorbing window of knowledge, making Ogoni issues accessible to scholars for further investigation. The Ogoni struggle remains a challenge and a major issue of concern in the Niger delta and Nigeria in general. I would recommend *Environment and Conflict* to anyone who wants to understand the Ogoni issue and the socio-cultural ideas associated with it.

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About the review author

Samuel Udogbo is a Catholic priest from Nigeria with a keen interest in development studies, a social mobiliser and PhD candidate in Sociology at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. He currently lives in Dublin, Ireland and is working towards the completion of his PhD, titled *Youth Activism: Participatory Action Research in the Niger Delta - focus on the Ogoni*. samuel.udogbo.2017 AT mumial DOT ie

Review Essay: Jason Schulman. Neoliberalism, Labour governments, and working-class power-resources: a tale of the tape

Review essay author: Brett Heino

Review essay editor: Alexander Waters

Jason Schulman. 2015. *Neoliberal Labour Governments and the Union Response: The Politics of the End of Labourism*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (172 pp; hardcover, €88.39).

The 2007-08 Global Financial Crisis represented a violent close to a two-decade period of ascendant neoliberalism. Although in the aftermath of the crisis the political and economic structures of neoliberalism remain more-or-less intact, the system is enervate, increasingly fragile and, perhaps most importantly, lacking the sense of legitimacy and inevitability which had once been its armour: 'dominant but dead', in the words of Smith (2010: 54). For the first time in years, there is the sense that history is open, that alternatives to neoliberalism are taking shape on both the Right and the Left. Invigorating yet dangerous currents of anger, disenchantment, hope and energy swirl in our politics: invigorating, in that they can be harnessed in the creation of a progressive and inclusive vision of life after neoliberalism; dangerous, in that such forces can equally be pressed into the service of a resurgent far Right. To realise the former is the pressing task confronting progressive forces across the globe. However, if the Left is to proffer a cogent post-neoliberal future, it must first come to terms with the circumstances of neoliberalism's birth and the painful truth that social democracy was complicit in its genesis. Only by identifying and acknowledging past mistakes can the ground be cleared for the progressive alternative to neoliberalism that we so sorely need.

Jason Schulman's *Neoliberal Labour Governments and the Union Response: The Politics of the End of Labourism* is an important contribution to this process of introspection. His object of analysis is labourism, a distinctive sub-species of social democracy that sees 'trade unionism extended into the arena of the government' (p. 10). Labourism was historically premised on a vision of the one embracing labour movement assuming two forms in the struggle to improve the lot of the working class: the industrial wing centred on trade unions, and the political wing crystallised in the party. Understanding the evolution in this union-party nexus and its status in the context of neoliberalism is the main task Schulman sets himself. In particular, through a focus on the experience of union-party relations in New Zealand, Britain and Australia, he posits that the degree and rapidity with which labour parties assumed a neoliberal trajectory was largely a function of the success or failure of the trade union movement in controlling 'their' party.

In the space of what is a short book, Schulman raises some very important questions regarding how trade unions have lost their parties to neoliberalism and the form this loss took. His account of 'working-class power resources' as an explanatory model for why labour parties stray from their historic mission of civilising capitalism is similarly thought provoking, and joins a promising line of 'labour-centric' research that stresses the agency of unions and the importance of union strategy (see, for example, Humphrys, 2018; Humphrys and Cahill, 2017; Lloyd and Ramsay, 2017; Heino, 2017). As will be demonstrated in the course of this article, *Neoliberal Labour Governments and the Union Response* is a timely work that, although theoretically flawed, speaks strongly to the present conjuncture.

In order to understand both the achievements and limitations of Schulman's work, however, it is first necessary to put in hand an understanding of his approach and his findings.

Neoliberalism and 'working-class power resources'

At the very outset, Schulman foregrounds the problem facing trade unions in the Western world; the embrace of neoliberalism by notionally working-class parties. He notes that '[o]ver the past 25 years, virtually all social democratic parties have presided over some degree of market deregulation, commercialization, and privatization of the public sector, and at least the piecemeal implementation of welfare-state retrenchment' (p. 1). Identifying labourism with social democracy (a problematic contention, but one which I follow in the course of this analysis), he notes that this pattern of change has characterised labour parties as much as their European brethren. The key question which Schulman addresses himself to is 'why'?

For Schulman, many of the traditional answers forwarded to this question, such as economic globalisation, the shrinking proletariat, and the declining relevance of class identification and ideology, are insufficient in and of themselves to explain the abdication of labour parties to neoliberalism. How, for example, can one explain Australia and New Zealand's very different paths on the neoliberal road in the 1980s when both were small, export-oriented economies? Conversely, why did the UK and New Zealand seemingly share a rapid neoliberal turn, despite their profoundly different economic structures and insertion into the global economy? While the globalisation issue might be a necessary condition of the neoliberal embrace, it is not a sufficient one. Some other explanatory theory is required.

Schulman finds this theory in the literature on working-class power resources (for some representative works, see Western, 1997; Huber and Stephens, 2001; Korpi and Palme, 2003). This is essentially a mid-range institutional theory which 'claims that variations in organizational assets such as unions and left-wing political parties account for cross-country disparities in distributional outcomes' (p. 12). The nub of the working-class power resources perspective 'suggests that the stronger the relationship between the working class and left-

wing parties, the likelier it is that the interests of workers will be reflected in left-wing party policies' (Han, 2015: 603). According to Schulman, this highly useful approach has tended to focus on macro-issues such as the retrenchment of the welfare state, paying little regard to 'the decline of organized working-class power *within (historically) working-class parties* and the subsequent programmatic change that these parties have undergone' (p. 13). To plug this lacuna, to account for how and to what degree trade unions ensure a labour party is *their* party, is the main contribution of the book.

Neoliberalism in New Zealand, Britain and Australia

To flesh out the intra-working-class dimension of power resource theory, Schulman embarks upon three case studies centred on periods of labour government in Anglophone countries:

- New Zealand and Australia through the 1980s and, in the case of the latter, into the 1990s;
- Britain in the 'New Labour' period of the late 1990s and 2000s.

The choice of these states is easily justified – each has a long tradition of labourism being the main form of political mobilisation of organised labour. The temporal limits of the case studies, however, see a plane of cleavage introduced into the analysis; whereas the New Zealand and Australian labour governments of the 1980s were at the vanguard of the neoliberal project, the Blair New Labour government acquired a more-or-less fully formed neoliberalism from its Thatcherite predecessor. Schulman can hardly be blamed for the historic timing of labour governments, however, and he largely addresses this seeming contradiction by making it clear he is focused on the *behaviour* of labour parties in office, rather than fixating on the distinction between them as creators versus inheritors of neoliberalism per se.

Whatever the temporal asymmetry, the crux of Schulman's case study analysis is that, despite the various institutional differences that make the union-party link unique in each country, a broad trend can be observed: whereas New Zealand and British unions were generally ineffective in exerting meaningful control over their parties, Australian unions experienced much greater success which certainly affected, if not the outcome, than at least the tempo and form of neoliberal change.

In order to understand how Schulman arrives at this conclusion, it is necessary to plot briefly how his analysis proceeds. Each case study is interrogated according to two main criteria:

- Changes in economic, social and industrial policy; and
- The structure of union-party relationships/union strategies in relation to labour governments.

In terms of macro-economic outcomes, Schulman acknowledges that, despite some progressive changes in the Australian taxation system over the 1980s

(such as the introduction of capital gains and fringe benefits tax), the differences between the three study states 'were not especially great' (p. 93), with all labour governments embracing policies of privatisation of government assets, financial deregulation and the broader marketisation of social life. Regarding industrial policy, Schulman paints the British New Labour government as the most actively hostile towards trade unions, clashing with public sector unions repeatedly, whereas both New Zealand and Australia left their fundamentally collectivist systems intact.²

It is in the field of social policy that Schulman observes a distinct difference between New Zealand and Britain on the one hand, and Australia on the other. Due to a combination of expansions in the 'social' wage (for example, through increasing some payments to low-income earners and the provision of superannuation funds), 'the case of the Australian Labor Party governments' social policies between 1983 and 1996 is less ambiguous and overall *less neoliberal* than those of Britain under Blair or New Zealand under Lange...' (p. 96 – my emphasis).

To the extent that the Australian Labor Party (ALP) was more successful in articulating impulses to neoliberalism with traditional social-democratic concerns, or was at least slower traveling down the neoliberal road, Schulman credits the greater ability of Australian unions to influence outcomes within the party itself. In particular, he draws attention to several key points of difference between the Australian union movement and its New Zealand and British brethren:

- The greater concentration of the Australian union movement under the banner of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU). By contrast, the peak bodies of the New Zealand and British union movement (the Federation of Labour and Trade Union Congress respectively) couldn't change the reality of a fragmented, decentralised movement.
- The ACTU had developed a more-or-less cogent corporatist vision, symbolised in the Accord agreement with the Labor government, whilst the other bodies had not.³

These factors enabled the ACTU to organically insert itself into the policy wheelhouse of the ALP government, in a way that simply was not open to New Zealand or British unions. Of these, the former consistently presented

² In this respect, Schulman doesn't adequately tease out the aforementioned distinction between labour 'creators' of neoliberalism (New Zealand and Australia) versus labour 'inheritors' of neoliberalism (Britain).

³ In Britain, initial attempts at a corporatist compact between the TUC and Labour Party in the 1970s came undone after a wave of union militancy in the late-1970s and were not revived in the New Labour era. In New Zealand, a cogent corporatist vision only came to cohere in the late 1980s as part of the formation of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (the successor peak body to the Federation of Labour). By this stage, much of the damage of neoliberal reform had been done and, in any event, the new peak body did not enjoy the policy access and control over affiliates enjoyed by their Australian counterpart.

themselves as loyal critics of the Lange Labour government, whilst the latter, desperate to free themselves from nearly two decades of conservative rule, allowed Blair's New Labour to maintain the essential structure of Thatcherism. In short, Schulman holds that these case studies are prime examples of the efficacy of working-class power resource theory.

With this outline in hand, we can now move to a consideration of the strengths and limitations of the project itself.

Neoliberalism and the utility of power-resource theory

As mentioned previously, Schulman explicitly identifies working-class power resource theory as the guiding thread running throughout the entire account. He states the case plainly in the conclusion:

The more a labour party has lost its base in the working class – the less directly a political expression it is of organized labour – the easier it is for the party leadership to quickly and radically impose neoliberal policies. That is, the policy shift is a result of the *diminishing power resources* that unions have within their historic parties (p. 111).

Given this centrality, it is necessary to more deeply interrogate the explanatory potential and limitations of this approach, in particular focusing on what it illuminates and what it occludes.

It is necessary at the outset to note what working-class power resource theory *actually is* – it is fundamentally a mid-range institutional theory. In Schulman's hands, it focuses on the ability of the working class to establish control over a distinct institutional body, the labour party, and to use that body to realise the essence of the labourist movement – the extension of the trade union principle into the political sphere. As Schulman notes, power resource theory's traditional focus, however, has been in explaining variation in the welfare state and in welfare state retrenchment.

It is useful in this context to revisit briefly the foundations of the approach. Rothstein, Samanni and Teorell (2012: 3) note that:

The PRT grew from an effort by a group of scholars who, during the late 1970s, tried to find a 'middle way' between the then popular Marxist–Leninist view that the welfare state should be understood as merely a functional requisite for the reproduction of capitalist exploitation, and the alternative view that welfare states follow from a similar functionalist logic of modernization and industrialization.

In this context, power resource theorists stressed two key issues:

1. The fact that variation existed in key indicators of the welfare state. These differences could not be dismissed out of hand, but had to be explored and explained; and
2. The significance of the political mobilisation of social classes in constituting these variations (Rothstein, Samanni and Teorell, 2012: 3).

In light of these goals, Schulman's use of power resource theory has to be analysed according to two over-arching considerations, formulated at different analytical levels: how well does his account address the issues foregrounded by power resource theorists?; and to what extent does Schulman's work share in the broader strengths and weaknesses of the approach?

On the first score, it is clear throughout the analysis that Schulman has grasped and conceptualised the fact that there is no one generic neoliberalism that has subjected New Zealand, Britain and Australia to a common temporality and processes. Rather, neoliberalism was constructed, and is maintained, by unique combinations of social forces and institutional structures, and one of the key determinants was indeed the degree to which trade unions were able to keep labour parties as *their* parties. Schulman is at his best in describing in razor sharp detail the fundamentally different experience of Australian unions in this regard compared to their New Zealand and British brethren. As recounted above, the former, due to a greater level of organisational centralisation and coherence, succeeded, both in terms of policy and personnel, in securing a much closer relationship with the ALP, and were thus in a position to inflect a different tenor and temporality to the process of travelling the neoliberal road. With equal clarity Schulman notes how the inability of New Zealand and British trade unions to maintain such a tight embrace with their respective parties saw them recast as obstacles to be overcome by a party leadership that was increasingly both organisationally and socially distinct.

However, by impliedly positing formal control over labour parties as *the* prime working-class resource, Schulman misses out on other factors which might qualify the strength of a claim which, although made in the specific context of social policy, nevertheless appears at times as a broader point:

Australian Labor's social policy essentially reflected a social democratic ethos which had to make concessions to powerful neoliberal interests, while the British Labour government's social policies reflected a neoliberalism which had to make concessions to the social democratic heritage and expectations of the electorate (p. 97 – my emphasis).

In this he shares a broader criticism of power resource theory (particularly where it is associated with the literature on corporatism, as it often is): that it conceives of power mechanistically, focusing on the ability of top union officials 'who barter their control over a disciplined labour movement for power via a social democratic party' (Howe, 1992: 14). The union-party link is regarded as

the privileged site of working-class struggle, with union leaderships and party members the prime agents. Forms of struggle and organisation outside of this party model are typically conceived as a demonstration of weakness, rather than strength (Howe, 1992: 14). If we expand the analysis beyond formal political control, it can be demonstrated, on the basis of the criteria Schulman himself sets (economic, social and industrial policy), Australia was rather more neoliberal and less social democratic than he supposes.

In order to pose these questions, however, it is necessary first to forward my own conception of what neoliberalism actually is. To say that neoliberalism means different things to different people verges on a cliché. Indeed, some scholars such as Dunn question the utility of the term at all (2017). I concur that, like most terms employed in both strict scholarly analysis and in political polemical discourse, neoliberalism can sometimes appear hazy and is, to use the expression of the great jurist Hart, surrounded by a 'penumbra of uncertainty' (Hart, 1979: 12). However, to jettison the term neoliberalism is to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Like any concept, we must distinguish between the intrinsic merits of a concept and the imperfections of its use.⁴ Moreover, the fact that the term neoliberalism serves as a useful focal point of Left anger at the current state of capitalism should make us doubly careful about rejecting it.

I maintain that, with due caution in formulation, neoliberalism can and should remain a useful concept in the scholarly toolkit. 'Due caution' in this context means explicitly locating neoliberalism historically and understanding it as *both* a structure and a process. Using the concepts and methodology of the Parisian Regulation Approach (PRA), I have elsewhere noted that capitalism can go through more-or-less coherent, stable periods, where the crisis tendencies of capitalism are contained, deferred and/or ameliorated (Heino, 2015; Heino, 2017). These periods represent capitalist epochs, or models of development, combining:

- An industrial paradigm, governing the social and technical division of labour (Aglietta, 1979);
- An accumulation regime, a stable combination of capital's economic forms that synchronises production and consumption (Jessop, 2013; Heino, 2017);
- A mode of regulation, 'a concrete hierarchy of capital's juridic forms, the extra-economic struts that allow capital to move through its circuit' (Heino, 2017: 16).

It is precisely at the level of a mode of regulation that I, following Lipietz, situate the concept of neoliberalism (Lipietz, 2013). Modes of regulation, centred on

⁴ A useful parallel I have explored previously is the very similar debate as to the status and utility of the terms 'Fordism' and 'post-Fordism'. There too I found that the terms remain useful, despite the fact that they are often ill-served by popular usage. Given that I proceed to locate neoliberalism by reference to Fordism, this parallel assumes more than a casual importance.

the state and law as root juridic forms, represent an arrangement of several key extra-economic struts, including wage relations, state forms, enterprise relations and linkages (such as competition) and money (Jessop, 2013). This characterisation serves to tighten the ambit of the neoliberal concept. It is not a synonym for globalisation or a catch-all term for any state project that disadvantages the working class; rather, it refers to a distinct process of evolution of structural forms which leads to a more-or-less durable and distinctive mode of regulation.

What this neoliberal mode of regulation actually does, and why it evolves the way it does, is a question that can only be answered historically. The idea of the post-World War II 'Long Boom,' 'Golden Age,' '*Les Trente Glorieuses*' and/or 'Fordism' is more-or-less ubiquitous in economic history/political economy. In line with PRA concepts, I have argued that the best way to conceive of this epoch is one characterised by the paramountcy of the Fordist model of development (Heino, 2017). Like any model of development, Fordism brought about a period of coherence and stability through explicit efforts to regulate and regularize capitalism's crisis tendencies, in particular the dangers represented by working-class underconsumption and the explicitly anti-capitalist attitudes of influential sections of the proletariat. Fordism's mode of regulation crystallised provisional and temporary solutions to these otherwise intractable problems. The state's assumption of an explicitly welfarist form, dominated by Keynesian thinking; the generation of a highly specific wage-labour nexus that integrated trade unionism into the fabric of Fordism through trading productivity-linked wage increases to subordination in the labour process; oligopolistic linkages between firms; and the status of currency as an adjunct to a system of financial regulation centred on the nation state – these were constituent elements of a mode of regulation that simultaneously answered the crisis of the Great Depression and ensured the coherence of Fordism. In short, one cannot understand Fordism's mode of regulation without also understanding the crisis tendencies it was responding to and the means by which it addressed them.

What is true of the Fordist period is just as true today. The crisis of Fordism in the 1970s has, through a process of punctuated evolution, been at least partially solved through the ascension of a new model of development, variously called 'post-Fordism' or 'liberal-productivism' (Vidal, 2011; Vidal, 2013; Lipietz, 2013; Heino, 2017). Importantly, this model of development, secured by a neoliberal mode of regulation, rose to a position of paramountcy precisely because it answered, in a provisional and contingent way, the crisis tendencies that had torn Fordism apart. Growing disaggregation of the manufacturing process (and its concomitant internationalisation), the slowdown of productivity in lead sectors and the increasingly dysfunctional institutionalisation of trade union power had combined to shear Fordism of its coherence and usher in the economic stagnation and crisis of the mid-1970s (De Vroey, 1984; Elam, 1994; Heino, 2017). The key characteristics taken as defining neoliberalism, including 'financialisation, trade liberalisation, deindustrialisation, deregulation, privatisation and the privileging of market principles over activities of the state' (Watson, 2016: 133), can only be fully understood and articulated if we

acknowledge them as part of a suite of structures and policies designed to answer the crisis tendencies of Fordism.⁵ The destruction of the Fordist wage-labour nexus (namely, the inversion of wages from a source of domestic demand to a cost of international production); the dissolution of the Keynesian state-form and its replacement by the competition state extending the commodity principle; the destruction of trade barriers and facilitation of hypermobile credit money – these structural features of neoliberalism perform exactly this function of Fordist crisis resolution (Heino, 2017).

Acknowledging the fact that neoliberalism is a response to the crisis tendencies of Fordism (and is thus an explicitly historical product) leads to two logically derivative points:

- Neoliberalism must be understood not merely as a complete, self-sufficient structure, but as a process, the unity of which can best be expressed as *a process aimed at answering the crisis tendencies of Fordism in particular ways*. Depending upon a host of factors, this process of ‘neoliberalisation’ can be fast or slow, incremental or violent, but provided it is tending towards the structures and rhythms of neoliberalism identified above, it is quite artificial to distinguish between ‘degrees’ of neoliberalism.
- Acknowledging that the crisis tendencies that the neoliberal mode of regulation answers are broader than the state strictly construed, a focus on the formal political sphere (such as that proffered by working-class power resource theory) is likely to omit important parts of the neoliberalising process and social actors outside of the union-party link.

On both counts there are difficulties with Schulman’s analysis. Regarding the first, whilst Schulman is undoubtedly correct in stating that union influence over the ALP, particularly in the form of the Accord, affected the form and speed with which neoliberalism was rolled out, he doesn’t systematically address the fact that this led to no durable impact on the long-term result i.e. the ascendancy of the neoliberal mode of regulation. That is of course a perfectly reasonable conclusion, but one which is not explicitly made in the book. Moreover, a causal mechanism accounting for this lack of long-term difference between the case study states is not at any time advanced, a lacuna I argue below relates to the use of working-class resource power theory in isolation from more grand theoretical concerns.

More broadly, the idea of neoliberalism as a process has usefully been discussed by Humphrys and Cahill in a recent significant piece (2017). Understanding neoliberalism as such, they undercut the somewhat rosy picture Schulman

⁵ Indeed, this was partly how the neoliberal revolution marketed itself, albeit in a fetishized and highly simplistic way (Cahill and Konings, 2017).

paints,⁶ describing how, throughout the 1980s under the Hawke Labor government:

...free tertiary education was abolished and taxation, which was to be progressively reformed to ensure that corporations paid a 'fair share', moved in the opposite direction. Other neoliberal measures implemented by Labor and often supported by the union leadership included restrictive monetary policy, extensive industry deregulation, privatisation of public assets, corporatisation of government departments, dismantling of tariff protections and promotion of 'free trade', tendering for previously publicly provided services, and the increased targeting of welfare assistance (Humphrys and Cahill, 2017: 675).⁷

The basic thrust of these changes is the same as those effected in New Zealand and Britain, a point that Schulman accepts in places. The working-class power resource approach, whilst capturing the fact that the process of neoliberalisation in Australia was forced to adopt a different tempo precisely because of the reality and necessity of union input, is not extended to that period which might have operationalised the model on a broader scale, that is, the early to mid-1990s when union ability to affect outcomes in the ALP waned severely. At several points Schulman notes how the ALP's 'movement to neoliberalism gathered speed' (p. 88) under the Keating government at this time without even cursorily indicating why. This silence is perhaps instructive as to the limitations

⁶ It is interesting to note in passing that, despite the large institutional differences between the New Zealand and Australian experience of neoliberalism in the 1980s, labour's share of national income declined more precipitously in the latter (Conway, Meehan and Parham, 2015). Such a development reiterates the need for a sense of working-class 'resources' broader than formal political party control.

⁷ Space precludes me from dissecting this highly important article at length, but the authors perhaps take the idea of neoliberalism as process too far from neoliberalism as structure. For example, they argue that the Accord, as a species of corporatism, 'was nonetheless part of the form that neoliberalism took in Australia and central to the roll-out of neoliberal policies' (Humphrys and Cahill, 2017: 676). It is certainly true that the Accord broke the cycle of industrial militancy and wage-and-conditions flow on central to the antipodean Fordist model of development, and it is also true that towards the end of the 1980s and into the 1990s it was used as a tool to stimulate workplace and award restructuring. However, the fact remains that the Accord intensified and accentuated the role of institutions, such as the federal arbitration commission and trade unions, which are regarded as pathologies within neoliberalism itself. Moreover, as I have indicated previously, the Accord process itself is better conceived as part of a period of institutional experimentation where different models of crisis resolution, *not all of them neoliberal in essence*, existed alongside each other. The Accord combined numerous, deeply contradictory planes within it, and certainly many on the established left saw in it not a neoliberal vision, but a road to greater union control and an elevation of the class struggle to the political sphere. There is no doubting that the Accord was a condition precedent to the full-rollout of neoliberal policies, and increasingly took on a neoliberal bent towards the end of the 1980s. However, it is demonstrative that the Accord disappeared at exactly the time the neoliberal mode of regulation came into full bloom. For more, see Ogden (1984) and Heino (2017).

of power resource theory – the ALP appeared to more fully embrace the neoliberal road despite the fact that the formal organisational ties between the party and the union movement remained intact (particularly in the form of the Accord, which was still on foot). In the same vein, it would have been fascinating to see Schulman grapple with the fact that the British Labor Party veered to the left in the early 1980s after the ascension of Michael Foot to the party leadership. The Party's 1983 Election Manifesto was strongly left-wing in tone, committing the party to democratic socialism, economic planning and nuclear disarmament (Labour Party Manifesto, 1983).⁸ This occurred at a time when unions generally were starting to wear the hostility of the Thatcher government. Investigating this period would have been salutary but challenging for the power resource theory perspective. The suspicion must be that these episodes are omitted precisely because they are hard to explain in terms of the working-class power resource theory. Had such analyses been forwarded, however, they would have immensely strengthened the central thesis.

Even with such a buttressing, however, it remains the case that, as a mid-level institutional theory that focuses on the ability of unions to exercise control in the formal political sphere, power resource theory suffers shortcomings. At the broadest level, like all institutional theories, it rises well above pure empiricism, but does not necessarily connect with broader 'grand' theoretical traditions that offer cohesive and systemic explanations of social phenomena (Vidal, Adler and Delbridge, 2015). Accounts which combine theoretical rigour with empirical sensitivity typically construct a rigorous 'hierarchy of abstraction', whereby the explanatory potential of grand theory is articulated with concepts more targeted at explaining specific phenomenon. Echoing Marx, such a hierarchy allows us to move from the study of the concrete, the world as it presents itself to us, up to abstract concepts which can then be reapplied to that reality to appreciate the 'concrete in thought' (Marx, 1973).

When not explicitly located as part of such a hierarchy, mid-level institutional approaches such as working-class power resource theory typically struggle to account for why the studied change was necessary in the first place. The conception of neoliberalism forwarded previously demands an awareness of the fact that it was evolving in response to the degradation of the Fordist model of development, which was coming apart under the weight of several of capitalism's most deeply-set crisis tendencies. It is those tendencies that generate the impulses to which proximate institutional developments, such as the changing balance of union-party relations within the labour movement, are responses.

Schulman generally does not link the evolving union-party bond to the specific crisis tendencies which spawned neoliberalism, and is thus unable to rigorously account for why working-class power resources changed in the first place. In the case of New Zealand and Britain, there is some mention of the changing

⁸ The British Labour Party had espoused and acted upon a socialisation objective to a much greater degree than their antipodean cousins.

demographic of party membership (particularly insofar as this was increasingly of a professional, middle-class character) and changes to the voting rights of trade unions within labour parties, but these are proximate mechanisms which were themselves responses to the crisis and ensuing coherence of neoliberalism. Had such a link between grand and mid-level theory been made, not only would it have improved the explanatory potential of power resource theory itself, it would have also allowed Schulman to suggest possible future developments and evolution in labourism itself.

In a more specific sense, Howe's (1992) warning regarding power resource theory, that forms of struggle/organisation outside the realm of the party are often elided, is pertinent here. For example, despite the fact that the Accord as corporatism represents an unprecedented institutional insertion of Australian unionism into the political sphere, deep changes in rank-and-file organisation at the shop-floor level were taking place at the same time. The 'no extra claims' provisions of the Accord were often enforced with an iron discipline by union leaders themselves, choking shop-floor organisation and demobilising grassroots networks of militants (Bramble, 2008). Whilst in a political sense, therefore, the 'power resources' of Australian unions appeared to be waxing, the Accord was severely depleting other resources, such as the capacity for direct industrial action which had powered upsurges in union militancy in the early 1970s and early 1980s. Such a development made Australian unions particularly vulnerable to the more openly neoliberal programmes of conservative governments,⁹ which can be usefully contrasted with the greater resilience of British trade unions where the shop steward movement, although hit hard in the latter half of the 1980s (Forth, 2008), proved a point of ongoing resistance to the neoliberal project at the plant level (Spencer, 1985; Danford, 1997).

This neglect of power resources outside the political sphere also bleeds into another aspect of the book which is otherwise its greatest asset – the restoration of some sense of union agency in the movement toward neoliberalism.

The role of unions in the rise of neoliberalism

I earlier mentioned how one of the great strengths of *Neoliberal Labour Governments and the Union Response* is that it joins a promising line of 'labour-centric' research that stresses the agency of unions and the importance of union strategy. Of particular note in this regard is the aforementioned article of Humphrys and Cahill, which stresses that unions are not only or necessarily the passive objects of the neoliberal movement – rather, in some countries, such as Australia, they can indeed be regarded as active subjects in that process (Humphrys and Cahill, 2017).

⁹ A threat realised by the election of the Liberal/National Party coalition in 1996.

Schulman stops short of such an assertion. His sense of agency is the agency unions had to control their parties. Such a perspective, firmly rooted in the working-class power resource perspective, carries latent within it the assumption that unions themselves can't be agents of neoliberalism. Rather, it is the party which is identified as the prime mover, and union agency is executed, with varying degrees of success or failure, to retard that movement. This is essentially a negative sense of agency – the agency to facilitate or prevent an outcome determined by others.

There is no doubting the fact that this negative agency was indeed the powerful factor Schulman identifies. As he so lucidly illustrates, more than a decade of Tory rule had convinced British unions of the need to get their party elected at any cost, whilst their New Zealand brethren saw their gravity within the party supplanted by a socially-differentiated strata closely linked to the Treasury. Such case studies are demonstrative examples of unions surrendering some of the control and influence they might otherwise have exercised.

In this respect, Schulman's book represents a highly useful complement to the work of prominent neoliberal theorists, such as Harvey (2005; 2007) and Duménil and Lévy (2011), who conceive neoliberalism principally as a purposive ruling-class programme to restore class power and funnel surplus value to the top of the income chain. Such a view is not incorrect, in that it captures the *raison d'être* of capital's project, but is incomplete, primarily because it tends to render labour as a passive object being acted upon, rather than as a social subject in its own right. Duménil and Lévy's (2011: 18-19, 85-87) conception of neoliberalism as a function of a social compact between, and hybridisation of, the capitalist and upper managerial classes leaves the working-class (or 'popular masses' in their tripolar model) on the sidelines, whilst Harvey, to the extent that he acknowledges working-class contribution to the neoliberal project, constructs it as 'self-inflicted wounds' (2005: 198) and consistent voting against ones material interests (essentially a form of false consciousness) (2007: 40). By drawing attention to the impact union strategy and tactics can play upon the assumption of the neoliberal road, a more nuanced and complicated picture comes into focus. Schulman illustrates the importance of looking within labour parties in explaining the neoliberal turn, rather than conceiving it purely as an environmental pressure leading social democracy by the nose. His account is thus an invaluable, 'labour-centric' companion to the more 'capital-centric' perspectives of Harvey and Duménil and Lévy.

However, this conceptual innovation is only half-done, precisely because the positive union agency described by Humphrys and Cahill features very little in the account. There is no real sense in which union officials *might themselves* be an active part of the neoliberal agenda, as could most graphically have been demonstrated by reference to the 1989 Pilots Dispute in Australia, where a cabal formed of the Labor Prime Minister Bob Hawke, airline owners and (most importantly for our purposes) the ACTU Secretary Bill Kelty conspired to crush the Australian Federation of Air Pilots (Taylor, 1992). Something similar could be said about the scheme to deregister the militant Builder's Labourers

Federation, led by the Hawke government and its extraordinary *Building Industry Act 1985* (Cth) (Hawke, 1985), but aided and abetted by the peak body and other unions. The breaking of the most activist segments of organised labour was a hallmark in the take-off phase of neoliberalism,¹⁰ and active union involvement in that process in Australia cannot be regarded as anything other than that of an active neoliberal subject (or at least a subject which assumes a neoliberal role in that specific conjuncture).

Only by appreciating both the negative and positive senses of union agency can the Left begin to carry out the task I identified at the beginning of this essay; identifying and acknowledging past mistakes so that the ground can be cleared for a progressive alternative to neoliberalism. If unions, particularly their leaderships, can be neoliberal subjects themselves,¹¹ then it stands to reason that greater union control over labour parties might not necessarily produce that neoliberal alternative, contra the implicit suggestion of working-class power resource theory. Such a development will be a necessary, but not sufficient, condition of the emergence of such an alternative. Just as important a consideration is the *nature* of that greater union control, and the political purposes for which it is being pressed.

Also necessary for Left revival is a transcending of the aforementioned exclusive focus on the union-party link that is at the heart of power resource theory. In this article I have largely confined myself to an interior critique of Schulman's analysis, accepting the theoretical premises that he adopts and demonstrating the shortcomings of analysis that result. However, there are myriad forms of working class action that exist outside of the union-party relationship, including wildcat strikes, unemployed workers movements, and community struggles (all of which have a rich heritage in Britain, Australia and New Zealand). Indeed, as Schulman notes at points in the book, some of the more important struggles over his study periods, such as those around the environment and nuclear weapons,¹² are not clearly linked to class, or are at least linked in complex (and sometimes contradictory) ways. As important as Schulman's effort in

¹⁰ Replicated in the UK with the Thatcher government's 1984-85 confrontation with the National Union of Miners and the Reagan administration's showdown with the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization.

¹¹ Indeed, Humphrys (2018) traces in detail how union leaderships themselves came to accept and work within the fundamental ideological framework of neoliberalism. Empowering union leaderships thusly minded would be unlikely to have progressive impact anticipated by working-class power resource theory.

¹² As Schulman notes, environmental activism and opposition to nuclear power helped the New Zealand Labour Party retain support from people who were otherwise negatively affected by its neoliberalising tendencies. He might also have noted contemporaneous movements in Australia, including the ultimately successful effort of the Hawke government to prevent the construction of the Gordon-below-Franklin Dam in Tasmania and its "three mine" policy to limit uranium mining to already operational sites. This demonstrates the fact that labour parties also can rely upon resources outside of the union-party link, a fact Schulman indicates but does not subsequently explore.

understanding the union-party link on its own terms is, equally important is charting how this link articulates with other forms of working class and social struggle, a task that requires as a necessary precondition an engagement with the grand theoretical concerns outlined above.

Conclusions

It may seem to the reader that I have been overly critical of *Neoliberal Labour Governments and the Union Response*. Some of the shortcomings I have identified reflect tasks that Schulman didn't set for himself. In its core function of providing an historical account of how and to what degree New Zealand, British and Australian trade unions ensured their respective labour parties truly were *theirs*, the book is incisive and engaging. It clearly demonstrates how, in each study state, different union strategies, forms of organisation and links with labour parties prevailed, which affected the tempo and pace of change in the case of New Zealand and Australia, and explained the fact that British New Labour did not resile from the neoliberal policies of the Thatcher era.

The chief virtue of Schulman's 'labour-centric' work is that it draws our attention to the significance of the union-party link at a time when social democratic parties generally, and labour parties specifically, appear to be moving to the left after decades of comfortably inhabiting the centre of the political spectrum. In Australia, the ALP recently forwarded an election platform that was more left-wing than any other over the past three decades, with genuine progressive reforms over franking credits, negative-gearing of investment properties and climate change.¹³ In New Zealand, the Labour Party went from the doldrums to forming a government, partially by promising genuine left-wing policies such as three years free university tuition, opposition to the Trans Pacific Partnership and genuine environmental action (Shuttleworth, 2017). By far the most radical shift has occurred in Britain where, under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour Party has adopted a suite of radical policies, such as targeted programmes of nationalisation, higher tax rates, the scrapping of tuition fees and the ending of 'zero-hours' contracts (Elledge, 2017).

Such rhetoric, of course, does not mean that these Labour parties will, or even can, deliver a genuine post-neoliberal alternative. The theoretical construction of neoliberalism forwarded above, as a mode of regulation answering Fordist crisis tendencies, militates against such an optimistic view. Schulman's vivid description of the betrayals perpetrated by the New Zealand and British labour parties dovetails with a broader scholarship drawing attention to the structural limitations of such parties in delivering meaningful social democratic policies

¹³ At the time of writing, the ALP had, contrary to most predictions, lost the 2019 election. Commentators are already suggesting that the lesson Labor figures will take from this episode is that ambitious reforms are not vote winners, and that in future the party will present a much smaller policy target (Crowe, 2019). This suggests that even the rhetorical shift to the left might be at risk.

when they run up against the accumulation imperatives of capital (see, for example, Bramble and Kuhn, 2010). Nevertheless, the rhetorical shift is important, not least because it creates expectations that can animate working class action and provides a standard by which labour governments can be judged in office.

In the midst of these developments, framed by the ‘dominant but dead’ (Smith, 2010: 54) hulk of neoliberalism, Lenin’s call for the necessity of correct answers to theoretical problems comes to mind (Lenin, 1963). *Neoliberal Labour Governments and the Union Response* is, for the reasons I have identified, not without its share of theoretical issues. Critique on this front is not intended to devalue the approach but to help it achieve its purpose of understanding the union-party link and, in so doing, illuminating ways to break the neoliberal mould within which labour parties have operated for the past three decades.

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About the author

Brett Heino is a Lecturer in the Faculty of Law at the University of Technology Sydney. His research interests include the political economy of law (with a focus on labour law), the structure of post–World War II Australian capitalism and regulation theory. His book *Regulation Theory and Australian Capitalism: Rethinking Social Justice and Labour Law* was published by Rowman & Littlefield International in November 2017. brett.heino AT [uts.edu.au](mailto:brett.heino@uts.edu.au).