

Introduction

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General issues of *Mosaic* gather together a grouping of essays from a particular submission period. Taken as a whole and given the discrete and often focused arguments that are a staple of academic writing, the general issue tends toward the fragmentary. This said, at times the general issue also provides a snapshot view of the largest questions on the minds of the journal's extended community of readers and writers—thus the general issue as barometer or indicator. In the case of the current issue, 50.4, which takes its shape from essays accepted between the fall of 2015 and the fall of 2016, the content consistently brushes up against a loose and broadly defined notion of governmentality.

As is well-known, the term finds its origins in the series of lectures Michel Foucault delivered at the Collège de France between 1978 and 1984. Foucault's stated intention was not to define a "theory of power," but to sketch out in preliminary form an expanded set of innovations and competencies that power had galvanized in the modern period. In these lectures, governmentality—what Foucault also calls "the art of government" and describes as a *poietics* of governing—is closely tethered to a second notion he named the bio-political. Roughly speaking, governmentality and the bio-political describe two sides of the same coin. They point to the complex interactions between the apparatus of government and those who are governed. They open

onto the broad field where sovereignty is sought out and contested. And they bleed out toward the rough and ready edges of every hegemonic system, subject, or ethical regime, where, at the micro-textual level, the responses to the active policing of order are in the grip of live processes.

With literature providing the basic crucible, these tensions are variously instanced, complicated and formulated otherwise in the essays collected here. Joe DeLong reconstructs the organizational lineaments of community for the lucky few who find mathematics a pleasure. With performatives doing the heavy lifting, Todd W. Reeser classifies the challenges faced by affective labour in the post-Fordist economy, specifically championing the mobilization of discomfort for the re-imagining of normative masculinity. Sam Reese and Alexandra Kingston-Reese highlight invisibility in the work of Ralph Ellison and Teju Cole as a formal, political, and existential value. Shirley A. Stave looks at two novels by Toni Morrison and finds the author working to undo restrictive laws of representation in one for more emancipatory ends in the other. Adnan Mahmutović focuses attention on the infrastructural role of the global city as locus for the flow of capital and an indispensable set piece for the work of Mohsin Hamid. Katrin Berndt reflects upon the social uses of satire in Ian McEwan's *Solar*. And with an eye to good and bad feng shui, Ryan Francis Murphy brings the logic of interior design to unpacking character in a novel by Henry James.

Freeing up space for the subject in an increasingly instrumentalized world is paramount in all of the preceding essays, and it is central to the three essays that form the backbone of the issue. Thus Thomas Peyser demonstrates with great lucidity that the peaceful utopics of Henry David Thoreau does not spring from nature alone, but instead is grounded in any ecology (whether natural or social) where spontaneous order is given a chance. Good government for Thoreau is something unintended and hence para-phenomenal to government proper. Like *Walden's* "thawing sandbank that 'organizes itself as it flows,'" Thoreau's advice is to trust the beginnings. Second, Joshua Rivas unpacks the snap-on/snap-off logic of the gay subculture described in Guillaume Dustan's *Dans ma chambre*. Based in equivalence, but subject to the laws of neoliberalism, Rivas describes a community of subjects for whom ontological well-being is not merely underwritten by relations to the other but literalized through an assemblage of objects that connect one member to another. Lastly, John Michael Corrigan uses René Girard's notion of mimetic desire for mileage into the Gothic complexities of William Faulkner's *Sanctuary*. Most compelling in this regard is the critical role of ritual, the function of a mirroric logic in disseminating violence, and the associated collapse of inside into outside, which is prohibitive of subjective depth.

Finally, *Mosaic* is pleased to include a portfolio of eight photographs by Andrea Robbins and Max Becher taken in Florida on election-day Tuesday, November 8, 2016. That the problem of governmentality in the essays that follow can partly be seen against the backdrop of the U.S. election seems clear enough given the submission period in question. What is less clear in looking at Robbins and Becher's photographs is how these citizens have chosen to be governed, how heavily the expanded powers of governmentality weighed upon them, and how complex and contradicted—how shot through by economics, race, and gender, how mediated by history, religion, and the media—these forces that make up this field of action that precedes action now are.