

Book reviews

Author meets critics: a set of reviews and response

Arun Saldanha

Psychedelic White: Goa Trance and the Viscosity of Race

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.

ix + 248pp., \$18.00/€12.99/£14.49 paperback (ISBN 0-8166-4994-4), \$60.00/€51.86/£39.49 hardback (ISBN 0-8166-4993-6)

Introduction

By the turn of the twenty-first century a shake-up of ideas around race and racism seemed inevitable. Fifty years of activism and reflection on diversity, equality and civil rights produced real progress in understanding that racial divisions are neither natural nor immutable, in recognizing that racism is a slippery style of oppression with a form for every occasion, and in establishing what anti-racism is against. Yet, it suddenly seemed hard to find any fresh account of what all this work was *for*. Race theory became trapped in the cycle of categorizations and identifications that mapped representations of race onto styles of resistance or models of recognition. Anti-racist practice clustered hopefully, but often fruitlessly, around ever more elaborate ways of using integration, socialization or some other style of mixing to counter strategies of exclusion, segregation and disaffection. Arun Saldanha's book is one of a handful of new works that effectively breaks

that mould. That is why it is so controversial; and it is why we chose to profile it here.

The subjects of this ethnography are white, well-off hippies and ravers ('freaks'), middle-class Indian tourists and villagers who come together in the beaches, bars and guest houses in the Goan village of Anjuna. As a participant observer in the assemblage of bodies, ecstasy, dancing and sun, Saldanha came to realize that despite trance discourse about peace and respect, white (Israeli, British, Danish, even Japanese) people coalesced in rave spaces, on certain beaches and in tourist hangouts, making them exclusionary. Whiteness, defined as 'sticky connections among property, privilege and a paler skin' (Saldanha 2006: 18), is creative, effervescent, finding ever more ways to remake itself. Its stickiness closed off the ostensible possibility of love and unity. Indians, regardless of class or gender, were not part of the 'in-crowd'; their bodies out of place even on the edges of the dance floor as the sun rose on a rave. While Saldanha is critical of the freaky form of whiteness as well as the moralistic response to the raves from Indian authorities, he wants to see some potential in the racial encounters in Anjuna. The immanent ethics Saldanha elaborates emerges out of white freaks' sense of 'intensive difference, the particular charge between oneself and another' (p. 173). Some white people feel that their privilege requires others' subjugation. When they stop taking their subjectivity for granted, they 'enter a field of intensive differences in which identities don't hold' (p. 175). Thus, '[i]n the face-to-face, the self embraces a relatively powerless other, not to exploit or appropriate him/her

into ‘the Same’ but to give and to care-for’ (p. 118). For us, then, an important message of the text is that difference is seen not as threat but as a resource for questioning the vulnerabilities and dependencies of one’s position in the world.

It is tempting to read *Psychedelic White* as a ‘new’ material geography of race designed to replace the outdated social constructionist model that preceded it. Saldanha himself cannot quite resist this claim. But, arguably, the force of this work does not depend on there ever having been a singular representational approach to race to react against. It does perhaps rest on the awkward truth that race scholars, having spent so long arguing against objectivist, materialist and realist accounts of race difference, have been reluctant to deal with the dissolution of the boundary between culture and nature that has occurred in other spheres of scholarship. Mostly though this is an account of the material geographies of race that stands or falls by its own appeal and plausibility, not by its ‘otherness’ to what precedes, follows or contextualizes it.

Saldanha (2006) understands race as an event: an assemblage of things, phenotypes and practices which is made, remade, revised and reformed in the constant flux (and occasional showcase event) comprising daily life. It is this emphasis on working with bodily practices—their engagements and disengagements, their fixity or movement, their material encounter—that stands in contrast to a body of work reflecting on the *representations* that people deploy to define or resist others. To understand how phenotype works, Saldanha’s approach not only describes ‘intensive differences between human bodies’ but traces how ‘economic, cultural, phenotypical and other disparities open those bodies to certain kinds of interactions and transformations’ (p. 25). In this

way, through ontology, he develops an argument for the materiality of race.

The book’s project is also political (as well as theoretical), and perhaps most distinctive in setting out not just what we should argue *against* in the field of race, but also what it is that scholars might usefully argue *for*. The book makes a case for the importance of revisiting and rethinking segregation and the possibilities of reconceptualising and re-experiencing race. Against the formulations of identity politics and racism, race, here, is open-ended becoming, made up of some relatively fixed and some changing aspects and, with practices, race plays a role in what bodies do. Thus for antiracist futures, it is necessary to consider race as the physical aggregating of phenotypes. We find inspiration in Saldanha’s point that ‘race should not be abandoned or abolished, but proliferated’ (p. 199).

Yet Saldanha has written about phenotype as if it must principally be associated with race when the term refers to any outward appearance. While he makes reference to ‘experiential ableism’ (p. 66) and the materiality of race in the work of ‘anthropologically inclined medical research’ (2003: 259), his contribution is much more than a theory of race; it is one of phenotype. Thus this work’s most lasting impact may be to inform understandings of all kinds of bodily marking—around disability, health and forms of genetic discrimination—as well as those that currently hang on race.

Psychedelic White is a compelling provocation to the theoretical frameworks traditionally summoned to study race and racism. In her review of the book, feminist philosopher Elizabeth Grosz writes ‘*Psychedelic White* is one of the most innovative, refreshingly different analyses of race I have read in the last decade’ (see www.amazon.com).

Rachel Slocum
 Department of Sociology and Anthropology
 St. Cloud State University

Susan J. Smith
 Department of Geography
 Durham University
 © 2009 Rachel Slocum and Susan J. Smith

Becoming viscous

What would it mean to write a *materialist* account of race? Or to claim that there is no need to place scare quotes around the term, since contrary to what cultural studies scholars have asserted race is *real* rather than merely *constructed*? Or to bring the body—and phenotype in particular—back into our analysis of race, as integral to what race *is*, rather than that which merely bears its marks? Such is the aim of *Psychedelic White*, perhaps the most adventurous, although not entirely unexpected, turn in geographical studies of race in the past decade. Adventurous because after a generation of radical scholarship that took race to be a ‘social construction’ and imagined a future ‘after’ or ‘beyond’ race, Arun Saldanha has the audacity to argue that anti-racism should not be about *surpassing* race, but about its *proliferation*. But not entirely unexpected either, because although constructivism has in many respects been the *lingua franca* of cultural studies since the 1990s, new materialist accounts of difference have challenged its tenets with increasing effectiveness, placing renewed emphasis on how difference is generated in and through the material processes, interactions and encounters of everyday life.

If race is not a social construction, then what is it? Saldanha gives us a simple response: race is the name we use for the *viscosity* of bodies, the

manner in which bodies come together and sort themselves out in the situated encounters of everyday life. Race is thus an event, rather than a schema; it happens *not* through the arbitrary imposition of racial difference on bodies—a kind of coding to which the body must submit and through which social hierarchy, colonial violence and economic exploitation find their basis and persistence—but rather ‘emerges as many bodies in the real world align and comport themselves in certain ways, in certain places’ (p. ix). Hence, in the analysis of difference, one doesn’t *begin* with race—either as an ontological given, or as a disembodied discursive category in need of deconstruction—one instead locates oneself on that plane of organization where the *becoming viscous* of bodies occurs; one attends to the *emergence* of race. Crucially, however, if race is a contingent outcome for Saldanha, it is also not a final outcome in the sense of something which endures as a stable and fixed referent after the dust clears; it is, rather, precisely that which is thrown open again, from moment to moment, a creation out of heterogeneity with no final end in sight. For Saldanha, then, race is not only that which emerges, it is, as important—and perhaps most controversially in the face of arguments *against* race by writers like Paul Gilroy—that which *can never be transcended*. For, as long as bodies mix and mingle, as long as combination and differentiation are ongoing propositions of material life, the viscosity of bodies is an insurmountable element of the becoming common of the world.

It should be clear by this point that Saldanha’s reconceptualization of race owes a great deal to the philosophical writings of Gilles Deleuze, even if Deleuze at no point put race at the centre of his concerns. But as any reader of *Psychedelic White* will discover, borrowing Deleuze’s approach to difference does not take Saldanha into greater and

greater levels of abstraction, but instead lands him squarely on the question of *method*. For if race is something that emerges in the encounter, if race is to be understood on the level of bodies and in the material practices of the everyday—a sort of microphysics of bodies—then one’s research and writing must be up to the task. For Saldanha, this means that race must be studied ethnographically, rather than discursively, and it is the trance-dance scene in Goa, India, that provides him with the rich material, conceptual conundrums and methodological and ethical quandaries that make *Psychedelic White* such an engrossing read. Admittedly, there is something propitious in this choice of site, and one can imagine how a different site might have rendered Saldanha’s project less self-assured. The rave scene in Goa, after all, presents itself as explicitly *anti-racist* in the sense that it imagines itself as a site where racial difference—and whiteness most specifically—is precisely that which has been left behind. Trance-dance in particular presents itself as at once a mode of escape (a way of being ec-static) and the means toward a common world beyond racial measure (a sort of ‘one-worldism’ where difference is surpassed). This provides Saldanha with a poignant point of departure: if we studied the rave scene only at the level of *representation*, he argues, it would accord almost point-for-point with the sort of ‘after-race’ world that constructivist accounts of race argue for and point us towards. Yet, Saldanha notes, what one actually discovers in Goa is a sorting of bodies that is perhaps even more marked than elsewhere. The riddle that Saldanha sets out to solve, then, can be stated in simple terms: ‘Why would a white microcosm be re-created if the whole point of going to India and Goa is adventure, escape, becoming different?’ (p. 6). If race is imagined to be left behind on Goa’s beaches and clubs,

then how is it that race continues to be so insistently present? Can this be explained solely in terms of the persistence of a racial schema, through which bodies are given value according to color of skin and hair? Or is the question of *viscosity* more complicated? For Saldanha, the answer to this question is only available through writing a microphysics of bodies that attends to movements and encounters, a detailed description of how bodies, white bodies in particular, come to ‘stick together’.

This is a crucially important turn in the study of race, both conceptually and methodologically. But like most first books the outcome is decidedly uneven. Divided into seventeen fragments and a number of interludes, the book is experimental in form, as well as in content. For this reader, it reaches its peak intensity in a series of chapters in the middle of the book that take the reader onto the beach, into the verandas, terraces and dance floors of local bars, or speeding along country roads on Royal Enfields, the bike of choice for Goa freaks. Here we find Saldanha at his best, noting the way that bodies are sorted in terms of habit and comportment, from the skilful comportment of participants in chillum circles, which require both practical knowledge and an acquired bodily intelligence, to the technics of ‘socio-chemical monitoring’, through which individuals subtly monitor their psychic state (and that of others). Or noting the subtle way that viscosity emerges in the visibility, posture and bearing of the Royal Enfield rider and the scrape wounds which signify this particular form of mobility, or through the temporal rhythms of the rave events themselves, in which morning is at once considered the spiritual climax of the event and also coincides with the period when the fewest Indians are present, driven away not so much by the sun as by a combination

of the need to work and the esoteric rituals of Goa freak subculture. Indeed, Saldanha's great strength is found in his ability to trace the coexistence of mysticism and microfascism in Goa, and to do so with the sort of raw immediacy and troubling complicity of a writer who is at once inside and outside the scene, too detached to be fully trusted by his informants yet too close to possibly gesture toward objectivity. Ultimately, the author is himself simply too entangled in the scene to imagine anything except a sort of experimental writing from the middle of things that never shies away from his own uncomfortable and often compromised position, which in the book's intensely discomfiting last pages removes any lingering sense of innocence for writer or reader alike. For if there can be no 'after' race, Saldanha seems to be suggesting, we must situate ourselves ethically and politically in relation to its ongoing actualization, a task that leaves us in the middle of a perplexity that has no final resolution.

There are, of course, points along the way where the narrative is strained, and where key questions are overlooked or passed over too quickly. Take Saldanha's odd and in many ways contradictory recourse to racial categories even as he seeks to conceptualize race as an emergent effect. In his description of the Goa trance scene individual bodies are often described as 'white' or 'Israeli' or 'Indian' from the moment they enter the picture, rather than such differentiation emerging in and through the embodied encounters that occur. But can one have it both ways? Can race be a category *deployed* in one's analysis if race is precisely that which is said to be an *outcome* of the processes that are being studied? Is a body 'white' from the outset, or is whiteness something that 'comes about' in contingent ways? Nor is it always clear why the viscosity of bodies should be discussed in terms of race,

rather than in terms of, say, subculture—along the lines of Paul Willis or Pierre Bourdieu—or perhaps in terms of class or gender. Why race is privileged is not entirely clear, an issue that seems rather curious given the author's own arguments about the need to understand how social difference happens rather than presume social difference in advance. Might a study of viscosity in Goa lead just as easily to a story about gender or sexuality, or, moreover, to these in relation to race? Indeed, isn't the great strength about the concept of viscosity precisely that it allows us to tell stories about the 'becoming being' of individuals and groups that doesn't *need* to be forced into pre-given categories? These issues are not entirely absent in the text, but rather than being drawn into the open they are pushed aside too quickly in the face of Saldanha's overarching ambition to develop a new conceptual framework for race that departs dramatically from writers like Frantz Fanon and Paul Gilroy. Likewise, careful readers of Deleuze and Emmanuel Levinas may find Saldanha's wedding of these two thinkers—Deleuze for his ontology, Levinas for his ethics—too quick and easy, even jarring, given their contrasting approaches to questions of difference and alterity. The combination that Saldanha offers towards the end of the book may be intriguing, even productive, but Saldanha simply does not engage systematically enough with their arguments to allow readers to judge whether such an effort can succeed.

Finally, it merits comment that the volume is marked by a strong emphasis on the spatiality of viscosity, but considerably less on its temporality. While it is true that Saldanha attends to the rhythms of trance dance events and to the role that habit plays in constituting bodies and their potential for combination, the question of how the past circulates in the present is not fully developed. A primary

emphasis on space is perhaps not unexpected from a geographer, but it *is* somewhat unexpected from such a close reader of Deleuze, who privileges the virtual over the actual, and for whom, following Henri Bergson, the past in its entirety is always in play. To be sure, Saldanha broaches the topic. The travelers that populate Goa's beaches have been elsewhere before; they have learned certain practices, gestures and responses as they have moved through well-trod paths to Goa. But is this the only way that the past 'bodies forth' in the present? Why is it, as Saldanha notes, that Israelis in Goa seem to be *particularly* viscous? Is it simply because there are many of them? Is it reducible to their spatial practices in Goa, or because of the routes that they have traveled en route to the village of Anjuna? Or does this viscosity perhaps have something to do with living in an apartheid state, or serving in a violent army of occupation in which race is learned as a kind of bodily intelligence? Bergson, on whose writings Deleuze leans heavily, insists that memory constantly rushes forward to meet perception, the body as a centre of action continuously prolonging the usefulness of the past in the present. What might it mean, then, to take Bergson's famous cone and place it on the dance floor? How might one attend not only to the spatial encounters and movements of bodies, but to the way in which the past irrupts in the present, as part of the intelligence of the body, part of how race is actualized on the plane of organization that Saldanha explores? This, of course, would lead to numerous methodological challenges: How does one get at memory-images, and not just spatial practices? Or, more to the point, how does one study how spatial practices actualize memory-images?

I can provide no easy answers to these questions. Indeed, the fact that Saldanha

leaves the reader with such puzzles says a great deal about his creativity and the bold challenge he presents to dominant paradigms in critical race studies. Whether one agrees or disagrees with the author's materialist turn, *Psychedelic White* offers a welcome addition to geographical studies of race that deserves to be widely read.

Bruce Braun
 Department of Geography
 University of Minnesota
 © 2009 Bruce Braun

The paradoxes of freaking whiteness

This book is a great read. Once caught up in the compelling language and the fascinating spin of ideas, I found it difficult to put it down. I read to the end, from one captivating point to another, marveling at the clarity with which Saldanha depicts the landscape of Goa trance. The story is about bodies: how bodies construct a landscape, what comes between bodies, and ways in which bodies interact with their complex environments and with other bodies. The analysis is an intellectual delight, rich in detail, subtle in interpretation, astounding in the depth of its social theory.

The book also calls to mind aspects of my own past, as an 'old' hippie. At university social gatherings in the late 1960s, one might hear 'S/he's a freak. S/he's cool.' These words carry a load of code: don't worry about using drugs in this person's presence; this person is into an alternative lifestyle; this person can be trusted not to sell out. More importantly, however, the words carry the promise of freakishness that fuelled the student movement: freaks were committed to ending war, poverty,

racism, sexism; to defying the established order and the hegemony of established identities; to overcoming oppression. I still cling to those objectives and I believe that the world really is a better place for the social movements that sprang up during that era but, in retrospect, the freaks of the 1960s seem entirely conventional in their use of dress, language, music, and other codes of the body. Their challenge to conventionalism set them apart from the norm, indeed, but also became a way of establishing a new social identity built around new forms of conventionalism.

Saldanha's major point, I think, is that the freaks of Goa engage in the delusion that they are escaping convention, but in doing so they paradoxically reconstruct a set of white norms that resist dissolution, that cohere, stick, remain embodied in this small enclave of freakiness. The historical fact of race, and the power of whiteness, are far more complex than any vision of united colors, global diversity, or cosmopolitanism can hope to budge. And he is right, I think, that if we hope to make a difference in a racialized world, then we must think up ways to change the dominant patterns in which bodies interact, cohere, include and exclude. We need to freak out race.

Saldanha takes a remarkable stab at laying out the theoretical basis on which such a freaking out might occur, and much of his argumentation is compelling. I would like to take issue here, however, with a couple of points. The first is his critique of the concept of social construction, which I think he has underestimated. He spends much of the book critiquing the social constructionism of anti-racist theorists such as Paul Gilroy, and the field of cultural studies in general, for failing to provide a material understanding of race, limiting it to a conceptual and representative realm. This limitation is a common claim of the recent 'material turn.' To treat race as a concept,

Saldanha's new materialism argues, is to limit it to the world of representation, as though representations are themselves immaterial, floating free of the bodies that created them, meaning without substance.

I agree with him that the interpretive turn in human geography has led to much—too much—analysis of discourses separated from the bodies that discourse. But that is because so many studies that invoke social constructionism do not follow its logic. It is not a question of what is only, or purely, a social construction and what is not, but of extending the reach of social construction to maintain the link between human actions and the historical results of those actions. Ironically, to study social constructions as disembodied representations misses the point at the very heart of social construction theory: it is the act of construction, not only the symbolic result that is important. To take social construction seriously is to take seriously the ongoing embodiment or performance of meaning that simply cannot be separated from the bodies that produce it. Just as the concept cannot be disembodied, therefore, neither can the body be deconceptualized.

Indeed, to do so implies that there is some material realm that exists beyond social construction, or, as many recent theorists would have it 'beyond representation' (see Thrift and Dewsbury 2000). This claim leads to my second point, that by invoking Deleuze and Guattari's notion of faciality as a complex machine, Saldanha falls into a conceptual trap that also separates the body from the construction of meaning, albeit in the creation of a realm that is supposed to be material rather than ideal. Both are essentialisms.

The concept of faciality is very attractive, and it works extremely well for much of the analysis, showing how bodies in Goa work to create difference. Faciality is an 'abstract machine' that

‘arranges bodies into relations of power’ through ‘imperialist racialization’ (p. 194). It is an intersubjective dialectic that goes beyond the Hegelian dialectic of recognition, transcending a simple binary of black and white. It is intricate, multidimensional, capable of thousands of expressions that give power to whiteness. Its capacity for transformation is also its capacity for power. By bringing bodies together, it is also geographically located or assembled in place. The machinic process, claims Saldanha following Guattari, is neither essentialist nor anti-essentialist, but rather non-essentialist: it originates in a complex set of human actions but emerges to gain a life of its own, or immanence (p. 189). He wants to counter the power of whiteness by addressing the immanent material quality of the white face, dissolving its power not only through the creation of new forms of faciality but in the proliferation of such forms to the point where the machine no longer has the capacity to reproduce itself.

But it is the ontological gap between immanence and transcendence that is problematic here, and Saldanha never quite comes to terms with the gap. There is a break in the dialectic (and dialectics cannot, by definition, be broken) between what is socially constructed and what is beyond. He speaks of the need for better ways of organizing politically, but provides little basis for political action. If the power of race is, as he claims, beyond the capacity of social construction to *create* it, then it is also beyond the capacity of social construction to *change* it. His answer, instead, is to make that power, expressed in the lines of flight through which faciality is transformed, less predictable, to place it outside the control, in other words, of ongoing social constructions (p. 207). And while we need to be mindful of the paradox, even the inherent contradiction, of believing that to freak conventional practices is to go beyond the conventional, is it not more effective

to embrace the paradox than to believe that it can be dissolved? Is it not more important that we understand the direction of lines of flight and the capacity of human actions to change those lines than simply to disrupt them?

I have no quarrel with Saldanha’s political objectives, therefore, but I am concerned about the theoretical paths by which he achieves them. To pick up the paradox of the title, while the psychedelic lifestyle of Goa freaks did not overcome, but rather reinforced, the power of their whiteness, the concept of whiteness itself is psychedelic, a delusion of superiority worked out in embodiment-face-location that ends up ‘reproducing what it escapes’ (p. 211). The troubling ambiguity with which this book ends and his resistance to committing to a political course, emphasizes strongly the limitations upon, as the first line of the first chapter has it, ‘what a white body can do’ (p. 11). Thus the book ends by reproducing rather than escaping the contradictions and social challenges of race. On the last page, white freaks still dance around, not with, Indian beggars. While I may be unhappy with the lack of politics in the conclusion, there is one thing about which Saldanha and I are in complete agreement: that before whiteness can be changed its complexity must be understood. This volume does a great job of making sense of whiteness.

Audrey Kobayashi
Department of Geography
Queen’s University
© 2009 Audrey Kobayashi

Reading Arun Saldanha’s *Psychedelic White*

Psychedelic White is a rich, complex and often troubling ethnography of an exotic ‘freak’ beach colony at Anjuna in Goa, on India’s west coast.

Part of the achievement of the interpretation is to repatriate that exoticism with the mother colony from which it has advanced (or perhaps regressed): a broadly privileged middle-class, European population that the author specifies primarily by its whiteness. The book reveals the touch of a creative imagination confronting demanding field conditions with largely non-cooperative respondents. It is innovative and an informative primer for a graduate seminar, engaging me fully and prompting multiple marginal notes on many pages. Of course discussion here requires some critical challenges, and there are four areas that I shall open up for discussion. It is worth noting that they have much more to do with the conceptual framing around the study than with the ethnography itself.

First, the criticism of *constructionism* is an important stage in the author's argument, for it creates the space for the development of an alternative conceptual structure in exploring race. The prosecution is problematic, for it is advanced on the grounds that constructionism and its representations are discursive, but do not engage 'realities' (p. 7), 'impacts on actual people in real space and time' (p. 8). Here the book accomplishes the common arithmetic of the theoretical critic: the division of a pre-existing theory, the subtraction of one part from it, its addition to an alternate theorization, and the multiplication of the new theory's potential, leaving behind the eviscerated theory swinging in the wind. So a response needs to address the first steps of division and subtraction. A portrayal of constructionism minus the realities of actual impacts on real people is not what I recognize in many geographical works that have emphasized the power of socially constructed representations to affect actual people in real time and space (see, for instance, Anderson 1991).

Secondly, if not its discursiveness, perhaps the problem with constructionism is that it is also *cognitive*, and *Psychedelic White* seems to set up a materialism that becomes defined as pre-cognitive. Simply put, stuff happens, not randomly of course but pre-cognitively. As the opening quotation in the book has it, citing Deleuze: not recognition but encounter (p. 1, also p. 194). Thinking comes later, after unmediated sense data have impacted bodies, including it seems the ethnographer's body. There is encounter and only then is there conceptualisation. So when the author asks 'Why Anjuna?' (p. 5). The answer is 'To form new concepts', and ultimately to better understand whiteness. First comes the encounter, then the conceptualisation.

But does this happen? *Can* it? Does an agent or a mind enter the social world as *tabula rasa*, an empty page waiting to be imprinted? Are actors free of intent, free of social values, free of knowledge, however imperfect prior to encounter? Are *ethnographers*? The thrust of cultural anthropology in the last twenty years has been to deny such a proposition emphatically.

And so too does *Psychedelic White*. For despite its protestations, it cannot evade the pre-existing construction of social meanings at its field site. In the micro-space studies on the beach, in the bar, at parties, the interpretive help of Erving Goffman is sought. Goffman's work is all about the definition of the situation, the construction and reading of cues that direct interpersonal behaviour in small public spaces. In this it draws upon the American tradition of symbolic interactionism that goes back to the pragmatists. For this body of thought, the cognitive, constructed intersubjectively prefigures and shapes, even as it is re-shaped by, action and encounter.

We can draw the same lesson from other allies that *Psychedelic White* employs.

The subcultural research of the Birmingham School of Cultural Studies is cited, including work by Stuart Hall, Paul Willis and Dick Hebdige. But like the interactionists, these authors are interested in prefigured shared meanings as well as social relations. Like Arun Saldanha, the Birmingham School had higher ambitions than Goffman in moving from the small spaces of social psychology to the more expansive spaces of national ideologies and practices. But like Goffman, identities were again constructed out of shared norms, repetitive actions flowed from shared expectations, common insignia from an agreed upon code of dress and accessories. So too the freaks and their fellow travellers in Anjuna comprise a subculture with their own intersubjective thinking-as-usual.

To use a final theorist in this tradition, also favoured by Saldanha: Pierre Bourdieu's use of *habitus* is I think closer to the author's formulation, in that agents sometimes seem to be primarily carriers of a set of capitals they have unselfconsciously inherited. The freaks in Goa construct a shared *habitus*, including a constrained set of practices, the utilization of preferred props and accessories, and hallucinogenic and musical preferences. But Bourdieu's actors are not unreflective, indeed the considerable variance in individual preferences and dispositions around the class-based ideal types shows that personal choices are being selected from a broad menu. Moreover, besides shaping rules for encounter and channelled outcomes, the *habitus* is also described by Bourdieu as 'a system of schemes of perception and thought' (Bourdieu 1977: 18).

To summarize this second point: the allies whom Arun employs are in their different ways cultural theorists for whom the cognitive precedes encounter, even as understanding may be transformed through it.

Third, discomfort with the cognitive leads in *Psychedelic White* first to a glance at ethology (Chapter 1), the human animal and its bodily practices. But ethology proves to be a way station en route to a still more daring theoretical destination: the *materialism* of the physical sciences, and ultimately with the machine as a form of complex system. I have two reactions to this unexpected end-point. First, that the machine in the humanities and social sciences has a profound place in modern intellectual thought, with the obsessive preoccupation of the modernists of the 1920s and 1930s with the machine-age aesthetic, from Le Corbusier's enunciation that 'the house is a machine for living in' to comparable declarations by other members of the avant-garde including Marcel Duchamp's view that 'the idea is the machine for making art'.

The machine-age aesthetic has been fully discredited, but this did not prevent the rise of cybernetics and systems theory in the 1960s asserting multiple linkages between physical and human systems, not least between the determinate machine and the brain (Ashby 1963). This was a literature it seems that inspired Félix Guattari (p. 185). But here is my second reaction to Arun's machine problematic. It reminded me of my own dissertation, an ethnography to be sure, but an ethnography that was influenced by cybernetics and theories of complex systems even as it interpreted everyday life in an inner-city neighbourhood (Ley 1974). In the context of a discussion in *Progress in Human Geography* a decade ago, I read parts of the book again after a gap of years. To my eye what had worn well was the ethnography itself. What seemed forced and awkward was the cybernetic problematic, innovative and untested when it was written. I think there is a broader lesson here. In ten to twenty years readers will continue to be intrigued by the power and

panache of *Psychedelic White* as ethnography, but will find the framing machine discourse no less forced and awkward.

My fourth point concerns the familiar challenge of *reflexivity* in doing ethnography. There are a number of points that could profitably be engaged: about going native; about going undercover; about the deployment of values (though the judgments on the *habitus* are judgments I share, not least after the rape and apparent murder of a 15-year-old British girl caught up naively in the Anjuna drug scene in March 2008); about the author's apparent participation in this scene which he relays with honesty—a conundrum not unlike William Whyte's admission to vote-rigging in a Boston election in his classic ethnography, *Street Corner Society* (Whyte 1955). And about the challenges of field work with a population who are both secretive and rarely coherent, leading to an unusual paucity of voices in the text.

But my query about reflexivity loops back to the previous commentary. In light of the emphasis on immanence, on encounter not reflection, on the 'faciality machine' not consciousness, how does one prepare for doing such an ethnography? What do we make of Arun's statement about searching in advance for a theoretical and political *perspective*? (p. 47), of moving sequentially from phenomenology to the politics of place, to post-colonialism, to Foucault and discourse, to deconstruction, to actor-network theory, and finally to carrying the works of Goffman and Deleuze/Guattari to the field site in preparation for the major research trip (p. 111)? It seems that rather than immanent encounter, the ethnographer is struggling to establish a way of knowing, a cognitive code, *prior* to the encounter itself, a perspective which is in flux and open to change. This is the view of Goffman, Bourdieu and, despite its rejection in

the book, the view of constructionism. Is it not possible that such a view also describes rather well the bizarre subculture on the beaches of Goa whose tragic lineaments are otherwise so intriguingly presented by *Psychedelic White*'s creative ethnography?

David Ley
Department of Geography
University of British Columbia
© 2009 David Ley

Ambivalent encounters and theorising at the beach

A young ethnographer goes to the beach in Anjuna, Goa with Goffman's *Behavior in Public Places*, and Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) in his backpack. He tells us that over the course of the fieldwork each book of theory became saturated with seawater. It is the palpable grit of the beach and the saturation of theory in the brine of seawater that makes *Psychedelic White* such a captivating read and important contribution.

Psychedelic White is an ethnography; something geographers talk about but rarely do. To some extent, the methodology appears to have been forced on the researcher. Goa freaks take a 'vehement stance' against the exposure of their subculture: interviews were often refused or skirted. The illegality of trance parties made explicit investigation into the political economy of parties difficult and even dangerous. The book has few photographs or direct quotations. It relies instead on field notes and participant observation, and offers vivid description of the Goa trance scene from 1998 to 2005.

The author's body was an important medium for theorizing. It resists easy classification by race or nation: Israelis addressed

him in Hebrew; he was invited to private parties of white freaks; his experience of being confronted by police whilst smoking a joint with two Belgium friends was that of a European foreigner. And yet he speculates that younger ravers were less friendly when he met them during daylight because they confused him with local Indians. His ‘fuzzy phenotype’ allowed access to different worlds, and his ambiguous grasp on freak status was a means of understanding the whiteness of Goa trance culture.

Travelling to India and the use of psychedelic drugs for self-transformation are, in Saldanha’s assessment, part of a long history of white culture, an urge to overcome one’s self, to become different, a ‘line of flight’ inherent to white modernity. In Anjuna by the late 1990s, this creative line of flight had ‘grown heavy’ and ‘closed in on itself’, and the racism and white exclusivity of the freak subculture are aspects of this. Saldanha understands racialization to be an ‘event’ that emerges from the ways bodies connect to physical and social environments; his is a spatialized, material reading of race. White bodies in Anjuna are viscous: they stick together and filter out other, contaminating, bodies. They do this through the way they occupy flea markets and bars, by the timing of and access to parties and chillum circles. They do this through a visual economy of dress, tanned bodies (achievable only by whites), Enfield motorcycles, and strict norms of drug culture. And they do this through a practiced contempt for most Indians as—at best—uncool, worse, dirty and stealthful.

Goa’s psychedelic trance culture is white, but it congeals around other social classifications as well, and it would be interesting to hear more about this. Nationality, for instance, is extremely viscous for some

(but perhaps not for others). Italians are the most ardent chillum smokers in Anjuna; there are villages, bars, shacks, guesthouses, beaches and dance-floor corners almost exclusively occupied by Israelis. Many young Israelis arrive directly after completing their military service and the army is ‘habitually invoked’ to explain the large number of Israeli youth in Goa. In the case of Israelis, backpacking in Goa seems a line of flight from but imbricated within the Israeli military machine. Does such an understanding alter a generalized reading of whiteness? And does a particularized reading of whiteness begin the work of ‘freaking’ whiteness that is the core of Saldanha’s antiracist politics?

The same might be asked about the workings of gender. Is whiteness inhabited equivalently by men and women of hetero- and dissident sexualities? More generally, how does gender articulate with race? The book conveys gender performances among white freaks in Anjuna as utterly conventional. Writing favourably about Goa in the late 1980s, as a community that brought ‘members to the same level, as they free [them] from the stigma of origin, nationality, education and social stratum’, a Swiss journalist cited by Saldanha nonetheless isolated gender as the one resistant social classification: ‘Only gender still plays a small role’ (p. 210). Little seemed to have changed in the period described in *Psychedelic White*. My question is this: to what extent does the repetition of heteronormativity fix or loosen racial classification? Can we think whiteness apart from other social formations? And—once again—does theorizing this specificity begin the work of freaking whiteness? In her early work, Alison Blunt (1994) described how the travels of bourgeois English women to Africa in the nineteenth century worked as a wonderful tonic for and release from at least some of the

norms of British bourgeois femininity. But this instance of movement around gender norms was predicated on the stability of their race, class and national identifications. How does the stickiness of gender norms in Anjuna work in relation to racial classification? Saldanha offers some fascinating examples to think with. For instance: white western women sunbathing nude on beaches in Anjuna have spawned domestic tourism; busloads of Indian men come to gaze upon these white bodies and fantasize about these white women's promiscuity. This is a tense contact zone and seemingly little more than gross stereotypes structure these encounters. It involves, as Saldanha notes, an acting out of Indian patriarchal culture. But might we also read it as another instance of white liberal feminism, with white women performing their liberation anywhere, oblivious to local norms and custom? And does it not involve a fascinating inversion of western assumptions of where sensuality, unmoored from convention, resides? Local men come up with all kinds of ruses to get close to these white bodies. Some falsely present themselves as masseurs, and their success depends on white women's stereotypes of their cultural skills and capabilities. As this gendered, racialized politics gets played out, are stereotypes merely entrenched or are some assumptions—for instance, who is a tourist and who is local, the racialization of desire—shifted in interesting ways? It's hard to know.

A halting ambivalent assessment may be the best we can do. The goal of the antiracist politics envisioned by Saldanha is to proliferate race beyond stabilized racial formations; it involves 'freaking' whiteness by working 'its lines of flight toward a situation wherein skin colour, genitals, AIDS, hunger, obesity, beauty, wealth and speed connect in less predictable ways' (p. 207). My impression is that Anjuna

is an unlikely site for such a politics. The norm for freaks—like tourists in most places—is to minimize contact with Indians. Saldanha nonetheless holds out hope for ambivalent cosmopolitan ethical encounters in Anjuna. 'Phenotype itself,' he writes, 'propels bodies to ethics, to making decisions about how to behave as rich whites' (p. 169). But what guides these decisions and where can or should ambivalent encounters between white Europeans and Indian poor go? And when and how do the ethics of individual encounters turn to politics?

The final paragraphs of the book are disarming. Saldanha locates himself tripping in the morning phase of a dance party. A tired woman in a sari carrying a baby taps his hand for change. 'With a faint smile', he writes, 'I gently pushed the begging woman away, as always ... The only way to participate in the party as a tourist, to enjoy the dancing, was to bracket the deep social inequality that made your enjoyment possible. Goa's trance-dance experience can't emerge without this amnesia' (p. 212). Saldanha clears none of the mess away: we are left both with complicities *and* the belief that trance-dance tourism offers more economic possibilities for locals and more potential for a creative disordering of race than other forms of elite tourism that threaten to displace it. Given this latter assessment, the author seems to come up against his Deleuzian proclivities by outlining a pragmatic politics of planning and regulation of trance-dance tourism in Anjuna. This is a carefully theorized book—without loyalty to its theoretical purity. It is one that poses difficult dilemmas for the western reader through a prose that 'puts you there', in the shifting sands of both Goa and critical race theory. For all of these reasons, it is a wonderful book to engage students in debates about whiteness, western privilege

and the ethics and political economy of tourism.

Geraldine Pratt
 Department of Geography
 University of British Columbia
 © 2009 Geraldine Pratt

The question of construction

There is no better way for one's first book to be broached for critical reception than by leading figures in the field. I am deeply grateful for the generosity of Bruce Braun, David Ley, Audrey Kobayashi and Geraldine Pratt. I thank Rachel Slocum and Susan Smith for organizing this exchange and Vincent Del Casino and Mary Gilmartin for publishing it. Both at the AAG author-meets-critics session in Boston and in the texts collected here, much has revolved around the concept of social construction. My book claims to supplant, or at least complicate, the social-constructionist framework for studying race. Its main concept 'viscosity' does not render social constructionism obsolete, however, but historicizes its assumptions and implications. Deriving from constructionism itself an emphasis on contingency, particularity and relationality, viscosity describes how flows of people become sticky in relation to each other and particular locations. The claim to newness lies primarily in attending to the range and complexity of processes that such contingency entails.

This book was therefore meant not to enforce a full-blown paradigm shift but to alert scholars to the ever-present possibility of refining conceptions of how systematic discrimination and segregation *come about* in the world. It is still about construction, still about the social, but I try to push these terms a lot further. In a Marxist vein, it is the stubbornly

unjust world that demands the adequacy of concepts. Novelty must be judged on the productiveness it enables in making our description of the world lay bare conditions and tendencies otherwise occluded from view. However penetrating it once was, the consensus that 'race is a social construction' without questioning which processes do the constructing is missing much of the reality of racism.

One worry raised among the reviewers is how turning to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari helps in combating racism. The reason for social constructionism to enter the study of race was after all to debunk, with renewed force, the still-hegemonic assumption in the West that racial inequality is ultimately inevitable. According to this ideology, bodies seek their 'natural' place in society according to inherited unequal capacities and preferences which are clearly delineable. Social constructionism has spent most of its theoretical energy disclosing the quasi-metaphysical foundations of racist, sexist, nationalist and other reactionary appeals to a self-explicatory grounding of social inequality. Arguing that there exists a materiality to race then risks returning to some form of essentialism or reductionism.

I contend that combating racism, both in reality and in intellectual discourse, needs to engage this risk. If by 'naturalization' we mean reification (assuming contra Darwin that nature equals stasis), then social constructionism *does not denaturalize race enough*. The leakage of identities does not only occur because mental and discursive categories cannot fully capture them, but because the identities are themselves leaking. Bodies need to literally stick together in space and time to make identities, and they are by nature incapable of doing this perfectly. Contingency is therefore much more profound than the

study of race has implied so far. It remains unclear in Paul Gilroy, who Kobayashi cites, whether what needs to be battled is only a kind of thinking (race-thinking). Being ‘materialist’ means, to me, understanding the construction of identities as myriad assemblages of feelings, physical conditions, objects, and a capitalist economy circulating those objects; critical race theory has so far placed little importance on the visceral, architectural, and climatological dimensions that racism encompasses. By limiting his critique to race-thinking instead of the full array of institutionalizations of race, Gilroy ends up expunging huge swaths of materiality.

Antiracism, as advocated in very different ways by Gilroy, Christianity and Islam, civil rights and human rights discourse, multiculturalism, neoliberalism, and postmodernism, usually aims explicitly at the transcendence of race. As Braun notes, this aim is not a real possibility from a Deleuzo-guattarian perspective. In fact, it can jeopardize actual intervention in the conditions that produce racial differentiation in the first place. Kobayashi and Pratt repeat a crucial argument of *Psychedelic White*: the psychedelic creativities of white modernity show simultaneously an intrinsic will-to-transcend and the dangers of microfascism. An immanent instead of transcendent antiracism delves into the nitty-gritty of the situation we find ourselves in, instead of proposing a staircase to some raceless realm. Though race cannot be transcended, its ‘thickness’ is not the same everywhere, and it can certainly be changed beyond recognition. The possibility of humans becoming arranged by something else than the racist capitalism of the last five centuries, itself grafted onto the species’ biogeography shaped over some 30,000 years, is remote but real. Even then race would strictly not be transcended, but dissolved, or petered out.

The irony of having to use essentialist categories such as ‘whites’, ‘Indians’ and ‘tourists’ to describe bodies which are conceptually taken to shimmer around those categories was noted by Braun. Though few philosophers would propose that language can function without some level of essentialism (‘cow’, ‘green’), an emergentist account has to demonstrate the possibilities of variation. This can in the case of Goa trance be done by respecting the *exceptional* bodies, however few they are, which the book does in many places. Another tactic is insisting such terms describe not actual identities, but virtual *attractors* to which heterogeneous bodies tend. In actual reality there are messy flows that make it difficult to discern who is ‘white’ or ‘freak’; in virtual reality, there are temporarily stable ‘essences’ of whiteness and freakness which direct bodies towards some degree of order (on essentialism, see Ellis 2002). Realism is an art in balancing the actual and the virtual, but in order to avoid epistemological anarchism its description needs to lean slightly towards an essentialist understanding of power differentials.

To account for bodies escaping the ever-refining colonial-capitalist system of tendencies towards essentiality—the faciality machine—I draw on Levinas, the ‘most ethical’ of contemporary philosophers who explicitly puts ethics first, before ontology. Braun is correct that Levinas’ ethics jars with my ontological edifice. Deleuze and Guattari belong to an anti-idealist legacy, whereas Levinas arrives at ethics in a more scholastic way through readings of Husserl, Heidegger and the Talmud. The jarring is necessary, however, to attain suppleness in the materialist edifice. As my ethnography shows, ‘molar’ realities (gender, poverty, tourism) demand *engagement* from participants, including the researcher. Deleuze and Guattari shun

interpersonal relations but thereby refrain from thinking such demands for molar individual consciousness. Since they never deny molar reality, we can assume that molar ethics deserves a place in their ontological system. Against Levinas' claim to its firstness, I employ ethics to fill in a gap left by ontology.

Does the ethnography, which dwells mostly in the here-and-now, i.e. Goa around the year 2000, suppress temporality? That the spatio-temporal present of Anjuna's psy-trance scene is materialized by a pulling-together of the echoes of colonial geography, the Californian counterculture, Internet, and the Israeli occupation of Palestine—all of which, *pace* Bergson, virtually coexist with this particular present—is indeed only fleetingly addressed. Tracing the Past-All that makes Anjuna both cosmopolitan and split is philosophically fascinating, because it is, of course, impossible. What interested me most was that Anjuna's abstract machine sucked in bodies almost regardless of their past. To focus on the Israeli or Russian experience would be to lose track of the abstract machine of *this* present, this coastal Indian village with foreigners which, though from heterogeneous national contexts, *still* behave in similar exclusionary ways.

During the author-meets-critics session, Kobayashi discussed the significance of dialectical thinking for social constructionism. Sartre's existentialist Marxism in particular revitalized Hegelianism for the anticolonial movements of the 1950s and 1960s. Since I depend for my identity on the recognition by the Other, I am compelled to continuously build meaningful relationships with her; since it was the European powers that created the categories of 'blacks' and 'natives', they are intrinsically bound to emancipating who they so despise. *Psychedelic White* is wary of dialectics, however, not only because it cannot account for the material complexity of

differentiation, but also polemically, because it has too long been accepted as the *only* valid framework for ethical and political action. It is true that commitment is more easily mined in a dialectical space, wherein relationality is all-encompassing, wherein the difference between oppressed and oppressor is 'Manichean' (Fanon), but wherein it is also discovered that Otherness drives the historical agent from within. Still, nobody said commitment was easy. I find Deleuzoguattarian realism more vocal on the economic, technocological dimensions of racism, making commitment at the least more precise.

Ley asks whether I have not caricatured earlier social and cultural geography. Obviously seminal studies such as Kay Anderson's of Vancouver's Chinatown (1991) understood very well that governmental, newspaper and other representations affect people's lives. The importance of studying these representations comes precisely from their real effects. Anderson's study starts to give a sense of the reality of what I would term racial viscosity, especially in her maps, but without systematic description of actual *practices* and their virtual tendencies, the argument about the exclusion of Chinatown from mainstream white society is primarily about the racism of beliefs and ideas. How these *are effected by* sensory bodies moving around and interacting through space and time has to be inferred. Because racial difference emerges in the midst of things and bodies, representations have to be studied as dynamically 'impacting' upon those bodies.

Though the reality of Chinatown includes the discourses 'on' it, it includes much more: import commodities, buildings, Chinese and other people, cars, foods, smells, signs in Chinese, and yes, at one time, opium. Anderson avoided the essentialist pitfalls of the earlier literature on sense of place ('one can

smell Chinatown'). In throwing away place-essentialism, however, some of the reality of racial differentiation is lost. Chinatowns usually *do* smell different from other city parts (thankfully), and this attracts some bodies and repels others, leading to segregation and stereotypes. As long as smell is not included in theorizing construction, constructionism remains not wrong but incomplete.

Hence Ley is correct to identify the precognitive as a level my take on 'construction' seeks to engage. Bodily encounter comes prior to the conceptions one can make of it; Kobayashi notes the likeness with nonrepresentational theory on this front. It should be noted that Anderson (2007) herself has recently staged an exchange between post-humanism and postcolonial studies, showing how the physical existence of environmental and phenotypic difference between Australia and Britain upset Enlightenment discourses on race and nature. A body (colonist, native, researcher) is not 'blank' prior to encounter; Deleuze and Guattari turn away from phenomenology precisely for still believing in such an originary and holistic subject. The question is how cognition and subjectivity can *take place* except through more encounters. When I read into new literatures, or take books to Goa to keep refining my approach, these are still a question of encounters: between my brain and books, between the beach and my memory, between what I know now and as yet unexplored truths. There are spatial and physical constraints on these encounters: I can't read while swimming; rare books are to be consulted in special rooms.

For Ley the definition of the situation, habitus and meaning seem to be primarily cognitive processes. Actors know what to do in a place because they carry to it conceptions of what is commonly done there. To me, the

definition of the situation does not exist in actors' heads but *in the situation*. Similarly, for Bourdieu, the habitus accumulates not in minds but in bodies and in real social fields. The 'meanings' of a place are indeed 'shared', as cultural studies and symbolic interactionists would have it, but they are shared between faces, organs, chairs, walls, lamps, doors, and a particular soundscape. So bodies enter a situation not as blank slates because they previously learnt to literally *incorporate* its (and similar situations') definitions, largely unaware of how they are, as bodies, continuously disciplined by their environment.

Philosophy has long accepted that the inspiration for realism is found more in the natural sciences than in the humanities. Many social theorists today—Doreen Massey, Nigel Thrift, Manuel DeLanda, Elizabeth Grosz, to name a few—are again arguing for dialogue across disciplinary divides. So unlike Ley, I do not see this primarily as a matter of aesthetics, as it was for modernism, dadaism and futurism. The project of reintegrating fields of inquiry, not into some whole but into an open arena of cross-fertilizations adequate to the changing world, is social-scientific and problem-driven. The human sciences recognize they have been too obsessed with discourse and meaning, while the natural sciences provide them less deterministic and reductionist models for conceiving social systems.

Interdisciplinarity is hardly new. Ley's own highly original doctoral ethnography of race and urban culture (1974) appeared during the zenith of systems theory's sway over the social sciences, but this did not distract him from his humanistic agenda. Perhaps the incongruence of humanism and cybernetics appeared to some readers, in Ley's own words, to be 'forced and awkward', but I would have liked to see more rather than less engagement with

cybernetics. The humanist critique of spatial science—to which Ley himself contributed in no small measure—was crucial to the vitality and the politics of our discipline. But in hindsight, it did not allow human geography to learn more from systems theory. What was wrong with the quantitative revolution was not its formalism or the borrowing of concepts from physics, it was that the formalism and physics tended to be mechanistic. The ‘machinism’ of Deleuze and Guattari steers away from mechanicism but not from systems thinking. Machinism is neither a radically new call for interdisciplinarity, nor a mere addition to an array of influences. It is quite serious about retrieving the excitement of conversations across the disciplines that have been broken off, while retaining the critical methodologies that the social sciences discovered.

The turn towards embodied ethics is welcomed by Pratt but she raises a concern Braun has too: why and how is race privileged as outcome of the play of bodies in Goa, not gender, for example? Surely gender, heterosexuality, and the distinction between rave subculture and mainstream white patriarchy are also effects of the ‘viscosity’ of bodies? Yes they are, and hopefully the book can help to analyze differences other than race. In fact, the concept of viscosity holds that differences such as race and gender necessarily interact, insofar as the limits of elasticity are reached by one differentiation just where another differentiation becomes more prevalent. If the mixing of human bodies becomes too fluid or gaseous to still discern institutional racism, another ordering principle has taken over, such as nationalism (black and white united under the flag), or heterosexism (racial mixing at a strip club).

The book does not fully theorize how one differentiation, say heteronormativity, can actually *reinforce* another, like race. Take the

hostility between domestic tourists and white women. Leading mostly to annoyance and contempt amongst the women, in rare instances holiday romances are formed. Understood through the Levinasian possibility of becoming unexpectedly and hurriedly *captivated* by an-other, and as long as the sex is safe and enjoyable for both, the virtues of such romances can be extolled. I can even accept that in actual practice, such experimental desire happens through, not despite, racial stereotypes (‘cute Indian boy’/‘easy white girl’). The danger, however, is that such encounters quickly become organized by pimps for white middle-aged male consumers. There are regular moral panics about sex tourism in Goa, mostly exaggerated given the prudishness of Indian society and the marginal status of prostitutes. Yet there is no example more blatant of heteronormativity underpinning racialization than sex tourism.

Can an effective antiracist and feminist politics be gleaned from the global psy-trance scene? Pratt thinks not, and *Psychedelic White* too is on the whole pessimistic. Especially since the acid-fuelled polysexuality has dissipated, this scene has promoted a fairly typical distribution of femininities and masculinities on top of its racializations. In the transient space of Anjuna, it is difficult for any lasting progressive politics to germinate. Its ambivalences are too acute to hold this scene up as exemplary for ‘freaking’ the power of whiteness, but we should also never lose sight of the real propensities for intercultural friendship and learning that travel counter-culture contains. The final word is one of caution: properly acknowledging the creativity of hippie mysticism or rave culture involves attending to lurking microfascisms, especially if it is increasingly attractive to consumption. Or with Public Enemy: don’t believe the hype. True antiracism demands more.

References

- Anderson, K. (1991) *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875–1980*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Anderson, K. (2007) *Race and the Crisis of Humanism*. London: Routledge.
- Ashby, W.R. (1963) *An Introduction to Cybernetics*. New York: Wiley.
- Blunt, A. (1994) *Travel, Gender and Imperialism: Mary Kingsley and West Africa*. New York: Guilford.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. B. Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Ellis, B. (2002) *The Philosophy of Nature: A Guide to the New Essentialism*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Goffman, E. (1963) *Behavior in Public Places: Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings*. New York: Free Press.
- Ley, D. (1974) *The Black Inner City as Frontier Outpost: Images and Behavior of a Philadelphia Neighborhood*. Washington, DC: Association of American Geographers Monographs.
- Saldanha, A. (2003) *Psychedelic whiteness: rave tourism and the viscosity of race in Goa*, PhD dissertation, Department of Geography, The Open University, Milton Keynes.
- Saldanha, A. (2006) Re-ontologizing race, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 24: 9–24.
- Thrift, N. and Dewsbury, J.D. (2000) Dead geographies, and how to make them live again, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 18: 411–432.
- Whyte, W.F. (1955) *Street Corner Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Arun Saldanha
 Department of Geography
 University of Minnesota
 © 2009 Arun Saldanha