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Vol. 17, no. 2:
Special issue on W. E. B. Du Bois’s *The Souls of Black Folk*
Guest edited by Robert Gooding-Williams and Dwight McBride
Anne Carroll on Du Boisian aesthetics; Vilashini Cooppan on nationalism and globalism in *Souls*; Sheila Lloyd on Du Bois and the racial picturesque; Charles Nero on queering *Souls*; Cheryl Wall on Du Bois and the African American literary tradition; Alexander Weheliye on sonic and temporal practices in *Souls*; and more . . .
At the close of volume seventeen of *Public Culture*, I will step down from the editorship of the journal in order to take up a position at Columbia University, handing over my job to the capable hands of Claudio Lomnitz. When I agreed to assume the role of editor of *Public Culture* some four years ago, I faced the imposing legacy of the journal’s first and founding editor, Carol Breckenridge, as well as my own ignorance of the daily rhythms of running a scholarly journal whose aspirations are to foster and be fostered by critical global publics. The forms of talk and topics of urgency and the everyday that compose these critical global publics can diverge dramatically, as suggested by the productive exchange in this issue between Michael Watts and Sarah Nuttall and Achille Mbembe over the representations of life and death worlds in Johannesburg. Quite quickly the idea of mastering scholarly terrains such as this one gave way to a deep curiosity about the terrain itself: the international forces at play in the emergence of specific arguments in *Public Culture* essays, the local editorial tasks crucial to publishing these arguments, the global nature of interpersonal relations leading to or developing out of the publishing endeavor, and the complexly circulating social sensorium that provides the languages and trace memories out of which these scholarly conversations and their publishing trajectories arise.

This issue of *Public Culture* exemplifies the long-standing goals of the journal to lend itself to essays focused on the contested intersection of critical publics and commodity dynamics. Kaylin Goldstein and David Bennett elaborate the delicate, dramatic, and sometimes hilarious means by which internationally circulating critical scholarly publics are transformed into sales receipts and admission tickets: the absorption of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* into the politics and economies of museum display and Freudian psychoanalysis into the selling of Barbie dolls.
Neville Hoad and Charles Briggs critically engage the genealogies of healthy and pathogenic polities in the wake of cosmopolitan calamities: the racist eugenics of the early twentieth century and the contemporary HIV/AIDS pandemic. Edward LiPuma and Thomas Koelble, Danny Hoffman, and Simon Leung and Marita Sturken roam and remodel the landscapes left in the wake of these international imaginary, commodity, and cultural transfers.

None of the issues that have borne my name as editor would have been possible without the steady and stellar management of Kaylin Goldstein, who is leaving the journal to take up a postdoctoral position at the University of Miami. Her collaboration with me, the other members of the editorial committee, and authors stretched far beyond the already creative and cumbersome duties of an editorial manager.

—Elizabeth A. Povinelli
San Francisco
July 2004
Call for Contributions

miscellaneous, n.: a collection of various kinds, especially news clippings, literary extracts, postcards, and other images. Includes media accounts of items relevant to public discourse and debate throughout the world. The section seeks to highlight not only the reported phenomena as such but also the mediated nature of media coverage. Public Culture especially seeks pieces that are witty or (unintentionally) ironic. Submissions should include all relevant facts of publication and should be no longer than three pages.

etymology, n., pl.: true sense or form of the network of keywords: public, publicity, public opinion, public sphere. Investigates the contemporary uses and meanings of the terms public, publicity, and public opinion. Short essays (of approximately six to eight pages) that consider the semantics and pragmatics of one or more of these interrelated terms in the context of a particular language and a particular people are welcome. How do these terms compare across cultures and languages? Do their meanings “translate,” and what do their “mistranslations” bode for comparative social theory grounded in what may be hidden ontological statements about civil society?

artwork, n., pl.: brief reports (up to 750 words) on innovative critical cultural work within and outside established institutions. Includes new kinds of museums; alternative or oral history projects; the expansion of musical performance and recording into forgotten musical histories or the dissemination of a broader range of musics; alternative publishing ventures or exhibition practices in film, theater, and dance; innovative cultural work with children; public art and art in public such as murals and graffiti; innovative uses of television, radio, or other mass media; and reports on past cultural work—the modernist, socialist, and avant-garde counterinstitutions of the early twentieth century. Send material and proposals to artworks editor Katie Trumpener.

from the field, n., sing.: briefly annotated single photographs for inclusion as a photo feature at the end of the issue. Submissions are not limited by style or content but should be glossy prints of at least 5" × 7".

CyberSalon: To join Public Culture’s on-line discussion group, send an e-mail message, “Add me to on-line discussion,” to publicculture@newschool.edu.

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