

Diaspora, Memory and Intimacy ed. by Sarah Barboar, Thomas Lacroix, and Judith Misrahi-Barak.

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 ***Diasporas, Cultures of Mobilities, 'Race': 2. Diaspora, Memory and Intimacy* ed. by Sarah Barboar, Thomas Lacroix, and Judith Misrahi-Barak (review)**

Reshmi Dutt-Ballerstadt

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REVIEW

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**In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:**

Reviewed by:

## Reshmi Dutt-Ballerstadt (bio)

**Barboar, Sarah, Thomas Lacroix, and Judith Misrahi-Barak, eds. *Diasporas, Cultures of Mobilities, 'Race': 2. Diaspora, Memory and Intimacy*. Montpellier: Presses universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2015. Pp 258. €21.00**

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In this second collection of essays under the topic of “Diaspora, Memory and Intimacy,” *Diasporas, Cultures of Mobilities, 'Race': 2* addresses transnational migration in a global context. In examining the intersections of race, class, gender, and geography, the essays in this collection explore the issue of who migrates where, how they make these journeys, and what is at stake in these migrations. The editors, Sarah Barboar, Thomas Lacroix, and Judith Misrahi-Barak, observe that the essays collected here will “unravel the subjective perceptions of the self through its interplay with the Other once it is affected by the experience of de-territorialization” (10). They divide their interdisciplinary collection into three segments: “Questions of Theory, History and Memory,” “Intersecting Identities,” and “Bodies in Motion.”

An interdisciplinary framework is apt for exploring the various conversations pertinent to migration and diaspora. In the first chapter, “African Diaspora Theory: Here, There and Everywhere,” Maggi Morehouse uses both a literary and a sociological framework to conceptualize African diaspora. Using Henry Louis Gates’ seminal book *Classic Slave Narratives* as a starting point, Morehouse expands on the layered intricacies of the African diaspora creole identity forged under slavery. Analyzing the autobiographies of Olaudah Equiano and Mary Prince and novels such as Bruce Chatwin’s *The Viceroy of Ouidah*, the chapter allows us to understand what these African diasporic subjects were narrating about “their place in the global world order” (22). Morehouse contends that while Equiano and Price reflect on the multiple disruptions caused by the institution of slavery in understanding their own displaced and diasporic subjectivity, Chatwin’s novel pushes the limits of national identity and citizenship for subjects who occupy a liminal

space. Morehouse ends the chapter with an interrogation of hybrid positionalities (AfroGermans, Black Russians, AfroBrazilians, and Black Irish) to further the process of de-territorialization.

After a strong chapter on Vietnamese-American literary works about Vietnamese subjects “fight[ing] their status as subalterns in an American neo-colonized Vietnam” by Deborah Stefani (51), the collection shifts to a sociological reading of memory construction. In this section, simple mechanisms of remembering are both layered and superimposed for Vietnamese subjects as a result of multiple border crossings, ruptures in social ties, adaptations **[End Page 156]** to new languages, and attempts to integrate into their “new” migrated societies. In “Between Silences and Rewritings: Two Approaches to Memory Construction by Spanish Refugees and Economic Immigrants in France,” Evelyne Ribert compares two Spanish migrant populations: the Spanish refugees in France after the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) and the Spanish immigrants who arrived in France in the 1950s and 60s. Her interviews reveal “important variations in the knowledge and memory of family migration and exile” (65) and hence a wide variety of transmitted memories. Her essay highlights people’s inability to access memory as a result of war and trauma. Ribert shows that memory’s discontinuity, marked by gaps of forgetting and remembering, is essential to explore.

The text’s second segment, “Intersecting Identities,” explores the vexed question of intersectionalities in the construction of diasporic identities. Adriana Capuano De Oliveira’s chapter “A Question of Identity: Being Japanese in Brazil and Brazilian in Japan” brings the politics of national belonging and exclusion to the forefront. The chapter offers a detailed historical overview of Japanese immigration to Brazil, noting that, until the twentieth century, Brazil “was considered an immigrant receiver” (83). Yet the Brazilian government did not consider the immigrants Brazil accepted (especially Japanese and Chinese immigrants) “healthy”—“given that a ‘healthy’ nation could not be built with African and Asian immigrants”—and called these demographics a “degenerated race” (88).

Turning from a discussion of the falsity of a fixed and stable national identity, Ghenna Hayek's essay explores clothing as a symbolic means of identification of race, class, and gender. In discussing the complexity of Lebanese identity, Hayek makes a poignant observation: "Clothing allows one both the ability to *write* one's identity and to be *read* (or sometimes...)

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Contemporary vodun arts of Ouidah, Benin, consciousness is sulfated.

*Ouidah: The Social History of a West African Slaving 'Port' 1727-1892*, by Robin Law: book review, the accuracy of the course, as can be shown with not quite trivial calculations, is strong.

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