Sanford F. Schram and Marianna Pavlovskaya (eds) (2017), *Rethinking Neoliberalism: Resisting the Disciplinary Regime*, London: Routledge, £33.99, pp. 296, pbk.
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Despite the fact that its title made my heart sink (do we *really* need another 'rethinking' of neoliberalism?), this collection is an interesting and productive addition to the neoliberalism literature, not least because it avoids some of the grosser generalizations about the relationship between neoliberalism and the welfare state. Instead this edited collection (drawn from a seminar series held at City University of New York's Hunter College between 2014 and 2016) explores different policy fields and sites, including urban policy, welfare work, policing and the penal system, and forms of poverty management and measurement. More theoretical considerations are explored in a range of opening and closing chapters. The opening ones discuss the psychological conditions associated with neoliberalism (Jodi Dean arguing that neoliberal individualism is best understood as generating psychotic states rather than narcissistic ones); the uncomfortable fascination that neoliberalism held for Foucault (Mitchell Dean) and the ways in which Foucault's theorising decentres the state (Kaspar Villadsen). The closing chapters by Sanford Schram and Barbara Cruikshank take up some of the political and policy challenges of this era.

Perhaps not surprisingly given its place of origin, the collection is dominated by reflections on the USA, from an Introduction that tries to connect the book's concerns with the moment of Trump (whose election came after the seminar series) to several substantive chapters that address US examples. These are interwoven with studies of welfare claimants in Denmark, poverty and its politicised measurement in Russia, discourses of social investment in the EU and the spatial politics of protest in Amman. Interesting though they are individually, I am not sure they justify the editors claim that the book offers an "international and comparative perspective" (p.xxi), at least not in any sense that social policy scholars would use the words. The book as a whole suffers the usual curse of edited collections: its quality and focus are somewhat uneven. Nonetheless, there are some important analyses and arguments that repay careful attention, beginning with Mitchell Dean's exploration of Foucault's attraction to the ideas and possibilities of neoliberalism's anti-statist and anti-institutionalist tendencies as liberating subjects from disciplinary or governmental power. This opens up a disconcerting distance between some of Foucault's later writings and the usual view of him as a theorist of advanced liberal or neoliberal governmentality.

Elsewhere the shifting forms and practices of state power are the focus of a significant chapter by Joshua Page and Joe Soss on the 'predatory state'. They examine how US municipalities have used fines and charges to 'tax' poor communities (and create fiscalised indebtedness) as a strategy to cover the shortfalls in their own finances, especially after the decline of federal funding. The chapter is compelling and depressing, not least for the way the authors see the police, courts and penal system as active players in sustaining this regime. Marianna Pavlovskaya's chapter examines the creation and concealment of structural poverty in Russia in the post-Soviet transition. Her careful deconstruction of how three core indicators have been developed, massaged and managed to make the rapid growth of poverty invisible is exemplary, as is her attention to the variety of informal economies, practices and relationships that have emerged in the interstices of state and market failure.

I am not really convinced that another 'rethinking neoliberalism; is what we most need, nor that the collection as a whole delivers it. Too often it resembles what Peck and Whiteside describe as neoliberalism's 'explanatory invocation' as the 'default position' (p.191) in critical work. In contrast, their analysis of Detroit's municipal crisis explores the diverse economic,

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political and social forces that came together to bankrupt the city and make it 'open for business', or, more precisely, available for financialised and managerialised take-over. In the process, they deconstruct and reconstruct conservative narratives that have (mis)represented Detroit as the exemplary lesson of the wrong kind of municipal politics. They also argue for the importance of attending to the mobile, mutating and shape-shifting qualities of neoliberalism as it pursues a 'zig-zagging path of creative destruction' (p.181). In a different register, Laurence Feldman borrows from James Ferguson's (2009) important essay 'The Uses of Neoliberalism' in examining the shifting political uses of techniques and technologies (from performance data to smart phones) in popular attempts to document, combat and regulate police violence.

That same essay recurs as a point of reference in Barbra Cruikshank's remarkable closing chapter for the collection. Cruickshank argues that critical thought has become fixated on the concept of neoliberalism. She sees neoliberalism performing the central role in what (following Foucault) she calls the 'repressive hypothesis': the view there is a totalising power that is hegemonic, defines all of our reality and even absorbs all resistance to it. As a result, critical thought has become obsessed (arguing eternally over how to define neoliberalism 'correctly'), monocular (unable to see anything beyond neoliberalism), and politically paralysed (since any counter politics must both start and go beyond neoliberalism). Instead, she argues for attention to the multiple forms of power and regimes of oppression and inequality that make up the present – and for attention to the dispersed but creative forms of politics that engage those regimes, and the relationships and practices in which they are enacted. Such political mobilizations are not 'against neoliberalism' (and are therefore viewed with disdain in some quarters) but Cruikshank makes a powerful case for viewing them as vital new political forms of association, prefiguration and contestation. This, though, leads to another of the eternal curses of edited collections: being doomed to end with a chapter that makes the reader wish that the other chapters had had to address it. Cruikshank challenges us to move beyond 'rethinking neoliberalism' to the possibility of thinking 'without neoliberalism'. I enjoyed the book unevenly, but this closing argument has made me think – and think again: always a good moment.

Reference

Ferguson, J. (2009), The Uses of Neoliberalism, *Antipode*, 41(S1): 166–184.

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