
reflect on whether that project has promise still or is just remembered from times gone by.

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Nomi Claire Lazar: *Out of Joint: Power, Crisis, and the Rhetoric of Time*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019. Pp. ix, 264.)

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Out of Joint is an important book which returns temporality to political thought. Political power is commonly understood more as a territorial than as a temporal principle. From the eighteenth to the twentieth century the world-wide growth of nationalism put emphasis on territorial boundaries as constitutive of both national and popular sovereignty – sometimes in a paradoxical fashion, as when the British denied imperial citizenship to Indian subjects on the ground that citizenship could only be a national-territorial claim even if India was not or not yet a nation! In later times of globalization, it was again the question of territorial sovereignty and border porosity that became critical in the context of the circulation of labor, commodity, and capital. In today's postglobalization era, once again, territorial claims are in contention in debates about cross-border migration of political and economic refugees and the issue of data location. In all this concern about spatial rights and territorial proprietorship, the question of time gets subsumed, if not entirely lost. It is for this reason that this book must be extensively read and engaged with.

In recent times, temporality has been discussed mostly in the contexts of modernity and colonialism. Political scientists have critiqued the modern ideologies of progress, modernization, and development, anthropologists the temporal othering of so-called primitive and backward peoples, historians the universal ancient/medieval/modern periodization system that flattens out historical differences across the world. There is also well-known work on the rise of clock time as a disciplinary mechanism in early modernity and on the acceleration and telescoping of time in the contemporary media and data worlds. *Out of Joint* is distinctive in that it does not confine itself to the modernity question. Instead it seeks to show how temporality is constitutive of political power as such, that is, political power across diverse histories and

geographies, ranging from classical Greece and China to Mayan kingship and first peoples' political formations in the Americas to medieval Europe and Stalinist Russia. Nomi Claire Lazar analyzes a number of temporal practices in her book: the invention of new calendars and chronologies by new political regimes, the adoption of new time-measurement technologies such as sundials, water clocks, and mechanical clocks, changes in periodization schema such as classical Mayan "baktun" and modern historical "ages," and most interestingly, the different uses of "primitivism" (i.e., return to a primordial or archaic beginning of things) and eschatology (a transcendence to a future beyond time), especially by political insurgents. These practices constitute what she calls a "temporal-rhetorical strategy" by which political actors achieve "legitimation" in terms of a shared sensibility of "the times," within which both political consensus and political opposition play out. I completely agree with Lazar's overall point regarding the centrality of time as political category.

I differ with the argument of the book, however, on two counts. One, I am somewhat skeptical of the seamlessness of Lazar's account of the politics of time across cultures and histories. To take as example the story of chronology, Lazar seems uninterested in the critical fact that in nonmodern times, states and peoples necessarily functioned with multiple calendars and chronologies, depending on the nature of the activities at stake. This has been demonstrated by many scholars, including Stephen P. Blake in his comparative study *Time in Early Modern Islam: Calendar, Ceremony, and Chronology in the Safavid, Mughal and Ottoman Empires* (Cambridge University Press, 2013). Hence the importance of time experts in nonmodern contexts, where translation across different chronologies was similar to how we conceive of translation across languages today. Evidently, it was common sense that different peoples and different activities of life operated on different temporal registers and with different temporal rhythms. This changed fundamentally with modernity. The first colonial comparative science of the late eighteenth century, even before the rise of comparative linguistics and comparative law, was in fact comparative chronology. Calendars of the world were now cross-referenced —by those such as William Jones, the "father of Orientalism"—with biblical chronology, and biblical events such as the Flood and eventually the birth of Christ came to be universal time-markers. (See Thomas R. Trautmann, *The Clash of Chronologies: Ancient India in the Modern World* [Yoda, 2009].) This universalization of chronology had two implications. One, there emerged a new temporally inflected division between politics and religion, between public life and inner life, because it was assumed that non-Christians would henceforth conduct their traditional spiritual and ritual activities in terms of indigenous calendars and almanacs while conforming, across the whole wide world, to the Gregorian calendar for activities of politics and work. And two, with the rise of a single universal chronology, chronology now came to be identified with time itself in everyday common sense, creating a permanent category confusion as it were for us moderns.

Two, I question Lazar's rather narrowly instrumentalist reading of political uses of time, which she sees as purely strategic, especially in the way that she deploys the concept of legitimation. But if one takes seriously different traditions of political thinking in the world, it would become clear that the question of time plays out in politics in more complex and often intractable ways. One example could be the epic tradition of the *Mahabharata* in south Asia, which discussed the conjoined figures of the king and the ascetic and placed the question of violence and death at the center of epochal thinking (see Luis Gonzalez-Reimann, *The Mahabharata and the Yugas: India's Great Epic Poem and the Hindu System of World Ages* [Peter Lang, 2002]). This epic tradition informed not just early south Asian kingships but also the later Mughal sovereignty, and in fact many strands of modern anticolonial thought. The other example could be the writings of poet, philosopher, and political icon Muhammad Iqbal, who sought to fashion a perfectly free and creative political self through philosophies of time, drawing together ideas from classical Greece, the medieval Arabic and Persian worlds, and modern European science and philosophy. Iqbal in fact argued for a concept of spiritually oriented political action, free from the prison of both causality and teleology, on the basis of his thoughts on the ontology of time (Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* [Stanford University Press, 2013]).

To say all this, however, is by no means to diminish the significance of the book. *Out of Joint* is an important intervention in the field of political theory and superbly negotiates its path between excessive philosophical abstraction and positivist empiricism. It makes its arguments with enviable clarity and lucidity. A book of incredible range and ambit, it actively engages the thought of readers, especially those who remain interested in the question of time and politics.

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Robert Alan Sparling: *Political Corruption: The Underside of Civic Morality*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019. Pp. xv, 250.)

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“A central task of the political philosopher is to render lucid that which is inchoate in political concepts” (16). So writes Robert Sparling in his thorough