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Review: The Bloomsbury Handbook of World Theory
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Di Leo, J.R. and Moraru, C. Eds., *The Bloomsbury Handbook of World Theory*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021, 528 pp. ISBN: 9781501361944, hardcover, US\$171.00.

We all know about the outcomes of globalization as a complex system, with digitalized World Systems and researchers asking for more transdisciplinary approaches; but in recent years, we have heard as well about an emerging topic: World Theory. Because we now live in societies with globalized interlinks, the theories we used to rely on sometimes seem incomplete, insufficient, or imperfect. Other dimensions need to be considered, questioned, addressed, and included. In their innovative *Bloomsbury Handbook of World Theory*, scholars Jeffrey R. Di Leo and Christian Moraru push Social Theory — and Theoretical Studies — to the next level, asking about the possible consequences of globalized ways to (re)construct and experiment some new theoretical frameworks that include a world vision. Things have changed. In their Introduction, the co-editors thrillingly refer to “an entire, spectacular paradigm shift — to a reframing of intellectual problematics across cognitive and geopolitical areas” (p. 1).

Each of the 35 chapters questions World Theory into one specific field of knowledge: “Worlding History”, “Worlding Public Policy”, “Worlding Spatiality Studies”, “Worlding Biology”, “Worlding Cybernetics”, “Worlding Systems Theory”, and so on. But instead of commenting on the first pages, let’s jump instead to the book’s final essays which are dedicated to Environmental issues: chapters 33 and 34.

In chapter 33 titled “Worlding Environmental Studies”, scholar Robert Marzec takes from Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* and *The Sea Around Us* to indicate how research about certain topics (such as Ecology and Environmental Education) must be versatile, interdisciplinary, and globalized (p. 475). Among many trends, one example is analyzed here: Deep Ecological Worlding and its many thinkers, such as Arne Naess (1912-2009), who thought that “the connectedness of the natural world was radically local,” but at the same time, “he balked at the importation of food, fuel, and building materials across great continental distances”, because international transportation is excessively energy-consuming (p. 479). In this hefty book, each contributor writes an essay that

should not be considered as being comprehensive or definitive; altogether, they are rather a series of works in progress and explorations into new avenues. In many cases, the most interesting passages depict the ongoing theoretical perspectives in one specific domain of inquiry, somewhat like a mapping of Who-Says-What within a specific field or discipline, that could almost indicate the various positions and trends in a subdiscipline: “Against Deep Ecology’s ecocentric view, social ecologists retain a strong belief in high Renaissance humanism” (p. 481).

The last chapter centers on “Worlding Earth and Climate Studies” and begins with the ongoing narratives of “The End of The World” scenarios and prophecies. (p. 491) But instead of questioning the real hazards and menaces linked with environmental issues, scholar Claire Colebrook explores a few examples of postapocalyptic cultures in literature and cinema (p. 492). This final chapter illustrates the frequent tripartite bridges being made between 1) the ongoing theoretical developments in a specific domain or a given discipline, combined with 2) philosophical hints (Kant is frequently invited here) and 3) social epistemology. Again, this proposed approach gives one possible direction, although other ways are evidently possible. A total Knowledge Synthesis of all these domains would simply be impossible to achieve in just one handbook, and not even in just one encyclopedia.

Undoubtedly, this *Bloomsbury Handbook of World Theory* is the most unusual English-language handbook I have encountered this year: original, inspiring, thought-provoking, and diversified. Because of its interdisciplinary — and even transdisciplinary — scope, the *Bloomsbury Handbook of World Theory* is indispensable for research libraries and would serve as an eye-opener for open-minded scholars in an infinity of domains. It reaffirms the pertinence (or the urgency?) of doing theory in a globalized world. Reading this Handbook from one cover to another can be a rewarding experience, no matter in which academic field you locate yourself. These contributors want to bring the reader beyond.

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