

Crimes of the Future: Theory and its Global Reproduction

By Jean-Michel Rabaté

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The decade since the publication of Jean-Michel Rabaté's controversial manifesto *The Future of Theory* saw important changes in the field. The demise of most of the visible French or German philosophers, who had produced texts that would trigger new debates, then to be processed by Theory, has led to drastic revisions and starker assessments.

Globalization has been the most obvious factor to modify the selection of texts studied. During the twentieth century, Theory incorporated poetics, rhetorics, aesthetics and linguistics, while also opening itself to continental philosophy. What has changed today? The knowledge that we live in a de-centered world has destabilized the primacy granted to a purely Western canon. Moreover, much of contemporary theory remains highly allusive and this is often baffling for students. Theory keeps recycling itself, producing authentic returns of basic theses, terms and concepts. Canonical modern theorists often return to classical texts, as those of Plato, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche.

And now we want to know: what is new?

Crimes of the Future explores the past, present and potential future of Theory.

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Editorial Review

Review

In *Crimes of the Future*, Jean-Michel Rabate offers the reader a dazzling series of encounters with thinkers, writers and artists who, since Kant, have fruitfully complicated our sense of the future. Moving with ease across a remarkable range of subjects (in both senses) and several linguistic and philosophical traditions, Rabate teases out threads that link Mishima and Benjamin, Kafka and Hegel, Althusser and Antigone, and very many more. The result is an exhilarating and illuminating intellectual workout. -- Derek Attridge, Professor of English Literature, University of York, UK

In *Crimes of the Future* Rabate demonstrates why Theory has a future; a vital one that sets out to answer the question 'how global should Theory be?' Rabate rethinks a tradition grounded in philosophical and psychoanalytic approaches to theories of the subject for the human sciences today. New materialisms, object relations, technological and digital languages, ethics and bioethics, post-feminism and post-humanism, these are among the rich tendencies and problems foregrounded in this study. The intellectual topography is spot-on. There are few books that provide such a comprehensive and coherent overview of theory between 2001 and 2014 or that experiment with new conjugations so boldly. -- Emily Apter, Professor of French and Comparative Literature, New York University, USA

Crimes of the Future, Theory and its Global Reproduction does not only concern itself with modernity's obsession with producing a homeless subjectivity, but commensurately, with the face off between the individual and the community, the universal and the particular. It also admits to the thrill that we moderns experience even before our crime - the crime of the destruction of the past - is or was committed. Our expectation in the face of our crime is one with the thrill of the atomic eruption, the bomb blast. It leaves behind only the ironic laughter accompanying the destruction of ancient values that we theorists are not simply helpless to stop but actively engaged in producing as we too seek to participate in the infernal globalized production of ideas. Dorothea Olkowski, Professor of Philosophy, University of Colorado, USA

Jean-Michel Rabate's *Crimes of the Future* reunites a number of interconnected essays that address the meaning and significance of theory in today's world. As the critic demonstrates, these are urgent issues. ... Counterintuitive as it may sound, theory has actually flourished in its post-theory days. *Crimes of the Future* demonstrates this explicitly, through the specific argument it builds across its chapters, and implicitly, as a wide-ranging and authoritative theoretical intervention itself. ... Replete with remarkably insightful and through-provoking connections, exceptionally learned and timely, *Crimes of the Future* provides a comprehensive and well-balanced assessment of theory's significance in the present and future global world. -- Christian Moraru *Journal of Modern Literature*

About the Author

Jean-Michel Rabaté is one of the world's foremost literary theorists. He is Professor of English and Comparative Literature and the Vartan Gregorian Professor in the Humanities at the University of Pennsylvania, USA. Professor Rabaté has authored or edited more than thirty books on modernism, psychoanalysis, contemporary art, philosophy, and writers like Beckett, Pound and Joyce. His publications include *The Ghosts of Modernity* (2010), *The Ethic of the Lie* (2008), *1913: The cradle of modernism* (2007), and *The Future of Theory* (2002). He is the Managing Editor of the *Journal of Modern Literature*. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and is currently the President of the American Samuel Beckett Studies Association.

Users Review

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