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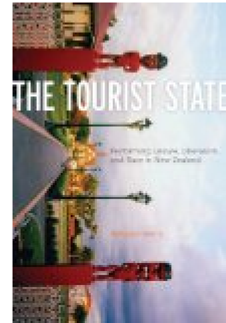
Margaret Werry. *The Tourist State: Performing Leisure, Liberalism, and Race in New Zealand.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011. Illustrations, glossary. xxxix + 313 pp. $75.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8166-6605-8; $25.00 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8166-6606-5.



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There and Back Again: Tourism, Race, and Agency in Liberal and Neoliberal New Zealand

Near the end of Kurt Vonnegut's deeply humanist novel, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Billy Pilgrim, having survived the fire-bombing of Dresden, finds himself digging through the destruction for bodies, paired with another prisoner of war, a Māori man. "The Maori was chocolate brown," Vonnegut writes. "He had whirlpools tattooed on his forehead and his cheeks." As the crew set up the city's first corpse mines, the stink overwhelmed the man, who died of the dry heaves. The image is a deeply troubling one, but one that also touches in its humanity, startling the reader into acknowledging once again the universality of the human condition; no matter how exotic the man may have seemed in 1940s Germany, he was, in this case, part of the global *human* experience of the Second World War.[1] Or, as the state of New Zealand would brand it, he was one of the good guys, a product of an exceptional country's experiment in bicultural liberalism, a noble man from a proud race that, through a unique history, had paired with white settlers in acting out the world's most remarkable of progressive visions.

In *The Tourist State*, Margaret Werry, an expatriate Pākehā New Zealander and associate professor of theater studies at the University of Minnesota, analyzes these sorts of images in two other eras of New Zealand history, 1890-1914 and 1998-2009–periods in which a managerial New Zealand state, at the forefront of global progressive reform, experimented with the contours of liberalism and pluralism. With lively and erudite prose, she argues that in both eras–liberal and neoliberal–the state has more than imagined its community, but, rather, *imagineered* the nation à la corporate branding. It has done so in an ongoing, all-encompassing performance that incorporates the overt and the subtle in all realms of society–economic, political, cultural, and ecological. At the center of this process, Werry convincingly shows, has been a broadly conceived tourist enterprise. And at heart of that enterprise, front and center, have been native New Zealanders–the Māori–both in romanticized forms and as active agents. As Werry weaves her way through five thematic chapters that focus on particular facets of this history, she uncovers and unravels a number of revelations related to race, liberalism, and agency. With a robust and consistent use of theory and a scope that is wide ranging and probing, she deftly crosses multiple historiographies in producing a work that should be of intense interest to a diverse array of scholars, including those interested in empire and postcolonialism, performance, liberal statehood and nationalism, tourism, race and postracialism, and film. *The Tourist State* should further attract readers for its fascinatingly unique theoretical basis.

New Zealand embraced tourism as it solidified its identity as a nation-state in the latter 1800s–when the majority of its population was native-born, when land wars had become a thing of the past, and when it began to take part in foreign conflicts and express imperial ambitions in the Pacific. Tourism was part and parcel of this coming-into-its-own, as New Zealanders crafted a sovereign identity to display to Australians, Europeans,

Americans, and themselves. Central to this national transition was another transformation–the resurgence of the Māori, who, because of their growing numbers and political organization could no longer seem a dying race to the Pākehā, or non-Māori. Rather than rejecting this resurgence and seeking to overturn it, Pākehā embraced their geographical counterparts as a second national identity, one that would help to set New Zealand apart from other Western nation-states; as Werry explains, they turned the Māori, in effect, into a brand, with implications that continue to this day.

Coursing through and buttressing Werry's work is what she dubs a "performance theory of state." The bulk of the historiography on tourism, she notes, focuses on "tourism's *representation*" of a culture, showing repeatedly that the combination of tourism and nationalism marginalizes others, essentially erasing the identity of conquered people and producing an imagined one in its place (p. xv). Werry finds, though, that by shifting one's lens instead to culture's *performance*, there are boundless heretofore uncovered layers to dissect. Werry's conception of performance is broad, encompassing not only literally conceived and executed performances, such as exhibitions, but also the playing out of culture and power in all its manifestations. This performance theory of state itself rests on two theoretical frameworks: actor-network theory and Michel Foucault's deconstruction of the liberal state. Actor-network theory sees humans and objects as engaged in intricately interconnected systems, transformatively related to all other components both materially and semiotically. Through this model, Werry sees New Zealand as having been a laboratory, with tourist enterprises working both as forums of experimentation and sites in which to "publish" results. From Foucault, further, comes the notion of governmentality, which sees power not simply resting on top-down structures, but, rather, deriving from the artful exploitation and transformation of patterned behaviors by the state and others. What is truly unique is that Werry skillfully connects performance methodologies, which view society micrologically, to these other two bodies of theory, which have long been used in macrostructural analyses. The bridge between the micro and the macro, she finds, is tourism. For instance, she notes, "in tourism, race is imagined, taken up, rehearsed, imposed, proposed, published, narrated, embodied, witnessed, entrenched, and elaborated" (p. *xxx*). As actors take part in the state via tourism, navigating through and pushing up against racial and other constructs erected by liberalism, their efforts transcend personal struggle, transforming the state itself. Yet, as Werry posits in a keen insight that complicates our understanding of agency, liberal states such as New Zealand actually embrace, in the service of branding, the agency of those on the periphery; they do so in order to turn oppositional feeling into their instrument–to co-opt, in other words, a marginalized group's struggle as part of the state's national story.

Werry's chapters are thematic and, by design, somewhat free ranging. Each looks at one, specific illustrative intersection of tourism and liberal statehood. The first three travel to 1890-1914, as a whole showing quite convincingly that a Pākehā embrace of Māori culture was central to New Zealand's emerging national image and that, despite heavy shades of Orientalism, Māori agents were actively involved–and oftentimes leaders–in the state's performance. Chapter 1 analyzes Rotorua, a Liberal-era resort and the state's premier experiment in imagineering. To achieve its biopolitical ends, Werry shows, the state employed romantic performance, portraying the land as a pastoral paradise whose savage elements could be managed progressively and harmoniously. It did so by working closely with a number of Te Awara iwi and hapū (social groupings and sub-grouping), particularly at Whakarewarewa, a village where tourists could visit with people living so-called traditional Māori lives. Perhaps the most famous guide at Whakarewarewa was Makereti Papakura, or Guide Maggie, the focus of chapter 2. Werry enriches the literature on Makereti by showing how the hostess and storyteller exploited, rather than suffocated in, her subaltern status. Quite adroitly, Makereti did so by capitalizing on the state's wish for bridges to Māori culture and the era's enthusiasm for feminine travel literature. Though she did hit walls in a state that only allowed her difference to take her so far, her life's path had subtly transformative effects. In chapter 3 the American Empire enters the scene. When President Theodore Roosevelt's "Great White Fleet" arrived in 1908, New Zealand engaged in full-scale pageantry and placed the Māori at the center of the performance. Despite being exploited for essentially neocolonial purposes, Māori men and women found an opportunity to engage in global progressive discourse. In effect, while the meeting between the United States and New Zealand was one premised on geostrategic concerns rooted in large measure on racialized notions of global progress that marginalized indigenous people, the moment of encounter also allowed Māori voices to enter the global current, disrupting the structures on which Western imperialism rested.

After this chapter, Werry leaps ahead to 1998-2009,

which she sees an era of neoliberal experimentation and branding, in some measure a return to the strategies and attitudes of the early Liberal era, though now within discourses of postracialism and postcolonialism. In chapter 4, she turns her eye to the state's relatively newfound bid to reimagine ethnic tourism in a fully bicultural manner. She surveys Māori engaged in tourism–politicians, businesspersons, workers, etc.–noting that while some long-marginalized *hapu* have discovered newfound agency, there is also tension evident between the national identity put forward by official policy and the very real fractures exposed by bicultural neoliberal experimentation. Her conclusions beyond historical analysis are tentative here, as she states that New Zealand's approach "might prove a model for indigenous peoples the world over who look to tourism as a tool for development and cultural remediation but who fear for their cultural safety. It might also prove to be neocolonial business as usual, all the more insidious for the intimacy it promises with those who stand to be exploited" (p. 136). Inversely and perhaps more profoundly, she shows how bicultural policy changes are occurring in tandem with the evolution of ethnic identities, as individuals reconsider the meaning of ethnic selfhood and as interest–and even ancestral–groups reconsider their borders. The final chapter closely considers one particular aspect of this neoliberal tourism, New Zealand's film industry, which is a unique site of national image making in an era of "Global Hollywood." While considering a number of films, Werry focuses above all on the most famous exports of the new millennium, *Whale Rider* (2002) and the *Lord of the Rings* (2001-2003) trilogy, finding in them to a certain degree a continuation of the trends she observed with Rotorua a century prior. In the former she discerns an ironic coopting of Māoridom by the majority culture. In the latter she detects a cheering for the kind of white heroism that has long been at the root of Western imperialism and the state's biopolitical power, with the rugged but picturesque landscape of Middle Earth replacing that of Aotearoa New Zealand. In those cases and others, she makes a compelling case to question the narrative presented by postracialism.

Werry is to be applauded, above all, for crafting a persuasive argument, thoroughly grounded in a diverse and thorough selection of primary sources, and for maintaining her theoretical framework throughout. At all points, she positions what she writes in performance theory, actor-network theory, and Foucauldian analysis–a difficult task that she carries out admirably. Supplementing her text are a number of photographs, and there is–very helpfully–a glossary of Māori terms included in the back of the book.

As with any work there are faults to be found, as well. Curiously, there is no bibliography or works cited section, with citations covered only by endnotes. More substantively, at times Werry's prose–despite its liveliness and power– obfuscates more than illuminates, with jargon and terminology employed quite often, it would seem, less for the sake of clarity and more for the joy that is found in intellectual wordcraft; what results is a book less accessible than it deserves to be. Her style of argumentation, furthermore, is often roundabout and led by questions, and each chapter–and the book as a whole–could have benefited quite a bit from more directly stated and presented arguments. Leisure, for instance, receives top billing in the book's title, yet its appearances in the text are as rare as a hobbit's out of the Shire. In certain ways, this adventurous style works, a fitting and compelling outgrowth of the complex interconnectedness of society with which actor-network theory grapples, but other times it dilutes or conceals the argument, leaving the work somewhere between journey and analysis.

All in all, though, the virtues of *The Tourist State* work far outweigh the negatives. All scholars of empire and race should give it their interest. Most practically, Werry's final chapter could prove to be particularly useful in a variety of classes, particularly if used in tandem with watching *Whale Rider*, as it would no doubt kindle a productive discussion on the subtle workings of postracialism, postcolonialism, and agency.

Just as New Zealand was the idyllic backdrop of the *Lord of the Rings* films, Aotearoa New Zealand has been acting out a vision rooted partly in fantasy for over a century. The implications of this performance, both marginalizing and empowering, continue to transform. With *The Tourist State*, Werry–like Guide Maggie, bridging two worlds–shows us the elemental continuities between the world of liberal, imperial nationalism and neoliberal, postcolonial biculturalism.

Note

[1]. Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five, or The Children's Crusade: A Duty-Dance with Death* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1969), 213-214.

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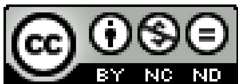

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