

curriculum taught and the realities faced by students beyond the school. The testimonials also show that race is not the sole factor behind whether a student feels supported and identifies with a teacher.

Life at the Intersection calls for an urgent intervention of critical pedagogical tools; equitable curriculum that reinvents the standards used and is unafraid of shifting the curriculum based on students' individual needs; as well as a community-centred approach to education that faces head-on issues of social class, poverty, politics and the material realities that contribute to ongoing inequitable distribution of resources and wealth in students' lives and communities. An issue that James touches on briefly but that perhaps needs further exploration is the anger and frustration faced by students. These concerns must be addressed without further delegitimizing students' feelings. These feelings, typically characterized as 'scary' and undesirable emotions such as anger and pain, need to be validated and dealt with in productive ways that contribute to material improvements for those feeling oppressed? This needs to be part of the critical pedagogical methods that James calls on us to engage with.

Dayan, Colin. 2011. *The Law is a White Dog: How Legal Rituals Make and Unmake Persons*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, ISBN 9780691070919. Hardcover: 29.95 CAD. Pages: 343.

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The primary intellectual-political project of Colin Dayan's *The Law is a White Dog: How Legal Rituals Make and Unmake Persons* challenges how law constitutes identity, particularly the permeability of notions of legal personhood. Using Haitian lore of law and dogs, and American common law legal histories of persons, slaves, zombies, and apparitions, Dayan, an American Studies and Humanities professor provides a language through which the permeability of life, death, and civil disability may be (re)understood and reframed. Such discussion urges the consideration of the legal thresholds between what is inside and outside of the person (mind and body), the community (society and exile), and the law (norm and exception). Thus, in the context of the Anglo-American legal system, the modern boundaries of civil, political and legal life and death are troubled to expose historical lineages of systemic abuses and normative practices stemming from the antebellum to the modern period.

Chapter by chapter—driven by questions of legal rituals and architectures of state and legal power that make and unmake the legal subject—this text prompts illustrative conversations about how legal histories of slavery, imprisonment, punishment, and colonialism construct and relegate legal subjects through penological technologies (e.g. chain gangs, forced labour, prolonged isolation, etc.) to effectively civilly disable and make them less than human within the law. In such a state of ‘civic death’, explains Dayan, the subject is ‘drained of self-identity, forever anomalous, condemned as extraneous to civil society, excluded from belonging’ (32). In a word: abandoned.

In the presented histories of slaves and prisoners, law, or more precisely, the rule of law is emphatically stripped from the (il)legal subject through a grammar of exceptionalism. The Agambenian formulation of this notion is expressed not as an exclusion (i.e. the subject is excluded through law), but as an abandonment—an abandonment by law. In effect, as Dayan puts it, the human subject is ‘in a negative relation to law’ (78). While the narrative of American exceptionalism is neither an explicit nor a dominant theme of the author’s critiques, the examples of the ‘war on terror’ detainment apparatus and modern penal technologies are rich with its marks. As the second chapter expounds a complicated legal history of civil injury in antebellum period case law, the slave is described as dead in civil law — lacking civic status and personhood. However, if in breach of criminal law, the slave is temporarily constructed as criminal and ascribed elements of moral agency and intent. The slave, thus, is interpellated by criminal law and temporarily humanized for the purpose of trial, only to be banished once more through punishment.

The prisoner or detainee, just as the slave in its historical context, exists at the liminal cusp of its own legal identity. In chapter three, however, the legal status of the modern banished subject is contested through a language of legal and human rights. In the dissenting opinion of *O’Lone v. Shabazz* (1987), a case concerning a constitutional accommodation for an inmate’s right to communal prayer, Justice Brennan writes that prisoners exist ‘in a shadow world’, but come to light when they make a constitutional claim, and ‘they ask us to acknowledge that power exercised in the shadows must be restrained at least as diligently as power that acts in the sunlight’ (100). What Dayan urges us to remember about the power of law is that in contexts of criminality and legal liminality of, for example, the prisoner or detainee, judges and prison officials are quick to rephrase ‘punitive detention’ to administrative segregation. Poignantly, Dayan observes, ‘[this] linguistic sleight of hand made the illegal legal’ (79).

In an effort to express this relation to law, Dayan, in later chapters, suggests and expands on the terminology of ‘negative personhood’, that is one who exists in a negative relation to law, or in other words one who is disabled by law. For example, the slave, a ‘hyperlegal’ construction considered unfree, was also considered as ‘dead in law’ (139). Other examples of liminal beings accounted for by Dayan—that is those banned or expelled from their person, the community, and the law—include: criminals; security

threats; terrorists; enemy aliens; illegal immigrants; migrant contaminants (and workers); unlawful enemy alien combatants; and ghost detainees. While the author succeeds in making stirring connections between the violence of law in the antebellum period and its twentieth century continuities, including mass incarceration, supermax prisons, and the 'war on terror', what remains untroubled and unaccounted for by Dayan's theoretical gaze and otherwise scrupulous analytical framework is the colonial history and legal subjectivities of the Indigenous subject, the American and Canadian Indian, and its relation to law, property, land, and non-Indian society.

It is at this point that I must distinguish this work, and in effect this list, from other similar conversations about personhood, liminal subjects, and the law. In *Impersonations: Troubling the Person in Law and Culture* (2009), Sheryl Hamilton argues for the recognition of the 'fragility' and limits of person and personhood by exposing the personifications of 'liminal beings' (women, corporations, computers, celebrities, and clones) as the incompletely 'made' personae. However, what Dayan grapples with are notions of personhood, but more specifically, ones that explore the power of law and attentively focus on the violence of law as it manifests through legal subjects including inmates, slaves, and security detainees.

The Law is a White Dog is a vivid exploration of literature, history, and law. It asks hard yet stimulating questions about the systemically entrenched racial, colonial, and ideological inequalities of the Anglo-American legal system. As a text concerned with the role of law in the (un)making of legal identity, this book makes a very valuable contribution to the field of socio-legal studies as it forces one to think about the violence of law and to trouble the assumptions made about the rule of law in modern liberal democratic societies. It is of interest to note the author's sole treatment of the notion of the rule of law: 'This world is singularly cruel. Its discriminations overturn logic, infect and befoul behaviour. And they reside in the rule of law' (137). As a present-day political project, this effort identifies the everyday consequences of remaining silent to systemic injustices.