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**Sushila Mesquita, Maria Katharina Wiedlack, and
Katrin Lasthofer eds. 2012. *IMPORT – EXPORT –
TRANSPORT. Queer Theory, Queer Critique and
Activism in Motion*. Vienna: Zaglossus. 352 pp.
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IMPORT – EXPORT – TRANSPORT. Queer Theory, Queer Critique and Activism in Motion (2012), a critical, interdisciplinary and transnational anthology in contemporary queer theory, queer studies and queer activism, consists of articles, essays and artwork that were first presented at the 2011 conference of the same name at the University of Vienna in Austria. Following the conference's conceptual structure and themes, this collection first of all addresses one of the most urgent matters in queer theory today, namely the issue of whether the concept queer still has the theoretical and political power to challenge and subvert society's current discourses and norms with regards to gender, sexuality and sexual politics without however relapsing into the kind of identity politics that works with rigid and exclusive identity cat-

egories (also see e.g. Cohen 1997 for her radical critique of identity politics and queer identity politics; and Eng et al. 2005 for a more recent deconstruction of (gay) identity politics). Whereas most of the authors of this anthology have their own, sometimes opposing views with regards to the matter of identity politics – a topic that gets introduced in this volume's first essay, in which Bini Adamczak and Mike Laufenberg criticise the politics of identity, and the politics of individuality that seems to be brought about by such a model – all of them do stress the present-day political and activist relevance and potential of queer theory.

The theme of queer theory and practice hence immediately enters the debate in *IMPORT – EXPORT – TRANSPORT*, because both the editors and authors effectively show

their readers how queer has been taken on or, on some occasions, has been rejected by activists and activist organizations outside the US (see e.g. the essay of Kulpa et al. on the ambiguous Polish (dis)identifications with the concept of queer in this volume). And the spotlighting of queer praxis and practices becomes even more manifest when the reader is confronted with the various queer artistic projects and creative essays that are included in this collection: Hanna Hacker's self-reflexive queer autoethnography, for example, offers a startling insight into the life and experiences of a queer Austrian 'femme-and-professor' (312) in a conservative academic context. By using an autoethnographic method in her poetic, almost *écriture féminine*-like essay (also see e.g. Cixous 1975), Hacker disrupts the traditional norms and logics of academic writing, and successfully brings theory and praxis closer together. Praxis and theory also stand face-to-face in Anthony Clair Wagner's subversive 'monster workshop' (347), which Wagner organised during the conference and tells us about in his written contribution to this anthology; during this workshop, Wagner asked the conference's participants to reappropriate the image of the monster, a category which has often been negatively associated with transsexuality, in order to act out their inner queerness and 'blur out the boundaries of normativity' (347).

The elements of theory and praxis are hence obviously completely entangled in this volume. But *IMPORT – EXPORT – TRANSPORT* nonetheless also pays attention to how queer theory – often branded as a hegemonic Western (Anglo-) American strand of thought (see e.g. Halberstam's acknowledgment of this issue in this volume on page 280, or Kulpa et al. for a similar critique and the thought-provoking statement that the complexities of Polish LGBT politics cannot be fully captured when seen through an American-biased lens on pages 120–7) – and queer studies and research in general, have been exported to non-English-speaking countries. Countries where they are not passively imported, as is often thought, but where they are in fact being critically and productively appropriated by various non-US scholars and organisations on a local level. *IMPORT – EXPORT – TRANSPORT* addresses this fascinating 'traveling process of "queer"' (18), queer theory and studies by investigating how queer is interpreted in multiple different ways, and how it is being brought into action in various local, non-North American contexts. The main motivation behind this anthology therefore not only appears to lie in the queering or the deconstruction of the so-called binary of academic theory versus activist practices – a dichotomy that is often said to be at work in feminism as well – but also lies in "de-centring queer studies" (18).

This concept of 'de-centralisation or de-Westernisation/Americanisation' (Kulpa and Mizielińska 2011, 101) has been borrowed by the editors of this volume from Robert Kulpa's and Joanna Mizielińska's *De-Centring Western Sexualities* (2011), and it should be seen as this anthology's most crucial leitmotif. Both the editors and authors of *IMPORT – EXPORT – TRANSPORT* effectively demonstrate that the traditional interpretation of travelling theories and frameworks as entities that are exclusively being exported from the (Anglo-)American context to non-English-speaking countries begs for an urgent and critical re-examination; this one-sided view of import-export relations does not do justice to the reality of how queer studies and its main concepts are actively and creatively being reworked and given new, localised meanings in countries such as China, former Yugoslavia, France and Germany, and Spain (see e.g. the contributions of Bao; Kajinić; Möser; and Wiesnerová in this volume). As this anthology proves, queer theory, queer studies and 'queer activism' are more than ever 'cultural and social activit[ies] within the dynamics of global/transnational academic knowledge production and (trans-)local community engagement' (Mesquita et al., 19). The processes of cultural exportation and importation of queer thus run along the criss-crossing tracks of multi-directionality, which means

that the cultural transportation of localised queer theories, studies and activisms to Anglo-American countries should be taken into account as well – which is exactly what is being demonstrated in *IMPORT – EXPORT – TRANSPORT*.

Both the motifs of deconstructing the supposed gap between theory and praxis, and the various cultural translations of queer, are thus at the centre of this anthology. But what really makes this diverse volume stand out is the fact that it upholds queer theory's and queer studies' tradition of critical self-examination. Although *IMPORT – EXPORT – TRANSPORT* as a whole is not explicitly written from a critical queer postcolonial and/or queer coloured perspective, in contrast to such volumes as *Postcolonial, Queer* (2001) or *Black Queer Studies* (2005), some of the essays in this anthology do address the topics of queer of colour critique and intersectionality (see e.g. Halberstam for the former, and Barát and Sußner for the latter). The fact that some of the authors introduce the topic of intersectionality here might sound odd at first, since intersectional theorists (see e.g. Crenshaw 1989; Wekker 2002) tend to see subjects as situated in a framework of multiple forms of oppression and privilege that interact with one another through socially constructed, co-constituting categories or identity markers, such as gender, ethnicity and others, whereas queer theo-

rists are known for their eagerness to disrupt and denaturalise identity categories in order to make the normative structures behind these categories visible. Yet, both Erzsébet Barát and Petra Sußner are involved in the process of sketching out a more intersectional, queer approach in critical legal theory in this volume – and their essays do not appear to be self-contradictory at all. They both seem to make intersectional and queer thought fruitful for one another, Sußner by examining and validating intersectionality as a possible tool to ‘overcome the gap between lesbian and gay equality politics and queer interventions’ (65) in queer legal theory, and Barát by ‘argu[ing] for a non-exclusionary, intersectional act of categorization [...]’ (82) when it comes to LGBT litigation cases. This combination of queer theory and intersectional thinking is thought-provoking, and although it has been taken up by some theorists already (see e.g. Rahman 2010; Fotopoulou 2012), these essays will definitely inspire other queer scholars and activists to further explore the path of intersectionality.

To conclude, it is exactly the combination of this volume’s attention to deconstructing the gap between queer theory and praxis, its critical views on the cultural translations of queer theory, and its manifest interest in making queer studies and theory more open to intersectional thought and other important con-

temporary theoretical interventions, that makes *IMPORT – EXPORT – TRANSPORT* such an interesting collection of queer gems. This anthology is definitively a valuable resource for those who are interested in queer theory, studies and activism with an interdisciplinary, transnational and critical, self-reflexive twist.

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