

ABSTRACT

This book sets out to explore lived time empirically and theoretically at the example of social formations in Guatemala. Building on Gilles Deleuze's reading of Henri Bergson's concept of 'duration' (Deleuze 1966), 'lived time' is in this book a realm of the given where everything is movement and change and in constant communication with everything else. Through an ethnography of everyday life at home, at markets and in buses, social formations have been explored that are particularly organised by lived time. Bergson (1907) called a singular line of movement within the realm of duration 'élan vital'. Going on from the notion of the élan vital, the book abstracts living within social formations that are organised by lived time to a vitalist mode of living the present. A 'vitalist' mode of living the present is one that orientates itself by the realm of lived temporalities.

The broader aim of this book is to explore vitalism in Guatemala as a perspective for critical and joyful existence within contemporary capitalism (Lash/Urry 1994, Lash 2002). Vitalist forms of life in a periphery of contemporary capitalism have been taken as a wealth of long-standing expertise in living with the decrease of structure and the increase of unpredictability that people in the nodes of contemporary capitalism are currently experiencing. In a Deleuzian perspective (Deleuze 1962, 1966, 1968, 1969, Deleuze/Guattari 1972, 1987), the exploration of lived time is explicitly a non-human adventure in that it focuses on a 'virtual' realm of the given prior to 'actual' human beings. According to Deleuze (1966), the virtual is real, but it is not actual. In sympathy with Deleuze, the exploration of lived time in this book is very much an exploration of a virtual realm of the given that exists prior to the actual. However, this book explores the virtual as a realm for finding one's bearings within the given. On the level of orientation, the human notions of self and other are indispensable. Throughout the book, Deleuze's stance therefore has been understood and eventually expanded from the perspective of an inter-relational approach within psychoanalysis.

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