

## EDITORIAL

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*Jeremy Gilbert*

The title of this issue - *Living Life in Pictures* - is taken from Michelle Henning's essay on the history of the Isotype and its reception (Isotype is an early twentieth-century technique for the graphic display of social information). This phrase could, in fact, apply to many aspects of the contemporary condition which a number of our contributors examine here, because this issue has a strong emphasis on visual culture, a field in which *new formations* retains a strong historic interest. However, the fact is that the title of this collection has been chosen for its evocative quality, as an invitation to reflection, rather than as a strategy to impose any arbitrary coherence on its contents. This is one of our much-valued but too rare general issues, presenting the best work that has been submitted to the journal - commissioned or unsolicited - over the past few years. As such, it presents a unique selection of work at the intersection between cultural theory, political philosophy, visual culture, critical economics, cultural geography, sociology and film studies.

Shahidha Bari's essay presents a moving set of reflections on the overlaps and resonances between the personal writings of the late Rachel Corrie - a young American campaigner killed by Israeli forces in Palestine - and some of Heidegger's most important work. Gillian Harkins' essay reads Jarecki's 2003 documentary *Capturing the Friedmans* as part of a cinematic trend in which remembered scenes of adult/child sex are used to reconfigure the meaning of white masculinity, re-deploying them for the era of neoliberalism. Angela McRobbie makes a decisive intervention in contemporary debates around the politics of labour, with a detailed critique of the gender bias which she sees at work in the post-Autonomist thought of Negri, Hardt, Virno et al. James Penney presents a subtle and precise reading of one of the most important films of recent times: Haneke's *Caché*, which proves the ongoing indispensability of the Lacanian perspective to the effective analysis of contemporary cinema, of its recurrent and novel themes. Richard Phillips' timely essay discusses the uses of history and historiography in recent contestations of Euro-American Islamophobia, particularly in the wake of the 'war on terror'. Jason Read's important essay discusses the work of the neglected French philosopher Gilbert Simondon (which has recently been the subject of a marked rise in interest, in both the French and Anglophone worlds); it makes an entirely persuasive case for Simondon's importance in the theorisation of a politics of collectivity which goes beyond any simplistic appeal to communality, such as is clearly demanded by the conditions of contemporary capitalism. At a time when the economics of the early 1980s seems to have made a triumphant comeback, Jackie Stacey's discussion of the political and aesthetic issues raised by Marcus Harvey's portrait of Margaret Thatcher is a cogent reminder of

the simultaneous potency of Thatcher's image and of her legacy. Finally, Matt Waggoner's article stages a dialogue between a handful of writers and artists whose works dramatise the 'predicament of dwelling', finding that in this regard Kierkegaard, Adorno, Benjamin, Kafka, Charles, and Matta-Clark all share a common sensibility with respect to the difficulties of modern life.

In our view, every one of these papers on its own, and the collection taken as a whole, serves to demonstrate the ongoing vitality of the interdisciplinary field within which *new formations* situates itself, and the continued relevance of cultural theory and other forms of abstract and trans-disciplinary inquiry to the great political questions of our time. We are sure that readers will share this judgement.