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*Uncommitted Crimes: The Defiance of the Artistic Imagi/nation* by Tara Atluri. Toronto, ON: Inanna Publications and Education, 2018.

Imagination is the capacity to form an image of something not currently present to the senses. Tara Atluri's book, *Uncommitted Crimes: The Defiance of the Artistic Imagi/nation*, is a celebration of those who are reimagining Canadian narratives of multiculturalism, diversity, and equity. Colonial, cisgendered, heteronormative, and racist narratives that may yet be invisible to the inhabitants of Turtle Island are revealed through Atluri's depiction of a diverse selection of artists and art. In the following review I provide a brief background of the author, a review of one of the central themes of the book, and a discussion of the book's application in practice.

A quick library search suggests Atluri has written extensively on the topics addressed in this book, including but not limited to subjects such as racism, colonialism, gender politics, sexuality, transgenderism, and white supremacy. In 2016, she published *Azadi: Sexual Politics and Post Colonial Worlds*, in which she discussed the political and legal results of the 2012 Delhi gang rape case, and how it affected the lives and rights of queer people in India. Since then, Atluri has published multiple works on the topics of queer politics, transgenderism, and Canada's colonial legacy and is well-positioned to speak as an expert not only on these complex social issues, but also on the role art can play in demystifying and destigmatizing these issues.

The themes of *Uncommitted Crimes* are many and include art as a political act, art as a creative intervention, and art as a social critique. The theme of art as an intervention weaves throughout the entire book and the focus of this review is on how this theme develops and emerges in the works of the artists presented by Atluri.

In the first chapter, Atluri presents a trio of queer and transgendered artists challenging dominant heteronormative, cisgender narratives and intervening by showcasing transcendent love through the written word. The artists' works may also be considered acts of defiance against gender binaries, highlighting the difficulty and risk of disidentifying with normalized sexual narratives.

Similarly, in chapter eight, Atluri describes Brendan Fernandes's work, *Encomium*. This piece presents the failure of love as defined by straight heteronormative culture, while also disidentifying with historical and iconic ballet imagery. Fernandes's work is described as giving "vitality to the timeless spirit of rebellion" (p. 262), as it invites a reconsideration of romantic love, dance, and desire. Although all the artistic oeuvres described here are staged in Canada, each artist hails from a background of Otherness—challenging not only heteronormative assumptions, but also calling for reconsideration of Canada's multicultural and inclusive identities.

In chapter three, Atluri presents Shirin Fathi's photographic challenges of gender and cultural forms. In exploring Fathi's work, Atluri puts forward a compelling argument about the role of photography in establishing the Other in the colonial context. She suggests that "the representation of the 'typical' within colonial history was often made possible through mediums such as photography" (p. 85), with photographs used to justify violent colonial agendas of domination. Fathi, Atluri submits, provides compelling challenges to this colonial

narrative and to the gender politics around representations of the Orient.

Rajni Perer's work reveals truths about the construction or destruction of racism. Perera uses mixed media on paper to counter racist and sexist colonial traditions, representing Brown and Black women's bodies as figures of power and sexuality. She also reclaims yogic cultural appropriation, depicting posed figures that are an "affront to the Lululemon-branding of contemporary yoga culture" (p. 155). Atluri's perspective on Perera's work is that this newer interpretation of yoga is evidence of the perpetuation of a colonial racist agenda, cultural misappropriation, and the ongoing promotion of colonial Orientalism.

Artmaking as a defiance of racism is also clearly portrayed in Joshua Vettivelu's work, *Washing Hands/Whiten Up*. In this performance piece, the artist washes his hands in white glitter, in so doing transforms his colored skin to a sparkling white and metaphorically washes away the Otherness. In another work by Vettivelu, the artist paints his face with wax that goes on clear but hardens to a dull white. These performances are powerful metaphors for the ongoing struggles of non-white people living in Canada: struggling to maintain their identity, while also working to become part of the Canadian landscape.

*Mass Arrival*—a public intervention and installation by Farrah Miranda, Graciela Flores, Tings Chak, Vino Shanmuganathan, and Nadia Saad—is described by Atluri as "a breathtaking spectacle of ironic and artistic revelry" (p. 178). This work confronts the Canadian identities of multicultural peacemaker and safe harbour, pointing out the xenophobic ironies of the federal government's panicked response when the refugee MV *Sun Sea* landed on Canadian shores in 2010. Comparably, the filmwork of Kerry Potts and Rebecca Belmore challenges the dominant white Canadian constructs of home, family, sexuality, and love. Atluri suggests that film offers artists an opportunity to invert the lens, showing observers how whiteness connects to power, property, and love.

*Uncommitted Crimes* is an excellent resource for anyone considering the power of art in creating social change and uncovering important, and perhaps hidden or stigmatized, narratives. As Atluri herself says, "these remarkable transnational artists create emotionally charged creative interventions" (p. 306), allowing people to experience their own identities and social worlds through a new reimagined lens.

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