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Resenha

François Debrix. *Global Powers of Horror:* security, politics, and the body in pieces. New York: Routledge, 2017.

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Contemporary dynamics of security and terror seems to be drifting towards a new regime of violence, based on the annihilation of human bodies and lives, beyond and against the idea of humanity and the integrity of the human body. The world, throughout these last decades, has become stage for horroristic atrocities such as carnages sponsored by cartels, beheadings promoted on a regular basis by the Islamic State, suicide bombings and launching of "hellfire" missiles from aerial drone attacks. These events target human bodies, dismantling them and leaving only fragments of human parts. Debates about these publicized sights of horror have been gaining ground as more cases unfold, like the beheading of the US journalist James Foley by the Islamic State in 2014, which caused international media, governments and civilians world-wide to wonder: how do we come to understand these emerging global powers of horror and what do they imply to the contemporary international politics?

To engage with the afore mentioned theme, François Debrix, Professor in the Department of Political Science at Virginia Tech, provocatively investigates the international shift from terror to horror and from body integrity to body parts and fragments. Beyond theorizing about horror and tracking down its production and distribution of violence, Debrix invites us to think through a post-human perspective, whose critique of the anthropocentrism can be an instrument to face horror and use its destructive forces to challenge regimes of terror and security. In a few words, the book's critical-driven approach engages over and above the annihilation powers of horror to think it through its radical potentials of revealing us, humans, forms of devastating violence we steadily produce and harvest.

While assuming a textual strategy underpinned by philosophical incursions and assaults throughout the book, in Chapter 1 Debrix keeps a direct dialogue with both Judith Butler and Giorgio Agamben in order to understand how biopolitics and thanatopolitics and their perpetuation of violence through human bodies are exercised. Critically, the author suggests an alternative theoretical framework, drifting away from bio and thanatopolitics, to think about violence, destruction and power with horror as the epicenter and that do not focus anymore on humanity.

Chapter 2 introduces the concepts of *katechon* and *eschaton,* in order to expose the relationship

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among sovereignty, security and terror. *Katechon* indicates that sovereignty is sacred and should survive – be protected – throughout time permanently and eternally. Politics of security, regularly based on violence, terror and force, are supposed to play this role of ensuring the infinitude of the katechontic sovereignty. On the other hand, *eschaton* is the rejection of endless time, and proclaims the finitude – represented by forces of terror that threat sovereignty. *Eschaton's* terror threats katechontic sovereignty, which in turn activates security devices – of bio and thanatopolitics – to eschew away *eschaton* and its will for non-eternal possibilities. Theoretically, that is how security and terror feeds one another over decisions on the life and death of populations. To break loose this kinship, Debrix points out to the *eschaton* as horror, which causes a Benjaminian messianic violence that is not engaged on bio or thanatopolitics, and that acts as an interruptive and transgressive force, but perhaps as a liberating one as well.

In-depth analysis is taken by Debrix on Chapter 3 to clarify us how powers of horror function and how they undermine regimes of terror and security. Terror manifests fear in others and makes them flee away, trying to preserve their lives. At the same time, it discharges in the enemy a will to resilience, perseverance and humanity, again activating security devices. This will to humanity, body integrity, essence of life – or metaphysics of substance – is what horror annihilates. Horror decomposes the body to parts and then reconfigures it to something without meaning to humanity. Horror's violence does not want to cause fear, to play with life/death, for its only objective is to pulverize the metaphysics of substance or, in other words, the ontology of human and humanity. On suicide bombings, for instance, the importance of resilient men and security-terror dynamics is faded away and gives stage to sights of horrifying scattered body parts.

The 4th Chapter is perhaps the most enriching and thought-provoking one, identifying severed heads as the contemporary icon of horror. While criticizing the West for "historical amnesia", reminding us of decapitations used in different historical moments in order to achieve goals such as democracy, the author points out West`s need to expose images of cut-off-heads to emphasize its meaning of humanity. To face horror, Debrix borrows the concept of demontology from Eugene Thacker to think about a "world-without-us", without a human-centric perspective. Demontology brings an indifference about human/non-human categories and prevents any possibility of creating oppositions between humanity (the West) and horror (non-West), and vice-versa. For last, on the Epilogue, Debrix analyses the September 11 Memorial Museum to show us how horror is confronted in a demontological and liberating way, going beyond the metaphysics of substance.

The book offers huge contribution to international relations and discussions on security. It intimates us to think through new epistemological and ontological approaches on terror and horror. Moreover, it brings to the front a debate on horror that is recent, thorny and hard to analyze without excessive moralism, something that Debrix managed well. However, the few examples and case studies alongside with the several open questions throughout the book perhaps makes it excessively dense. In any case, "Global Powers of Horror" is a must for scholars interested in security studies and new regimes of violence.