Series editor's introduction

In this exceptional book, *Race and the Yugoslav region: postsocialist, post-conflict, postcolonial?*, Catherine Baker brings together her extensive scholarly expertise on former Yugoslavia with theoretical work in postcolonial and postsocialist studies to offer us a novel and distinctive insight into how the region is configured by, and through, race. Moving beyond a simple engagement with key concepts from within postcolonial theory to describe the current situation of the Balkans, Baker is more interested in examining how global colonial histories have themselves been integral to the formation of geopolitics and culture there. She argues, for example, for the Yugoslav region to be understood as entangled with more extensive histories of coloniality and, thus, as shaped by 'transnational racialized imaginations' as many other parts of the world.

Baker skilfully fulfils the task she has set out for herself by first investigating what the demographic transformations of, and in, popular culture reveal about the historical legacies of coloniality and racialisation in the region. She locates the discussion of the cultural archive also in the question of how, as a consequence of the Non-Aligned Movement, people were able to move into and through spaces historically constituted as white. She then goes on to examine the multiple and intersecting connections of ideas and peoples within the historical contact zone of the Balkans. She weaves together discussions of historical migrations and myths of nationhood to present a complex and compelling account of the longer history of the region. In this way, Baker is adeptly able to highlight the ways in which historically constituted racial formations organise the ground of Yugoslav politics in the present.

One of the key aims of the Theory for a Global Age series is precisely to ask what difference theory makes, and is made to theory, when we start from places other than the Euro-centred West. Here, Baker uses postcolonial theory to better understand a region seen to be unmarked

by processes of colonialism and uncovers both a richer history of the region and the basis for sharpening theoretical concepts and categories in the process. It is an outstanding contribution to the series, providing new insights, theoretical clarification and a rich narrative.

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