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Benjamin Bateman, *The Modernist Art of Queer Survival* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018, \$65.00, £41.99). Pp. xii + 158. ISBN 978 0 19 067653 7.

Benjamin Bateman's *The Modernist Art of Queer Survival* traces forms of 'queer survival' in the work of four modernist writers: Henry James, Oscar Wilde, E.M. Forster, and Willa Cather. In contrast to Social Darwinism, which emphasized the competitive struggle of ruthless individuals who seek to reproduce in an evolutionary scenario of 'survival of the fittest', Bateman explores forms of queer survival in which 'weakness, fragility, uncertainty, dispossession, senescence, indistinction, and even morbidity play a vital role' (5). In doing so, he has recourse to the work of the contemporary psychoanalyst Michael Eigen, which allows him to replace a focus on the sovereign individual with one on intersubjectivity, and intersubjective modes of survival. Eigen's psychoanalytic theory is particularly useful in the powerful final chapter on Cather: rather than seeing suicide as antithetically opposed to life, Bateman argues that in the short story 'Consequences' (1915) and the novel *Lucy Gayheart* (1935), micro-suicidal practices paradoxically turn out to be ways of relating and attaching to life.

Bateman's concepts of 'queer survival' and 'the queer invitation' make a significant intervention in a strand of queer theory that is concerned with temporality, and is associated with theorists such as Lee Edelman, Jack Halberstam, Kathryn Bond Stockton, José Muñoz, Carolyn Dinshaw, Elizabeth Freeman, and Heather Love. While Edelman's concept of 'reproductive futurism'—or the investment placed in the (ever-deferred) future, most commonly through the figure of the Child—has been enormously influential, Bateman joins other queer theorists who have resisted Edelman's call to counter such a phenomenon by rejecting the future altogether. Indeed, by redeploying Martin Hägglund's notion of *chronolibido*, he brilliantly argues that, while rhetorically powerful, rejecting the future outright is just as impossible as the desire to escape time for eternity: instead, the passage of time involves 'the trace', or the becoming-space of time

and the becoming-time of space. Picking up on the ‘lateral’ aspects of the spacing of time, Bateman develops the notion of the ‘queer invitation’, which involves the future, but resists the dictates of heterosexuality, and instead orients the self to what exists beside it and opens it to forms of mutual permeability and interanimate collaboration and agency. The queer invitation is explored in Forster’s fiction, as Ruth Wilcox is seen as extending a queer invitation to Margaret Schlegel in *Howards End* (1910), and Mrs. Moore extends a similar invitation to various human and nonhuman agencies in *A Passage to India* (1924).

One of the benefits of Bateman’s approach to temporality is that it allows him to explore some of the under-appreciated ecological aspects of his modernist archive. As Nicole Seymour has argued in *Strange Natures: Futurity, Empathy, and the Queer Ecological Imagination* (2013), many theorizations of queer temporality—including Edelman’s call for queers to reject the future—have been inhospitable to environmentalism, which seems to require concern for the future of the planet and its resources. By contrast, Bateman’s concepts of queer survival and the queer invitation allow him to trace more environmentally-friendly ways of living and being in the work of his modernist authors. For example, he reads James’s ‘The Beast in the Jungle’ (1903) as a philosophical parable in which May Bartram queerly guides John Marcher to a more ecological way of living that collapses human exceptionalism. The concept of queer survival has great ecological potential, both within modernism and in other literary and cultural domains.

Some might regret the fact that Bateman’s study is not more fully historicized. The Social Darwinism against which queer survival is pitted as an alternative is only lightly sketched, and the associated discourses of eugenics and sexology are only fleetingly mentioned. For example, although he claims that his chosen modernists responded to sexologists and more generally that they thought and imagined ‘in and against’ the ‘countless inquiries, inspections, and interventions that defined the sexological era’ (19, 13), this relationship is not more fully explicated. It would

be intriguing to know which sexological texts these writers encountered, and whether they engaged with any conceptions of futurity (including any analogues of ‘queer survival’) found therein. However, while the study might thus not entirely satisfy narrowly historicist literary critics, this is not to say that its approach is unhistorical. On the contrary, its relationship to its modernist archive might be deemed to be a queerly historical one. For example, in a queer slippage between past and present, Bateman deftly moves from analysis of a Kodak taken of an athletic character in *Lucy Gayheart* to a discussion of the normalising photos of gay athletes with which contemporary queer kids are inundated by popular media, and how these might be related to suicidal impulses (122). By addressing such urgent matters, and through its articulation of the concepts of queer survival and the queer invitation, this brilliant study will be of considerable interest to those working in modernist studies, queer theory and the environmental humanities.

David Shackleton, University of Exeter