

Land Of Strangers

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this text argues for a new understanding of the relation between nineteenth century realist literary form and the socially dense environments of modernity

originally published in 1995 this book constitutes a turning point in the development of what francois laruelle calls non philosophy towards its

democratic and emancipatory vision in this work laruelle utilises his non philosophical theory to develop unified theoretical analyses into philosophy s relationship with the humanities politics and psychoanalysis centred on the figure of the stranger he argues for a democratic reformation of thought governed by human multitudes the new field of thought is opened by this universal humanity identified with three different pathways a science of people and non humanism democracy and non politics and non psychoanalysis as the development of a universal unconscious

the impersonality of social relationships in the society of strangers is making majorities increasingly nostalgic for a time of closer personal ties and strong community moorings the constitutive pluralism and hybridity of modern living in the west is being rejected in an age of heightened anxiety over the future and drummed up aversion towards the stranger minorities migrants and dissidents are expected to stay away or to conform and integrate as they come to be framed in an optic of the social as interpersonal or communitarian judging these developments as dangerous this book offers a counter argument by looking to relations that are not reducible to local or social ties in order to offer new suggestions for living in diversity and for forging a different politics of the stranger the book explains the balance between positive and negative public feelings as the synthesis of habits of interaction in varied spaces of collective being from the workplace and urban space to intimate publics and tropes of imagined community the book proposes a series of interventions that make for public being as both unconscious habit and cultivated craft of negotiating difference radiating civilities of situated attachment and indifference towards the strangeness of others it is in the labour of cultivating the commons in a variety of ways that amin finds the elements for a new politics of diversity appropriate for our times one that takes the stranger as there unavoidable an equal claimant on ground that is not pre allocated

sometime in the future the head librarian at a great center of learning suddenly disappears leaving behind a journal that describes his weariness with a world where people teach but know nothing where the sentences flow on endlessly but lead nowhere his successor in the post becomes more and more intrigued by the vanished man s fate until a series of mysterious clues lead him on a journey both inward and outward to a world that begins where language ends within a matter of weeks he finds himself in the company of powerful dervishes god intoxicated nomads whose eyes blaze with love and ragged beggars with the smile of the pure one these men the followers of an enlightened shaykh speak little but simply to be in their company fills him with ecstasy and knowledge

in traditional human societies the stranger was a threat to be disarmed at once by an act of force or by a ritual of hospitality under no conditions could a stranger be ignored or taken for granted yet in all great cities today human beings seem to live out their entire lives in a world of strangers how did it become possible for millions of people to do this how is city life possible the unique value of a world of strangers lies in loflands expert use of rich historical and anthropological sources to answer these questions she demonstrates that a potentially chaotic and meaningless world of strangers was transformed into a knowable and predictable world of strangers by the same mechanism humans

always use to make their world livable it was ordered lofland offers a brilliant analysis of the various devices used at different times in history to create social and psychological order in cities concluding with an analysis of the contemporary city in which the location of the encounter between strangers has come to replace personal appearance as a means of evaluating others lofland also describes how city people initially learn and then act upon the ordering principles dominant in their society a world of strangers is a wonderfully wise and readable account of how we have come to live as we do

rediscover the classic novel of love violence and obsessions from booker prize winning sunday times bestselling author ian mcewan colin and mary are a couple whose intimacy knows no bounds away on a holiday together in a nameless city they get lost one evening in a labyrinth of streets and canals they happen upon robert a stranger with a dark history who takes them to a bar and ushers them down into a subterranean land of violence and obsession haunting and compelling the times no reader will begin the comfort of strangers and fail to finish it a black magician is at work new york times

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