more interactional perspectives, the book raises productive questions about the precise role of language in ethics and morality. In particular, the analysis urges consideration of the reflexive accounts found in narrative and the more in-the-moment constitution of ethico-moral personhood that emerges in everyday interaction.

Shohet's discussion of asymmetrical reciprocity will be useful to those interested in studying language and power. As Shohet notes, this concept is applicable beyond the Vietnamese context and provides productive nuance to conventional understandings of hierarchy. Shohet's analysis points to key intersectional vectors for asymmetrical reciprocity, in which gender and generation are cross-cut by class positionalities and histories of political affiliation. Building on this work, scholars of language and social life can use our analytical tools to productively examine when and how particular relationships are constructed as asymmetrically reciprocal, and which forms of social inequality are mobilized in creating these differences.

Ultimately, the book provides a model for linguistic anthropologists seeking to incorporate historical perspectives into their work. Shohet continuously weaves together family interaction and life-history narratives with Vietnam's often conflictive past. Thus, while this is a book about family and language, it also illuminates much larger questions about the social legacy of war, political turbulence, and economic change. Shohet clearly demonstrates the importance of kinship studies for answering broader questions about social lives, demonstrating the power of linguistic anthropology for tracing the way that that families' home lives are always already political.

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Onscreen/Offscreen

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Grounded on nearly two decades of fieldwork in Tamil Nadu, India, with film producers and fan viewers, Constantine Nakassis's *Onscreen/Offscreen* ambitiously—and quite successfully—works to bridge the theoretical and disciplinary divisions between linguistic anthropology, film studies, and visual and media anthropology in their approaches to visuality, or more specifically, "performative presence" and "realist representation." Instead of an ethnography of the Tamil film industry *per se*, *Onscreen/Offscreen* is a critical engagement that attends to interconnected sites and social actors to answer the core question that concerns Tamil film production and consumption: *What is an image?*

This question not only serves as the empirical object of this research (or, for that matter, any work on cinematic image), but more crucially as the subject matter through which disparate stakeholders, including directors, actors, producers, and viewers, express and participate in what Nakassis calls the "ontological politics of the image." Probing "what a film image *is*" is political as it directs our attention to heterogenous contestations of and for the nature of images (i.e., the *being* and *becoming* of the image [p. 203]) as well as the "actness" of the image (p. 78), to unpack how images function as "a central node for how these social fields are manifested, represented and enacted, reproduced and transformed" (p. 8–9). A critical contribution that Nakassis achieves is to utilize "the ethnographic methods, analytic tools, and semiotic theory of linguistic anthropology" (p. 9) in unpacking the dialectical and mutually constituting relationship between the semiotic dimension of an imaged event and the context of its happening. He proposes a linguistic anthropology of cinema that conceptualizes "images as the medium and outcome of indexical practice" (p. 10) and is "concerned with semiotic processes and relations that give rise to and breech them at one and the same time (p. 11)". That is, it does not ask *what* images do to represent (i.e., reference) the profilmic world as image-text; rather, it examines how images act as "contingent and emergent events of by-degrees institutionalized iconic indexical practice as they traverse the screen" (p. 10). In so doing, a linguistic anthropology of cinema is not "a plea for 'reception studies' against 'textual analysis' or even to add one to another" (p. 205) but a critical engagement with images as entextualized, ontological contestations.

Onscreen/Offscreen consists of two sections, each of which carefully unpacks the interconnected and contested ontological politics *of* images and politics *for* images. Each chapter takes on a particular case (or cases) and combs through the entangled, intertwined networks on and off the screen where disparate ontological claims regarding gender, sexuality, kinship, caste, class, and ethnonational relations clash and merge. Part One (Chapters 1 and 2) foregrounds the politics *of* images – which refer to the "claims and contestations made through and by particular images" (p. 115) – to address the performativity of images, that is, their "actness" within and beyond the *sight*ing moment. Part Two (Chapters 3 and 4) attends to the multiplicity in the production and uptake of the representationality of images to discern the politics *for* images – which refers to the "semiotic work by various stakeholders. . . . involved in bringing images into being" (p. 115).

Chapter 1 illustrates the politics *of* images by closely analyzing a sequence and its uptake of the mass-hero film *Mankatha* (2011), in which Ajith Kumar performatively presences both as the desired masculine onscreen hero-protagonist and offscreen political personage for the masses. The problematized slap sequence and the subsequent fan anger at the screening towards such an image bespeak two ontological orientations to "the image's *being* and the image's *doing*" (p. 33). The image is "a contact zone, a site of struggle between different claims on the being of images, illuminating the multiplicity of ways that reality, aesthetics, and politics – that is, different modes of being – can be conjoined in one and the same image" (p. 37). Thus, the imaged slap does not simply re-presence the object of a past event (i.e., the hero-star being slapped) but also "put[s] us in the continuing presence of what it 'embalms'" (p. 35); that is, the imaged slap also illocutionarily *acts* as a present event, semiotically and ontologically placing the fan viewers as co-participants of the profilmic image, witnessing and experiencing first-hand the verisimilitude of the slapping.

Chapter 2 takes on the politics of vision, particularly the ontologies of "being seen seeing a filmic image" (p. 67) by interrogating the stigmatized performativity, and the cinematic uptake, of an "item number/song"– a heterosexist, stand-alone song-and-dance sequence with little diegetic relevance – intercalated into the narrative-text of the film *7/G Rainbow Colony*. The sexual(ized) song-and-dance sequence invites spectators to simultaneously engage in the heroine's acts of female desire onscreen as a "voyeuristic play of gazes" (p. 90) and to entextualize them as an exhibitionist display of her (mis)conducts offscreen. Nakassis

further shows how such polyphonic interpretations play into "a masculinist culturalist politics of Tamil identity" (p. 22), where the presence of female bodies generates and contests binaries of vulgar/class, premodern/modern, and Tamil/Western. Given that few heroines are considered ethnically and linguistically Tamil, their image-acts offscreen engender the discourse that "constitutively erase[s], while lamenting the absence of, historical Tamil women as able to appear on the screen as *Tamil* women (or at all)" (p. 102). Yet, paradoxically, it is the absence of Tamil heroines that warrants male patriarchal gaze and desire of "unrelated female bod[ies]" without adulterating "the sanctity of 'Tamil culture' or the respectability of the film industry" (ibid).

Chapter 3 analyzes how the spoof film *Thamizh Padam* critiques and disrupts the performativity of the mass hero figure (and his populist political potency) through ruthless caricature. The spoof makes the mass hero seem unrealistic in order to "open the space for a putative proper representation of reality" (p. 115), where the hero-star is stripped of his authority over his bombastic onscreen performative presence and his "credulous spectators absorbed into the performative image of the mass hero" (ibid). In so doing, filmmakers reclaim authorship over the image-text that they produce, inviting a liberal kind of spectatorial sensibility to interpret "not just *what* is imaged but what *is* an image, what it can be or become (or should not be or become)" (p. 142). In this way, *Thamizh Padam*'s satire evokes what Nakassis calls a "*chrono*politics," in which the mass hero is deliberately made to be seen as "real" only within his diegetic world; but, at the same time, he is also presented as temporally out of place beyond his diegetic world, and hence, unrealistically absurd for the modern audience.

Chapter 4 turns to sequences from the non-hero-centered, realist films *Kaadhal* (2004) and *Subramaniyapuram* (2008) to delineate how "Tamil image-texts … reflexively frame themselves and are framed by their makers and viewers as 'realist (*etārttam*)'" (p. 147). These image-texts are realist not because they are inherently so (although they may very well be) but because they bear an image politics that is "at one and the same time, an ontological politics of image and a class and caste politics of spectatorship" (p. 22). Here, Nakassis argues that these image-texts exhibit properties of a shifter, whose meanings (i.e., referents) consolidate in accordance with and remain contingent on their contexts of occurrence. Thus, realism can be productively unpacked as "a kind of *register* … as *an enregistered style of representation* … that links together realism as a formal, filmic style and realism as an ideology" (p. 149). *Kaadhal*, for instance, gestures toward the realist representation of its image-text and the critique of caste patriarchy "by contrasting with and integrating into its textual fabric" (p. 182) the performative excess of the mass hero. The intended ambivalent politics of the image thus result in an open-ended ideological space where casteist and liberalist viewers may construe such images either as realist representations or performative image-acts.

Through *Onscreen/Offscreen*, Nakassis powerfully illuminates the potential in addressing the polyphonic interpretations, iterations, (re)presentations, contestations, and (im)mediations of images while also attending to the ontological politics involved in the production, circulation, and consumption of the image-texts. A linguistic anthropology of cinema does not treat image-text "independently of *entextualization*, the multiply situated and perspectivally complex processes by which a text is carved out of its surround, *made* to stand apart from its context of some set of persons" (p. 205). Instead, it studies image-text as historically and ethnographically-situated events and processes to "triangulate and provisionally reconstruct precisely the processes and relations through which any so-entextualized image-text comes into being, comes to be experienced, interpreted, contested, affirmed, circulated, and take on the qualities and relations and powers that we and others find it to manifest" (p. 206).

This book, as Nakassis intends, serves as a perfect introduction for media and film scholars to semiotic theory and linguistic anthropological frameworks for studying cinema;

likewise, it is a useful companion for anthropologists and ethnographers of cinema (in fact, any visual medium) who are interested in addressing ontological politics that involves various stakeholders both onscreen and offscreen. Readers might find it beneficial to also engage with Nakassis's earlier monograph, *Doing Style: Youth and Mass Mediation in South India* (University of California Press, 2016), as they work to expand and develop a linguistic anthropology of cinema.

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