



Book Reviews

Transcultural Teens: Performing Youth Identities in French Cités. Chantal Tetreault. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015. 232 pp.

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KIMBERLY A. ARKIN

Boston University

Chantal Tetreault's *Transcultural Teens* offers a novel methodological approach to a long-standing sociopolitical question about second- and third-generation Arab Muslim youth in France: To what extent are they culturally, rather than just legally, French? Tetreault tackles this question through symbolic interactionism, minutely analyzing a series of (often very short) discursive exchanges recorded among the (mostly) Muslim teenagers of Algerian origin who participated in a tutoring association where she regularly volunteered. The tutoring association itself was located in Chemin de l'île, described by Tetreault as a fairly typical Parisian *cit *, or culturally diverse semi-urban working-class neighborhood. Through these interchanges, Tetreault teases out the multiple and conflicting enactments of gender, generation, ethnicity, and national belonging that are part of how young self-identified "Arabs" position themselves in French society. She uses the term *transculturality* to describe the discursive liminality indexed and produced by these complex positionings.

Her lovely analyses of even the briefest interchanges repeatedly show how deeply *cit * adolescents have internalized the norms and tropes of dominant French society. They can ventriloquize everything from politicized anti-immigrant racism to the pronunciation and semantic forms used in pseudo-intellectual mainstream French television programs. These same adolescents can simultaneously draw on a North African, often more specifically Algerian, cultural repertoire—a repertoire that is often transformed as it is deployed. So while many of the adolescents she worked with peppered their everyday speech with Arabic expressions, those expressions had different meanings in mixed French-Arabic milieus than among native Arabic speakers in monolingual contexts. Similarly, cultural taboos associated with honor and respect—like not referring to ascending generations by their first names outside a familial context—became the foundation for complex social games that both signaled distinctive North

African forms of cultural intimacy and challenged the moral and cultural foundations of that intimacy. In short, Tetreault shows how the most banal of everyday teenage interchanges—making fun of someone's clothes or embarrassing them by publicly revealing a secret—involve the deployment of multiple systems of value and meaning. This alone is an impressive ethnographic feat; she seems to turn the almost always petty, often quite mean interactions of teenagers into a rich field of social analysis.

In addition to illustrating transculturality in these everyday micro-contexts, Tetreault also highlights how creative adolescent invocations of both "French" and "North African" (read "parental") values lead them to perpetuate (some of) the conditions of their own subordination. This is particularly apparent in the way *cit * youth negotiate raced identities by invoking French stereotypes that juxtapose "Arabs" with "the French," while linking "Arabs" to highly derogatory cultural and socioeconomic characteristics (unemployment, academic failure, etc.). And while *cit * youth play with these stark dichotomies, highlighting their occasional absurdity—for example, a college-educated French citizen gets called an unemployed illegal immigrant—they nonetheless routinely reproduce the idea that immigrant-origin youth are not and cannot be "French."

If discursive challenges to dominant racial categories reinforce racialized marginalization, the same is also true for gender. Tetreault seems to have had far more intimate relationships with young girls than with boys, and her analysis therefore focuses on the particular difficulties faced by transcultural girls who seem to be stuck between a rock and a hard place. In wider French imaginaries, the *cit * itself is gendered as hypermasculine: misogynistic and violent, simultaneously fundamentalist and synonymous with the black market in stolen goods and drugs. In a number of recent contemporary sociological accounts, *cit * girls and women respond to this environment by veiling, either because they are "forced" to do so by overbearing male relatives or because the veil itself allows for autonomous female action.

Tetreault, in contrast, worked with girls and young women who overwhelmingly chose not to veil. Many of these performed versions of *cit * masculinity through dress or, more commonly, through agonistic and offensive speech as a way of escaping restrictive transcultural gender expectations *and* dominant "French" understandings of

sexualized femininity. Like the veil, this kind of gendered “border crossing” ultimately reinforced female subordination in a number of cultural fields. It made girls “bad” or even *racaille*—thugs—for a local, transcultural public invested in policing female behavior. It also potentially reinforced the association between the *cit * and pathologized subjectivities in the wider French context.

Transcultural Teens does not fall into the symbolic interactionist trap of divorcing the micro-politics of individual performative choices from larger structures of domination and inequality. But Tetreault has to import these structures into the analysis of teen talk and behavior, seemingly from afar. She draws on highly abstract French public discourses to contextualize her interpretations of adolescent behavior, rather than situating those behaviors in a robust middle-ground ethnography of the social and political economy of everyday teen lives in Chemin de l’ le. Sometimes this makes for awkward reading, as the reader gets pulled between extremely micro and macro levels of description and analysis. It also makes some of the original findings of Tetreault’s work harder to interpret. For example, the relative absence of religion from her informants’ interactions, as well as its almost total absence from her analysis, remains unexplained. Given the ubiquity of Islamic ethics and engagements in sociological accounts of Muslim youth and in French public discourse, it would be fascinating to know how Tetreault accounts for the seeming distinctiveness of Chemin de l’ le youth.

The powerful way Tetreault analyzes the multiplicity of symbolic registers and codes evoked in adolescent interactions also raises questions about her theoretical frame. Perhaps the dualism implied by transculturality unnecessarily reifies the very differences Tetreault’s argument actually deconstructs. Youth practice in France is not the reenactment of some timeless North African script in a new environment; rather it is a complex set of expressive practices born within a particular kind of French urban context. So is transculturality, with its presupposition that two different ways of life are being evoked and bridged, actually appropriate? Once again, I wondered whether this question required middle-range ethnography that even the best discourse analysis cannot provide, middle-range ethnography that might have more robustly illustrated the constraints upon, as well as possibilities open to, Chemin de l’ le youth.

Despite the potential drawbacks of “transculturality,” Tetreault’s work makes an important contribution to political and academic conversations about minority youth identities in France. This is particularly true as I write, hard on the heels of the November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris. As “immigrants” and particularly “Arabs” become, yet again, a metonym in French politics for a political and cultural fifth column, Tetreault offers a well-written and subtly analyzed counter-narrative.

Gangs of Russia: From the Streets to the Corridors of Power. Svetlana Stephenson. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015. 277 pp.

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MARINA MIKHAYLOVA

Temple University

In October 2015 Russia’s President Vladimir Putin, while discussing military engagement in Syria, said that 50 years ago the streets of Leningrad taught him that if there is going to be a fight, one should strike first. This transfer of street code into international politics aligns with Svetlana Stephenson’s intriguing argument in *Gangs of Russia: From the Streets to the Corridors of Power*. Stephenson traces Russian gangs’ roots to Soviet and post-Soviet street culture and argues that gangs are embedded in Russian society, while gang code shapes “unofficial rules of Russian politics” (9).

Stephenson rejects the binary between the state and its illegal shadow, arguing that the two phenomena “overlap and coalesce” (1). The book examines the role of street gangs in the evolution of Russian organized crime and traces the transformation of gangs’ structures and practices in response to social changes in Russia. Stephenson bases her argument on interviews she and her Russian colleagues conducted with former and current gang members, police officers, and local residents in the Tatarstan region of Russia, as well as on focus group discussions with young people engaged in Moscow’s street culture.

Stephenson effectively examines gang transformation in historical context. She links the escalation of youth violence in Kazan, Tatarstan, in the 1970s and 1980s to urbanization, increasing social differentiation, booming shadow economy, and lack of satisfying working-class jobs. The author’s typology of street groups is less convincing than her analysis of gangs as both criminal and social organizations, rooted in youth street life and claiming adherence to Soviet-era ideals of social justice. In the 1990s, as state capacities deteriorated, gangs increasingly resorted to violence, while commitment to social justice was eclipsed by an ethos of individual materialist success. In the face of social and economic uncertainty, gang membership expanded from its working-class roots to a broader range of socioeconomic backgrounds and ages.

The book makes some unexpected arguments about gang violence. Stephenson positions herself against scholars who view gang protection as extralegal governance in a vacuum created by a weakened state. She views Russian gangs in the 1990s as extortion rackets that took advantage of lawlessness during the transition to capitalism to establish asymmetrical predatory relations with their “clients” without assuming obligations to protect them. After brutal

gang turf wars subsided in the late 1990s, gangs developed multiple strategies to secure their positions in “the local architecture of violence” (189) consisting of gangs, criminal groups, and police. While Stephenson’s description of violence as a learned and ritualized performance is not particularly revealing, her point about the importance of verbal skills in navigating street life is compelling. She argues that Russian gang members often prefer “nonphysical strategies of domination” (201) to the use of force due to the dense social space of the street, where one cannot easily decode someone’s affiliation, status, or social connections. Similarly, business experience, charisma, and adherence to gang code are better predictors of gang status than is mastery of violence. Brotherhood ethos and respect for the code of the gang contribute to the members’ sense that their lives are morally superior to the rest of the population’s. Stephenson notes that women in gangs are mostly marginal, although the role of masculinity in the appeal of gang life remains underexplored.

Stephenson shows that Russian gangs are embedded in the broader social world. Gang life is not a stark alternative to “normal” existence, but one of young people’s survival strategies. The gang does not channel everyone into a criminal lifestyle: individuals are able to leave the gang and pursue traditional careers. At the same time, police do not seek to eliminate gangs, since street life is considered to be a normal part of transition to adulthood. Exchange of favors between police and gang members contributes to gangs’ social embeddedness. While gangs in Kazan coexist with other social institutions in young men’s lives, Stephenson admits that not all Russian gangs fit the Kazan pattern and provides examples of regions tightly controlled by gangs. Stephenson’s discussion of gang code (*poniatiia*) furthers her point about gangs as part of community. She argues that gang code is much more flexible, situational, and pragmatic than the code of “thieves-in-law”—a powerful Soviet-era elite criminal organization—allowing gangs to adapt to modern urban life and individuals to exist in multiple social milieus. The book also explores the importance of street code in popular culture and in political rhetoric and argues that street language and us-versus-them rhetoric signal the importance of parochial noninstitutionalized relations in post-Soviet Russia. Stephenson concludes the book by warning that if Russian gangs shift toward illicit economy and drug trade, young gang members will be increasingly socially isolated and confined to criminal life trajectories.

This sociological account relies on interviews to construct a detailed and convincing picture of gang culture, but lack of ethnographic detail makes it difficult to fully grasp the necessity and allure of Russian street life. Understandably, ethnographic access to gangs is difficult to obtain and sustain, especially given the gendered nature of street formations. The book’s insistence on the tribal

nature of gangs and references to tribal and medieval methods of rule and “decivilizing” (226) in Russian politics are problematic. This terminology posits a simplified and outdated vision of linear progress toward rational governance, disregarding the role of social connections, informal relations, and glorification of strength in many contemporary regimes beyond Russia. It would be more helpful to unpack the effects of street culture and the overlap between state and its shadow on the “corridors of power.” While Stephenson notes that gang leaders who were not killed or imprisoned in the early 1990s later sought legitimacy and leveraged their connections to secure lucrative businesses or political positions, the book does not fully explore implications of structural links between gangs and state institutions.

Overall, the book’s novel focus on street culture and nuanced exploration of the interplay between gangs and social context make it a valuable contribution to the study of criminal worlds. The book is appropriate for graduate or advanced undergraduate students of criminal cultures or postsocialism. Stephenson’s rich analysis, which provokes timely and intriguing questions about Russian politics, is a welcome addition to the scholarship on post-Soviet societies.

Caged In on the Outside: Moral Subjectivity, Selfhood, and Islam in Minangkabau, Indonesia. Gregory M. Simon. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2014. 255 pp.

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WEBB KEANE
University of Michigan

After the Javanese and Balinese, the four million Minangkabau of Sumatra are surely the most heavily studied ethnic group in Indonesia. They have long drawn anthropological attention for the apparent contradiction between their matrilineal social system and strong identification as Muslims. An outward-looking trading society, Minangkabau also became prominent on the national scene early on. In the 19th century, they underwent a Wahhabi-inspired social revolution; in the 20th, they provided a disproportionate number of Indonesia’s political and literary figures, some with passions more socialist and nationalist than religious. As Gregory Simon points out in this “person-centered” ethnography, everyday moral life for the 100,000 inhabitants of his field site, the city of Bukittinggi, is shaped by the resulting tensions. Simon’s book is a fine contribution to Southeast Asian studies, the anthropology of moralities, phenomenologically inspired psychology, and the ethnography of Islam, and is well suited for the classroom.

This is hardly the first psychologically oriented study of Minangkabau, but it is perhaps the most subtle.

Focusing on fundamental conflicts in Minangkabau moral life, Simon is critical of those who would reduce Minangkabau to a single psychological ethos, value hierarchy, or ontological postulate. He tells us of people who are at once collective and individualist, achievement oriented and conformist, relational and autonomous, and quite aware of the resulting dilemmas. His case turns on nuanced portraits of individuals (necessarily skewed somewhat toward men, as he points out), substantiated by generous amounts of quotations from his conversations during almost two years of research. Besides offering nuance and concreteness, this approach makes the book a pleasure to read. Given that city life poses obstacles to the “deep hanging out” of traditional fieldwork, much of this book is based on interviews. Justifying his approach, Simon treats his interlocutors’ words “as legitimate windows into their lives and subjectivities” (12). His handling of the interviews benefits from his great sensitivity to individuals and his self-awareness about the ways they are responding to him. Unlike some approaches to ethos and ethics, this book does not rely on people talking about hypothetical situations and cultural generalizations (although Minangkabau seem to have a weakness for just this kind of idealized self-portrayal). His interlocutors come off as highly articulate and reflexive, and one gains a tangible sense of real people grappling with problems for which they have no settled resolutions. But for the ethnographer, their very articulateness can also be a drawback, a point to which I return shortly.

Simon remarks that the people he knew were more inclined to speak of themselves as Minangkabau than as Indonesians, although the imposition of state institutions has affected such things as the power of lineage heads and the matrilineal transmission of property. But an idealized and often reified local tradition (*adat*) sits uneasily with increasingly standardized Islam. Where local cliché maintains that “*Adat* is based on Islamic law, Islamic law is based on the Koran” (51), Simon sees the expression of an uneasy half-awareness that they are not actually consistent with each other. He explores the various ways people try, not always successfully, to resolve this uneasiness, for example by relegating Islam to a transcendental plane that mere humans cannot expect to inhabit fully in this life.

At the heart of the book is moral subjectivity, which Simon defines as the ways people think about and experience human value. His emphasis is on their efforts to live with alternative but coexisting visions of that value and ways of inhabiting it. In their basic form, these values are personal autonomy and social harmony. Simon treats the opposition as both specifically Minangkabau and a universal human condition. To his credit, he suggests something more complex than a balancing act between self and society. As in many Islamic societies beyond the Middle East, there is a long-term effort to work out a *modus vivendi* between “local” tradition and universal religion. For Minangkabau, this

centers on relations between the ideals of harmonious social hierarchy, on the one hand, and the competitive egalitarianism of the marketplace, on the other.

But Simon also portrays these moral struggles in terms of universal existential dilemmas, remarking that “in any society cultural conceptions of selfhood and morality, and moral experience, must necessarily reflect and elaborate on such subjective tensions” (2). The key dimension of human experience here is having a self, something he treats as prior to, and subject to elaboration by, cultural conceptions. These conceptions are the heart of the conversations Simon discusses. Consider how Minangkabau thematize the experience of deceit and the unavailability of inner selves to one another. *Baso-basi* refers to the high value they place on formal, deferential etiquette. This value is familiar from other parts of the archipelago, most famously in Clifford Geertz’s accounts of Javanese etiquette. But whereas Geertz treated the Javanese concern with formal appearances as a key to local values, Simon insightfully observes that “rather than see *baso-basi* as a way of cultivating aesthetic surfaces over interior depths, we must understand it to constitute the effort to place those things at the surface that belong at the surface—not because they are the only things of value, but because they are valuable precisely when manifest at the surface” (84). Moreover, the sense that something else might be going on behind that surface is both celebrated—Minangkabau sometimes depict themselves as unusually cunning—and a source of worry about the opacity that looms between individuals. This ambivalence is a central theme in the book. From all the talk about the oppositions between outer and inner, male and female, what is innate and what can be cultivated, Simon concludes, “it is not possible to put them all together into a larger, completely coherent picture of Minangkabau selfhood” (88). Although many social theorists have argued against totalizing depictions of culture on axiomatic grounds, here it is the ethnographic texture that carries conviction.

This is a well-written, thoughtful, and scrupulous ethnography. It tackles deep questions with disarming modesty. It offers astute insights into how Minangkabau express their struggles to live moral lives. But Simon is interested in more than concepts; he is after subjective experience. If interviews give access to the former, do they provide a window into “subjectivity” as such? Developing the local contrast of inner and outer aspects of the person, Simon notes that Minangkabau protect the self through indirection—“sloping words” (162)—which suggests their talk should be treated with some circumspection. Since the interview has become so central to contemporary ethnography, I close with three general observations. First, the one-on-one interview is a peculiar speech genre, unlike most forms of talk, inevitably shaped by being addressed to the interviewer, and often

contradicting local norms for social interaction. Second, it favors people who are skilled in self-narration, and induces them to be at their most self-controlled and self-conscious. And third, it has a retrospective (or sometimes prospective) cast to it, referring to things out of their immediate context. We can still learn an enormous amount from interviews, especially when combined with the wider range of ethnographic knowledge that Simon deploys. This book excels at conveying the conceptual and pragmatic resources available to Minangkabau as they work through their moral dilemmas. But “subjective experience” may be just too slippery a fish for this particular net.

People of Substance: An Ethnography of Morality in the Colombian Amazon. Carlos David Londoño Sulkin. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012. 158 pp.

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CHRISTOPHER JARRETT

University of Texas at San Antonio

People of Substance is an ethnographically rich and theoretically compelling account of how indigenous peoples in the Colombian Amazon develop and negotiate notions of morality and personhood, which they understand as inextricably entangled with the substances they consume. Carlos David Londoño Sulkin focuses on the People of the Centre, an ethnic label that includes clans speaking six different languages, and bases his account on fieldwork from 1993 to 2008. A main theme of the book is the role of particular, socially meaningful substances—especially tobacco, coca, and chilies—in composing and directing individuals’ subjectivities and moral dispositions. Here agentive personhood manifests itself through “thoughts/emotions,” which People of the Centre characterize as “speeches” or “breaths.”

The key questions addressed in *People of Substance* are “what kinds of beings these persons understand themselves and each other to be, and how they conceive the cosmos within which their lives take place” (3). Londoño Sulkin describes these as moral questions, where morality refers to “people’s evaluative perceptions, reactions, understandings, and claims concerning subjectivities, actions, persons, qualities, and ways of life, in terms of whether these were admirable, despicable, unremarkable, or otherwise distinct in worth” (3). His main objects of analysis are “moral portrayals,” whereby People of the Centre develop understandings of what is valuable or good, and worthless or bad, about people and life itself.

Londoño Sulkin situates his work in dialogue with the anthropology of morality and with what he calls the

“Amazonian package,” a set of commonalities anthropologists have identified throughout Amazonia—“that human bodies are fabricated socially, that this occurs in the context of a perspectival cosmos, and that relations with dangerous outside Others are necessary to the process” (24). This approach engages with two key analytic approaches within Amazonian ethnology—the “symbolic economy of alterity” and the “moral economy of intimacy” (Viveiros de Castro 1996).

The book is organized into six chapters that focus on how People of the Centre understand moral personhood and how moral persons are created. Chapter 1 describes “second-order desires” among the People of the Centre, such as “coolness,” a gloss for calm conviviality, and “the capacity to start and finish jobs in one quick, efficient fell swoop” (42). It outlines how selfhood is crafted through “the speeches of the substances embodied in individuals,” a process that involves the social shaping of bodies by providing the “correct” substances to kin and ethnic similars (33). Chapter 2 articulates the moral differentiations People of the Centre make between different kinds of beings, particularly humans and animals, the latter of which are characterized as “failures in moral sociality,” or “unsuccessful attempts at creating real people” (49). Unlike true humans, animals are “hot,” or impulsive and undisciplined. Likewise, people who act in less than fully human ways are characterized as embodying hot qualities and thus exhibiting more animalistic subjectivities.

Chapter 3 describes productive activities among People of the Centre and the role of “domestication” in making these activities possible. Chapter 4 provides an overview of the substances key to crafting moral selves among the People of the Centre and the particular moral attributes with which substances are associated. The chapter also explains gender complementarity in terms of women providing substances that keep men “cool.” Chapter 5 analyzes the role of kinship in shaping understandings of morality among People of the Centre. It contrasts two common tropes related to the family—as a social “body” where each individual contributes to the collective whole, or as a *maloca*, where each part is essential but nested within a hierarchical structure. He also describes the importance of the incorporation of alterity for social reproduction of the kin group, a process achieved by gradual “consubstantialization” (139). In chapter 6, he concludes by clarifying his overall approach, which focuses on how collectivities are constituted by individuals commonly “citing” similar concepts and symbols over time.

Londoño Sulkin provides important correctives to some of the basic tenets of perspectivism. He shows that bodies are constantly in the process of being crafted among People of the Centre, rather than more or less stable “bundles of affects and capacities” (Viveiros de Castro 1998,

478). Although a person is born with the accumulated substances of his or her father, contained in semen, most of one's humanity and moral personhood come as a product of gradual socialization through the consumption of specific substances. Here Londoño Sulkin builds on Terry S. Turner's (2009) critique of perspectivism as sometimes understating the dynamic qualities of bodies. His analysis of bodies and substances as co-constituted also leads him to argue that People of the Centre see substances themselves as the loci of "perspectives." This point links to anthropological work in Amazonia on objects as extensions of persons (Santos-Granero 2009).

Another important corrective to perspectivism is Londoño Sulkin's analysis of the moral inferiority that People of the Centre attribute to animals. Like Turner, he notes that Amazonianists who interpret the continuity of personhood between humans and animals as reflecting a shared humanity miss the most important aspect of Amazonians' understandings of animals—animal personhood as an analogue for less-than-human selfhood. Along these lines, he might have provided more information on how People of the Centre articulate their differences vis-à-vis ethnic others, a point to which he alludes in chapter 6 but does not fully develop. This would have helped the reader to understand how People of the Centre define themselves in relation to ethnic others and the new kinds of selves that shifts in interethnic relations might make possible.

Nevertheless, Londoño Sulkin's "ethnography of morality" contributes greatly to anthropological understandings of personhood, ethics, and value in general, and Amazonian ethnology in particular. In addition to clearly explicating key moral principles among People of the Centre, he accounts for creative individual expressions of these principles. This is an ethnographically compelling account that also makes important theoretical contributions, and it is a valuable addition to courses on Amazonian anthropology, the anthropology of morality, or the anthropology of kinship and social organization.

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Sustainable Development: An Appraisal From the Gulf Region. Paul Sillitoe, ed. New York: Berghahn, 2014. 556 pp.

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MARTIN SKRYDSTRUP

University of Copenhagen

What might "sustainable development" mean and look like in a region that has the largest ecological footprint in the world? This is the key question that *Sustainable Development: An Appraisal From the Gulf Region* explores. From Paul Sillitoe's introduction, we learn that if the rest of the world were to maintain the same standard of living as the Gulf states, it would require more than five planet earths, if we translate ecological footprint to land area needed to carry consumption and absorb waste. The genesis of this volume goes back to Sillitoe's tenure as Shell Chair in Sustainable Development at Qatar University. There, to explore the paradoxes of sustainability in the core region where unsustainable fossil fuels are extracted, he assembled a wide array of scholars with disciplinary backgrounds in archaeology, anthropology, sociology, natural science, economy, architecture, and urban planning, as well as government professionals and private-sector entrepreneurs, mainly from the Gulf states, but also beyond. Shell is a major stakeholder in that region, and its funding of the chair makes for many paradoxes, which the editor and most contributors tackle with a certain ironic pleasure.

The collection is organized in five parts framed by the editor's introduction and conclusion, as well as the first chapter, which examines localized sustainability within communities in the Central Plateau of Iran in the archaeological record. Part 1 addresses the planning of sustainable development. Trudy Tan, Aziza Al-Khalaqi, and Najla Al-Khulaifi tell us about the official components of the Qatar National Vision 2030, as does Khondker Rahman. Bahaa Darwish deals with a 2009 report by the Qatari General Secretariat for Development Planning that identifies three environmental challenges: water security, marine environment, and climate change. Common to these chapters is that we remain within the vision of the Qatari state apparatus, with its various pillars of human, social, economic, and environmental development as an official blueprint for sustainable development. We learn very little, however, about the making of this national vision, the notions of anticipation that might fuel it, and its potential adverse effects on the ground.

Part 2 explores the energy and economic issues of sustainable development. Thomas Henfrey deals with the energy futures of Qatar, while Emma Gilberthorpe, Sarah F. Clarke, and Sillitoe explore the "resource curse thesis" comparing Qatar and Papua New Guinea. Rodney Wilson paints with broad strokes an image of Islamic

financiers being more cautious than Western venture capitalists, arguing that Islam harbors a distinctive approach to issues of climate change and sustainable development.

Part 3 covers environmental issues; in two of these chapters, Ben Campbell, Sillitoe, and Ali Alshawi take on biodiversity conservation in protected areas, focusing on the roles of participation. The approach to participation deployed in these chapters looks at how local environmental knowledge, such as grazing practices of Bedouin pastoralists, might further the objectives of biodiversity conservation (260).

Part 4 examines urban and health issues. From Ali A. Alraouf and Clarke, we learn how “traditional” architectural designs in the form of wind towers, which serve as passive ventilation, are incorporated into contemporary and future urbanism in the Gulf. Andrew M. Gardner explores the “super-modernism” that results from urban master planning in the six Gulf states, providing critical commentary on the official planning visions of part 1. Gardner introduces the historical legacies of British colonialism and a critical theoretical orientation, which sets his chapter apart from most of the other contributions. His rigorous ethnography allows us to get behind the front stage of “sustainable urban development” and glimpse the support systems in the forms of labor camps and service facilities, which sustain the front stage and which largely remain out of the analytic picture throughout the volume. Ultimately, Gardner questions whether urban sustainable development can be planned from above, since the Gulf states can be characterized as so-called rentier states (oil profits are converted into a vast social welfare apparatus), which are at odds with the democratic and participatory principles that generally undergird sustainability. The last two chapters in this section—one by Clarke with Salah Almannai, the other by Mylène Riva, Catherine Panter-Brick, and Mark Eggerman—address solid waste management and health, speaking to the almost encyclopedic scope of this volume.

Part 5 covers cultural and social issues. Gina Porter writes on participatory approaches to research in Ghana, which adds little to the central theme; Serena Heckler considers how *culture* has been incorporated or not into *development*, arguing that we need to improve the concepts of development, rather than local communities; and Fadwa El Guindi provides a critique of the master planning presented in part 1, based on what she calls “people’s own cultural models of nature” (465) in the shape of Turkey’s birds, Egypt’s cats, and Qatar’s falcons, although these emblems seem to embody a stately monumental aesthetic, rather than “people’s participation.” In the conclusion, “A Doha Undeclaration,” Sillitoe argues for an additional “endogenous pillar” as a complement to the

existing three of environment, economy, and equity, which conventionally inform sustainable development. Here Sillitoe draws on his long-term research on the incorporation of indigenous knowledge into development, which as he argues in very modernistic terms “becomes murky when politics enters the equation” (515).

The volume is conceived and intended as an introduction to the field of sustainable development in the Gulf region, and the text is supplemented with many photographs, figures, and text boxes introducing central concepts. Missing, however, are recommendations for further readings on, say the ethnographic particularities of Rodney Wilson’s chapter on Islam as a “non-risk economy,” such as Bill Maurer’s (2005) central work on Islamic banking. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are referenced throughout the volume, which might make the volume seem outdated to some, since their successor, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is now the talk of the town in development studies. However, the challenges of the SDGs, such as statistical monitoring, actually make many of the chapters more timely—for example, Nobuyuki Yamaguchi’s chapter on the deficit of data to monitor nature. Concerning the organization of the volume, I did find it slightly confusing that Wesam Al Othman and Clarke’s chapter on environmental legislation in Qatar and Kaltham Al-Ghanim’s chapter on environmental degradation were not placed in the section exploring environmental issues. Apart from that, the editor does a good job of weaving the collection together in his introduction, but the extremely broad scope and the many disciplinary perspectives come at the price of a certain lack of cohesion across chapters. The flip side of this unevenness, however, is that the chapters, which are critical of the kind of official master planning introduced in part 1 (especially Gardner’s chapter), serve as “bombs” or meta-commentary within the volume, which is generously cross-referenced. More generally, I was hoping for a stronger engagement with the post-development paradigm challenging Eurocentric understandings of development, but such an engagement is largely absent. It would have been interesting to explore if post-developmentalism has found resonance among actors at various levels in the Gulf region. Despite these minor criticisms, I strongly recommend this kaleidoscopic collection to scholars who want a topical overview of the region and to undergraduates who wish to explore the apparent paradox of what “sustainability” might mean in the heartlands of the global carbon economy.

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Unearthing Conflict: Corporate Mining, Activism, and Expertise in Peru. Fabiana Li. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015. 265 pp.

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ANITA CARRASCO

Luther College

This is a timely ethnography of contemporary mining conflict in Peru. Fabiana Li spent two years (2005–6) conducting fieldwork based primarily in the city of Cajamarca and focusing her analysis on the Yanacocha mine. She offers an attractive understanding of “conflict.” No theory of resistance along the lines of already assumed, immutable material interests (such as mass protests or road blockades) can capture the nuances with which Li meticulously “unearths conflict.” She warns her readers early on that she has no intention of treating activist networks and corporate networks as ideologically antagonistic; rather, she wants to emphasize the shifting alliances among various actors and the way in which they work both with and against corporate interests (6). In this same vein, Li examines the inherent ambiguities and contradictions present in the relationships between communities and mining companies.

Li discusses the effects of mining on the environment as a material, yet highly political terrain. To do so, she draws on two bodies of literature: first, foundational work in political ecology, with a special emphasis on the unequal relations of power that characterize environmental conflict; second, resource conflicts as ontological conflicts over the making or destruction of worlds. These bodies of literature inspire her overarching interest in examining how pollution takes form, when it becomes tangible, and for whom it becomes politically significant. Her analysis of pollution’s materialization draws heavily on Bruno Latour’s (2004) distinction between “matters of fact” and “matters of concern” and his insight that matters of concern have replaced matters of fact in the political power struggles that shape what counts as conflict and in adjudicating who is responsible for providing solutions. Li introduces the concept of equivalence as an analytic tool to examine how solutions to the conflicts are conceptualized and the underlying tensions that remain beneath the surface when equivalence is contested. This approach is especially interesting when we think about how people assign value to things deemed to be incommensurable. In the chapter “The Hydrology of a Sacred Mountain,” she tells the fascinating story of the 2004 protest that resulted from the mining company’s plan to excavate on Cerro Quilish, a mountain sacred to local indigenous communities, such as those in Tual. For days, people from these communities, claiming they were there to protect their water, gathered outside the city of Cajamarca and blocked the highway leading to the mine. For Andean

societies in Peru and beyond, water, the source of life, commonly comes from sacred mountains. Herlinda, one of Li’s key respondents, told her, “The mountain has to give its consent in order for it to be mined” (107). The obvious question that follows such a statement is: What does it mean to say that a mountain must give its consent to be mined? In this conflict, Cerro Quilish was the embodiment of life itself and could not be reduced to a simple economic resource to be defended (110). This perspective made the mountain incommensurable: that is, it was irreducible to gold or other material benefits. In this way, the question—how can Cerro Quilish be mined responsibly—was out of the question. The sacred mountain as an agentive entity successfully “disrupted the equivalences” (122) that are often pushed by mining companies under their programs of corporate social responsibility.

For this same chapter, Li cites Ana de la Torre’s (1986) *Los dos lados del mundo y del tiempo*, which is based on ethnographic research conducted in 1979–80 among the communities around Cerro Quilish. In it, Torre introduces a being that emerges from the underworld through tunnels that end at water springs. This being is called a *Shapi* (water spirit); in the water springs, it waits patiently for its victims so it can steal their *ánimo* (spirit), tempting them with the promise of gold coins, livestock, and other offerings. Li writes, “The danger of the *Shapi* lies both in its evil intentions as well as its ability to fascinate and entice humans with promised gifts; this contradictory nature, the tension between danger and desirability, destruction and fecundity, is what produces the natural order” (130). The *Shapi* and the Yanacocha mine seem to have in common certain fundamental structural points that reveal the mimetic likeness of these two beings, both of which emerge from the underworld. I thought it was fascinating to find a historical continuity of the kinds of relationships that communities surrounding Cerro Quilish have encountered. The communities’ relationships with the *Shapi* and the Yanacocha mine are full of ambiguities and contradictions that neither erase the tensions and the divergent interests at stake nor solve the incommensurable views that lie at the foundations of mining company-community relations. In a way, some of the Quilish anti-mining protesters had bodily memory of what it felt like to deal with powerful entities that both seduce and destroy. The force of the protests prompted Yanacocha to withdraw from Cerro Quilish. Much of the company’s public relations focused on the claim that water issues would be “managed.” This time the “promises of gold coins” did not manage to seduce the *ánimo* of the communities around Cerro Quilish.

Although Li partially repeats what she has written in influential articles elsewhere, she has offered us an important synthesis in this book. It is a must-read for veterans and newcomers to research in the anthropology of mining.

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Beyond the Big Ditch: Politics, Ecology, and Infrastructure at the Panama Canal. Ashley Carse. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014. 298 pp.

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DANA GRAEF

Brown University

When it opened in 1914, the Panama Canal was an engineering triumph. Spanning 50 miles between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the canal was “touted as modern man’s ultimate conquest of nature,” writes Ashley Carse (7). While previous plans would have entailed a sea-level passage, the final design incorporated a series of locks that ships pass through on their journey between the oceans, rising three steps before reaching and crossing Gatun Lake, then descending three steps. Each ship requires tremendous amounts of freshwater to navigate the canal: “an astounding 52 million gallons . . . approximately the same volume of water as . . . the daily domestic consumption of half a million Panamanians” (3). With this, Carse hints at the focus of the book to come, in which the Panama Canal is understood not as a narrowly bounded entity, but as a wide-reaching project that requires ongoing resources and upkeep. These conditions continue to shape the region’s politics, landscapes, and livelihoods.

In *Beyond the Big Ditch*, Carse paints an inverse portrait of the Panama Canal, seen through the lenses of farmers’ agricultural practices, watershed management, forest cover maps, flooded towns, road construction, agrarian reform, and the invasive water hyacinth. Despite “connecting” the world by facilitating global shipping, Carse shows how the canal has often divided the people and landscapes of the surrounding region. Carse’s richly detailed book draws from diverse archival and ethnographic sources to compellingly illustrate that the “big ditch” did not “conquer nature”; rather, it could not exist without it. While a project of such transformative scale most readily appears to be an imposition on the landscape, Carse demonstrates that infrastructure is not divorced from its landscape. Instead, it simultaneously reshapes and depends on it. As Carse persuasively argues, “Infrastructures produce environments, and vice versa” (6). To understand how this mutuality develops over time, it is necessary, in Carse’s terms, to go *Beyond the Big Ditch*—to refocus our attention beyond the canal itself.

In part 1, “Headwaters,” Carse traces the influence of global environmentalism on the area surrounding the Panama Canal. Over time it became a region of environmental governance, where deforestation was seen as a threat to the essential water supply for the canal’s operations. This mapped onto a parallel transition in the 1970s from seeing water availability as a *technical* issue to an *environmental* issue. With the conceptualization of water availability as an environmental problem linked to forest cover, the very definition of the lands related to the canal expanded to include the “watershed” as a unit of social and political management. In turn, this transition affected local farmers, whose agricultural practices were impeded once areas with “five years of growth” (38) were classified as forest and protected in the interest of the canal. These are some ways that the Panama Canal has had a significant impact on social and environmental relations in areas beyond the immediately recognized Canal Zone.

Part 2, “Floodplains,” further establishes the Canal Zone as a historically agrarian space. As Carse argues, “Agriculture was not peripheral to the history of transportation on the isthmus, but bound up with it” (155). In contrast with the massive ships that pass through the canal today, stacked with large metal shipping containers, Carse brings to life a period in the mid-1800s when Gatun, a small village along the Chagres River, was “the hub of the rural banana trade” (83) where “long wooden canoes stacked high with bananas” gathered for a market (84). He shows that for many residents of the region, agriculture and transportation projects were alternating endeavors. Carse interweaves agrarian history with a chronology of infrastructure projects, including the Panama Railroad in the 1850s, a failed French initiative to build the canal in the 1880s, and the eventual construction of the canal by the United States in the early 1900s (123). Even after the Chagres River was dammed and the canal was opened, there was a surge in banana production during the 1920s, when the Canal Zone was briefly reopened for agriculture. As Carse writes, residents of the town of Limón recalled “that the best times were not construction booms, but periods when agricultural production thrived” (123).

Carse’s long-term, historical perspective enables him to portray processes of change over time and the often cyclical nature of development. Throughout the book, he shows the region around the canal as a place of *disconnection* as much as *connection*, and he argues that “transportation infrastructures” can create such divides (168). In part 3, “The Interior,” he examines the construction of the Transistmica, a concrete highway that parallels the canal. Through the stories of smaller, less permanent roads that link a rural community to the Transistmica, Carse emphasizes the life cycles of infrastructure projects themselves. He shows that roads are entities requiring upkeep: “without constant work—both physical and political—a

road can fade into the landscape" (204). In part 4, "Backwaters," the same principle applies to the Panama Canal itself. Carse devotes a wonderful chapter to long-term efforts to understand and control the spread of invasive water hyacinth. Without ongoing management, "the canal would be impassible in three to five years"—a mat of green (208). Thus Carse clearly shows that the "conquest of nature" is not as definitive as one might imagine (208), and "infrastructures . . . are not permanent but processual" (219).

The study of large infrastructural projects like dams, highways, and canals provides unique challenges for anthropological research. In this book, Carse provides a useful road map for such studies. *Beyond the Big Ditch* would make an excellent addition to graduate or advanced undergraduate courses in environmental anthropology, the politics of water, globalization and development, imperialism, Latin American studies, and science and technology studies.

Things Fall Apart? The Political Ecology of Forest Governance in Southern Nigeria. *Pauline von Hellermann.* New York: Berghahn, 2013. 191 pp.

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A. PETER CASTRO

Syracuse University

Readers worldwide generally associate the phrase "things fall apart" with the title of Chinua Achebe's classic novel about colonialism's devastating impact on West African villagers. Today Nigerians also use it to refer to their country's current political and economic malaise, including rampant governmental corruption and inefficiency. Pauline von Hellermann's *Things Fall Apart?* draws on both connotations, critically examining Nigerian public forest governance during the colonial and postcolonial eras from the perspective of political ecology. She presents a case study of Edo State, the heartland of the Benin Kingdom, using historical and ethnographic data to challenge the conventional narrative that Edo's forests were sustainably managed in colonial times but now face rapid destruction due to illicit or shortsighted deals and practices. In contesting that narrative, von Hellermann raises significant questions about constraints to sustainable forestry and how to address them.

Von Hellermann takes aim at scientific forestry, long a favorite for grilling by political ecologists because of its colonial connection and scientific pretensions. In the colonial era, forestry departments gained control over large territories by promising sustained commercial timber harvests (or other valued products) while protecting resources from presumably feckless indigenous populations. These were

big promises, and the foresters in Edo (like foresters in many other colonial settings) were unable to deliver that golden age of sustainability. Instead, von Hellermann contends that institutional weaknesses in land and resource management evident in colonial times directly contribute to current troubles. She also demonstrates that the distinction between formal and illicit forestry practices is often fuzzy, since some of the latter end up as accepted policy and procedure. Local conservation practices, in fact, frequently fall within "unofficial, hybrid spaces," indicating their disconnect from statutory systems (17).

She begins by challenging the notion that until recently Edo consisted of primeval forest, using historical accounts to show that the Benin Kingdom possessed a patchwork of forests, fields, and settlements. Although she relies on her own ethnographic material to describe the presence of trees in communities, surprisingly, her study provides relatively few details about how people actually manage trees, including specific farm-level and communal techniques. For example, the trees featured in Figure 3 (38) look as if they have been pollarded—or do they just grow that way? Sacred groves are mentioned only in passing. Later in the book, some brief general passages mention the role of trees in cocoa and plantain farming. Von Hellermann also states that people now buy non-timber products once obtained in the forest (149), such as wild foods, fodder, medicine, fiber, and resins. Nonetheless, more data on forest product use would have been welcome. As is often noted, a drawback of political ecology is that one frequently gets a lot more politics than cultural ecology.

Von Hellermann focuses on scientific forestry, exploring how and why land was reserved or "dereserved" from colonial times to the present. As elsewhere in the British Empire, officials used crisis narratives to put forests under their control, generating local resistance. The government's need for increased agricultural production, initially created by World War II but sustained long afterward, proved more decisive in spawning the countertrend of legally or illicitly taking land out of the reserve. After independence state governments within Nigeria gained greater control over forest reserves, furthering their decline. Von Hellermann portrays regularly shifting administrative priorities, booms and busts in the timber market, and the constant inability of foresters to attain their promises. A major constraint for large-scale timbering proved to be the low density of commercially valued species within the forest. Von Hellermann concludes that colonial forests were unable, even at the height of colonial power, to fulfill work plans or attain revenue targets. No golden age of scientific forestry existed. The rest of the chapter deals with postindependence, when official forest management "largely collapsed and corruption and patronage politics" became rife (120). Still, she notes that some forestry staff and local community members remain committed to conservation goals.

She devotes a chapter to examining debates about the *taungya* system of reforestation, which originated in Burma, combining trees and food crops. Given von Hellermann's astute analysis of colonial forestry, it seems odd that she does not emphasize what colonial foresters usually regarded as the *taungya* system's chief virtue: it was cheap to implement. The *taungya* plots were treated as a subsidy for poorly paid workers. Family members subsidized these efforts by providing free labor for planting, weeding, and protecting plots. Today foresters often regard the *taungya* labor force as out of control, no longer growing trees. Von Hellermann shows that the situation is more complex, as the practice helps meet rising local demand for land. Ironically, forest regeneration is increasing outside the reserves, as land pressures diminish. In the last chapter, she looks at the recent history of Okomu National Park as a means of assessing strengths and limits of community-based conservation. She reveals that conservation-with-development strategies, while well intended, are often not appropriate for local needs. She favors building on existing community-level practices but points out that in Edo these "largely take the form of informal or illegal arrangements, with few formal opportunities for their development" (159). This is an extremely valuable insight, deserving of wide dissemination among policy makers and technical personnel.

Overall, *Things Fall Apart?* enriches our understanding of forest governance in Nigeria. Von Hellermann demonstrates the value of integrating a historical perspective into political ecology analysis as a means of understanding the complex institutional setting and conflicts of interests among various stakeholders. One wishes at times that the book contained more specific details about local resource management. Some gaps also exist in the historical analysis. For example, what operational difference, if any, occurred when the forest service underwent Africanization? Did Africanization alter how foresters interacted with local authorities or community members? In spite of these issues, *Things Fall Apart?* offers a convincing case study that can be appreciated by a broad audience.

Harmattan: A Philosophical Fiction. *Michael Jackson.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2015. 192 pp.

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SAMUEL MARK ANDERSON

Harvard University

What might a fiction accomplish that a report of reality cannot? Factual accounts can be made as compelling as any invented characters or events, yet we find ourselves continually drawn to fabrication. When authors and readers distance themselves from the constraints of

verifiable empiricism, they do so not merely to fantasize, but also to approach alternative revelations, truths revealed in the suspension of other truths. Literary make-believe invites writers and readers to hold a text differently, listening for different sorts of message, exercising different classes of critique, and embracing different forms of intimacy. Now and then, ethnographers turn to fiction's alternative potentials in order to account for those epiphanies that do not readily fit within a standard monograph.

Through novels, poetry, and unorthodox theoretical texts, Michael Jackson has done more than any other living scholar to explore and expand forms of ethnographic writing. His encounters in Sierra Leone have inspired a series of publications that move progressively free from the bounds of standard genre—from classical monograph to fable analysis to oral history to a variety of biography-memoir hybrids—so as to explore various constellations of consistent themes including travel, struggle, storytelling, social interaction, and personal introspection. Jackson revisits such motifs in *Harmattan: A Philosophical Fiction* and trains them toward the meticulous exploration of an existential conundrum: the stubborn drive to confirm one's own agency that compels the quest for knowledge of oneself at the frontiers of the other.

Jackson recalibrates the term *limitrophe* to describe the nourishing power provided by pushing beyond one's received limitations (6). Paralleling such existential expeditions, *Harmattan* advances into the unpredictable realm of fiction systematically. Early pages are a philosophical rumination on the themes of the text, but as Jackson's meditations float by, his source material becomes less universalist and more subjectively specific, drawing insights increasingly from literature and artists, then from his own life and memory. By the end of this brief first section, Jackson has transitioned into memoir, and part 2 marks his arrival in Freetown. Narrative prevails as he meets Tom Lannon, a stubborn student from Cambridge eager to strike out into Sierra Leone's hinterland without any counsel from the more seasoned researcher. Two months later, Jackson is summoned to Freetown's notorious Pademba Road Prison to bail out the student, arrested for an implausible crime and stricken by an unspecified illness.

Jackson devotes the remainder of the text primarily to Lannon's recounting, further accentuating *Harmattan's* cumulative fictionalization with layered storytelling. The authorial voice has thus far proceeded from impersonal scholarship to Jackson's childhood memories to his quasi-fictive travel memoir, and it now passes to Lannon's narrated saga, which itself contains manuscripts by Lannon's Sierra Leonean friend Mansaray and letters from his girlfriend—stories within stories within stories. In perhaps another case of going far afield only to find oneself, Jackson's erudite and compassionate tone is never lost amid the varied characters' voices. Nevertheless,

these nested narrations exemplify how our own quests for self-knowledge are sites of encounter with others traveling in intersecting or opposite directions, a theme reiterated as Lannon successively meets Sierra Leonean migrant Mansaray seeking edification within the British Library, Mansaray's estranged wife seeking self-respect through infidelity, and a village elder whose confrontations with the spirit world ultimately guide his confrontation with death.

In fictionalizing the intercultural encounter, *Harmattan* explores an irony that rarely figures in scholarly texts: the ordinariness of the everyday lives we aim to describe is often at cross-purposes with the profound extraordinariness of our personal experiences as ethnographers. To resolve this incongruity, we often expunge feelings such as wonder, disapproval, and confusion from final academic products. *Harmattan* suggests numerous situations paradigmatic of the ethnographic experience yet rarely mined for epistemological potential. Readers confront words and actions neither immediately legible nor eventually interpreted, reproducing Lannon's disorientation and suggesting fiction's ability to preserve spaces that "resist the rites of naming and knowing on which we set such store" (35).

Lannon's well-intentioned fumbling lacks training in ethnographic methods, yet his fictional struggles are likely to be embarrassingly familiar to even the most conscientious and prepared researcher. How does one negotiate shortcomings in language training, and what might that suggest about education infrastructure and pedagogical models in the places in which we work? Why is illness such a common trope of cultural immersion and the trials of tropical research, and what can it reveal about our own stubbornness, our desires to share risk with our subjects, tenacious colonial narratives, or local medical standards? Finally, how can we balance our responsibilities in the field with our relationships at home? How can we reconcile those duties with our own voyages of discovery? How do these tensions between work and home, selfishness and selflessness, obligation and love inform what it means to be a mobile, globalized subject? To be human?

Harmattan sparks such weighty and irresolvable questions. Ethnographic fiction will always be an unstable, provocative genre as each author seeks to balance demands from academia, aesthetics of literature, and responsibilities to field sites. Such instability is constitutive of the genre's intellectual contributions, since each novel configuration alternately undermines and highlights the values of different forms of truth. *Harmattan* conscientiously epitomizes this instability by harnessing the productive tension between fact and fiction to investigate the thinking subject's quest for self-determination in the face of challenging alien limits: Englishmen facing Sierra Leone, Sierra Leoneans facing England, villagers facing the bush, ethnographers facing literature, and so on.

One of Jackson's stylistic quirks drives home such confrontations and their implications for knowledge of culture and self. Rather than following academic orthodoxy by ending sections with a summary, a clarification, or a lead-in to the next section, Jackson often closes with a haunting image that actually challenges his previous assertions: an enigmatic Picasso quote (36), for example, or the inexplicable cruelties of boys in his New Zealand hometown (30). Such unfinished thoughts purposely exceed the scope of his analysis and hang in the reader's mind as exemplars of the unfathomable depths of encounters with the unknown.

The Arts of Citizenship in African Cities: Infrastructures and Spaces of Belonging. Mamadou Diouf and Rosalind Fredericks, eds. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. 308 pp.

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ANTINA VON SCHNITZLER

The New School

Scholarly work on the African city has often oscillated between apocalyptic depictions of urban Africa as sites defined by lack and celebratory accounts of creative innovations by urban dwellers in the face of adversity. In each mode of narration, the African urban experience tended to be told by analogy—it appeared to be imaginable only against a foil of normative "city-ness" shaped by the North, leaving little analytic space for more open-ended starting points. This collection of essays avoids that well-worn path, providing a valuable addition to a growing, interdisciplinary body of work that provides new avenues for thinking African urbanism to "decolonize urban theory" (1).

Guided by the themes of infrastructure and spaces of belonging, the editors set out to go beyond the multiple binarisms through which city life on the African continent has often been represented in both scholarly work and in the popular imagination—the traditional and the modern, the mobile and the static, and, not least, the distinction between the rural and the urban itself. Instead, this volume draws our attention both to the labor required for these dualities to become effective and to the multiple ways that they are obviated or exceeded through everyday practices and performances. The collection specifically focuses on what Rosalind Fredericks has called the "arts of citizenship"—that is, the "forms of experimentation, adaptation, and negotiation surrounding claims to the rights and rewards of the city" (5). Attending to these less obvious modalities of ethical and political expression, the chapters draw on ethnography and history to explore how urban citizenship is fashioned and refashioned through aesthetic and spatial practices, religious imaginaries, and judicial and bureaucratic techniques.

The question of who belongs—and how and in which sites such belonging is generated and performed—features centrally throughout the collection. The contingencies and ambivalences of attachment emerge as central threads, most strikingly in AbdouMaliq Simone’s focus on practices of conjunction at work in urban dwellers’ efforts to mobilize resources and make claims on the city; they also feature prominently in Peter Geschiere’s meditation on the funeral as a contested ritual of belonging that mediates relations between city and village, as well as in Christine Ludl’s exploration of the ambiguities in narratives of belonging by Malian and Senegalese migrants in Johannesburg. Such ambivalences are expressed not just in narrative, but also in the experience of space and time. Juan Obarrio’s chapter beautifully excavates the layers of temporality at work in the peri-urban court in Mozambique where colonial, postcolonial, and postsocialist juridical modalities collide to produce novel forms of “customary citizenship.”

If urban belonging often follows lines laid out during the colonial period, there are as many instances in which such historically sedimented forms are crisscrossed by other lines of affiliation, as Jinny Prais shows in her discussion of colonial elites’ claims to urban modernity and the mobilization of class against the dominant colonial focus on ethnicity. The rise of new religious movements generates different modalities and imaginaries of belonging and, with them, new spatial orderings, as Ruth Marshall and Adedamola Osinulu demonstrate in their chapters on practices of Pentecostalism in Lagos.

The second vector that runs through many of the chapters is infrastructure and the built environment. Contributing to the large body of recent engagement with infrastructure in the social sciences and humanities, the essays take infrastructure to be more than a neutral tool for more substantive ends. Instead, infrastructures here emerge as epistemological sites and analytic starting points for the exploration of questions of citizenship, belonging, and the political. Thus, Giles Omezi traces the plans for large-scale infrastructure projects in Lagos as expressions of nationalist belonging and aspirations of modernization, while Emily Brownell examines how colonial and postcolonial planning discourse regarding waste and dirt in Dar es Salaam also produced new languages of inclusion. There is less focus on the materiality of the infrastructure itself, although both Hannah Appel’s chapter on infrastructure and oil in Nigeria and Omezi’s chapter demonstrate how political and economic projects are not merely performed discursively, but also enacted through the built environment itself. As Appel shows in her compelling chapter on urban infrastructures linked to the oil industry in Equatorial Guinea, practices of enclaving become central to oil companies’ abdication of responsibility, even as they demonstrate the material work entailed in such disentanglement. In both of these chapters, infrastructures thus

become discursive and material media for negotiating and refashioning entanglements of citizenship and the state.

If in these chapters infrastructures operate as conduits for symbolic and techno-political forms of power, the volume is particularly compelling in its explorations of the more oblique spaces for political engagement and mobilization. These include sites in which spatial and material practices of citizenship intersect with the discursive and the performative, such as the embodied and aesthetic practices traced by Rémy Bazenguissa-Ganga in his discussion of beautification projects in Brazzaville. But they also include the imaginaries and practices of place-making explored by Rosalind Fredericks in her chapter on hip-hop as a political medium for Senegalese youth. In these various ways, the collection shows the diverse forms and sites in which the arts of citizenship unfold in African cities.

In its focus on the less visible spaces of urban politics and belonging, this collection not only offers a range of nuanced historical and ethnographic studies of urban life, but also provides new insights and avenues for research on citizenship, infrastructures, and the built form. Perhaps most importantly, these essays enable us to think anew about the politics of cities and city-ness in Africa and beyond.

Bush Bound: Young Men and Rural Permanence in Migrant West Africa. Paolo Gaibazzi. New York: Berghahn, 2015. 218 pp.

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BRANDON D. LUNDY

Kennesaw State University

Paolo Gaibazzi commits himself to understanding the shrinking mobility options for Gambian laborers navigating “shifting horizons of (im)possibility” (106). Sabi rural Gambian youth are socialized to *hustle* creatively to improve their standards of living, as a process of “continuous adaptation, reassessment and correction in fields of activities that social actors do not often construct and master” (105). Gaibazzi has revised how to research migration and mobility patterns, making this investigation a game changer within the field. He shows how the rural staging ground, or what he refers to as “village mooring,” is an active place of shifting opportunities, dreams, hardships, and failures for those young men remaining behind. His research achieves a level of analytic clarity that should excite scholars of the contemporary realities of West Africa.

With displaced peoples globally reaching numbers not seen since World War II, this contribution is both timely and critical. Building on Henrik Vigh’s (2006) work on the forms of *social navigation* youth in Guinea-Bissau must master in order to survive, Gaibazzi asks his readers to consider how vulnerable, yet tenacious people use their positionality to

navigate social relationships and interactions that connect them across geographic and socioeconomic spaces, allowing them to move from the bush to the *travel-bush*—their term for the wild, yet legitimized space of travel abroad that can provide the necessary bounty to sustain livelihood. According to Gaibazzi, “this study suggests ways in which we can conceive of and investigate sedentary livelihoods as an integral element of migration. It . . . shows how movement and stillness combine to animate social life” (3). Instead of viewing migration as an alternative to agrarian lifeways, Gaibazzi reframes the issue as an examination of “agrarian life *within* migration” (8) where rural values such as hard work, perseverance, hospitality, respect, and social participation and (re)production are embodied as necessary for both successful sedentary and mobile livelihoods.

During his 17 months of fieldwork from 2006 to 2008 and in 2012, Gaibazzi embarked on “an apprenticeship in Sabi’s life-world” (20) as a way to “contextualize [his] interlocutors’ life trajectories” (21). He participated in their everyday lives and conducted an extensive oral historiography of the village and its families. The lessons learned through this intensive ethnographic investigation provide compelling evidence and ample analysis of the effects of restricted mobility on migrant-sending communities. This study shows that it quite literally takes a village to enable migrants to migrate from the Global South to the Global North and that the benefits and consequences of labor migration are multidimensional and multidirectional. Migrants and stay-at-homes can improve their economic situations together or jointly suffer the burdens of high expectations, fewer and fewer opportunities for unskilled laborers abroad, and the “double crisis” of de-agrarianization in Africa and the ever-increasing restrictions on legal rights to travel.

In Gaibazzi’s introduction, he reengages the stalwart anthropological concepts of livelihood, migration, and identity by weaving them into an alternative story of West African migration not yet told, “how movement and stillness combine to animate social life” (3). He posits that migrants and stayers have the capacity to act through established “relational potentialities” (9).

Chapter 1 focuses on the making and unmaking of the village he calls Sabi. The village emerges through historical processes as a somewhat disconnected transnational site for farmer-traders. The community was embedded in shifting geographies of agricultural trade, with international emigration eventually becoming a common form of livelihood for many Sabi households. As agriculture lost its appeal as an investment opportunity, traveling and farming lost their complementary relationship. The “rural ethos,” however, remains crucial as a foundational identity element for Sabi migrants. Chapter 2 fleshes out this idea that the agrarian ethos of Soninke migration is an important form of cultural reproduction, “where boys are turned into

hard-working, disciplined and compassionate *hustlers*” (64). In other words, suffering in the fields and ghettos of Sabi makes one a potentially successful hustler in Europe.

Life histories of two age-mates are explored in chapter 3 to show social navigation in action as their livelihood efforts cut across both moving and staying. Ultimately Gaibazzi argues that the real endgame for these young men is emplacement, or the ability to assist oneself or one’s family to stay put at home, not as “bare immobility” (chapter 4) in which the stress from a lack of opportunities creates a sense of paralysis from “just sitting” by eroding confidence and determination, but instead as a realization of the “horizon of opportunities” (113).

Chapter 5 discerns Sabi from other sites of emigration by showing that male-headed households remain the norm. As a direct result of the increased importance placed on mobility, however, a slight generational shift has occurred: the youngest male within the extended family, rather than the eldest, is now responsible for family lands. As such, the last son is often pressured to “sit at home” to manage family affairs. While a semblance of prestige remains for those who stay, it is accompanied by declining rural incomes that “exacerbate dependence on off-farm incomes” (147). Chapter 6 explores the revitalization of age groups as a way to reclaim rural agency through civic reform efforts in Sabi. Active citizenship encouraged young men’s autonomy in decision making. These equalizing efforts, however, were only partially successful.

Ultimately, Gaibazzi’s *Bush Bound* is about imagining mobility differently. He “considers the possibility of an analytics of mobility based on fixity” (183) that grapples with the meaning of the “freedom to stay” (182) for young peasants in contemporary West Africa. The farmer-trader is now the agrarian-migrant in the Gambia whose “waithood” impedes livelihood, tests social organization, fashions cultural identity, and continues a form of structural violence through forced (im)mobility.

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MARYSIA H. GALBRAITH
University of Alabama

Considering the overwhelming predominance of Roman Catholicism in contemporary Poland, it may seem like a

surprising place to study religious pluralism. Nevertheless, Agnieszka Pasięka convincingly shows the ethnographic and theoretical relevance of such a project. Her book functions on two levels: as a fine-grained analysis of the religious practice of inhabitants of a multireligious area within a mostly religiously homogeneous country, and as a theoretical inquiry into the ways in which the exercise and expression of religious pluralism can nevertheless lend support to “naturalized” hierarchies between ethnic and religious groups. Pasięka highlights *pluralism from below* as a means of rethinking religious hierarchy and pluralism in Poland and beyond. Through careful attention to local practice, she shows how ethnic and religious minorities respond to the dominant Polish-Catholic narrative in ways that “inscribe hierarchy into pluralism” (3). With the acceptance of Catholic dominance, unequal relations are maintained even as pluralism is allowed.

Of key relevance as well is the distinctive link between church and state in Poland. Whereas the dominant national narrative has emphasized how the Catholic Church has bolstered Polish national identity in the struggle to regain state autonomy, Pasięka inverts this relationship, asking why the state allows the Catholic Church to assert so much influence in Polish politics.

Building on the practice theory of Pierre Bourdieu and Sherry Ortner, Pasięka illustrates the degree to which habitus is durable, and yet subject to creative use by local agents. The first chapter explores Poland’s history of ethnic and religious pluralism, emphasizing how periodic disruptions contributed to the homogenizing of Catholic Poland. She describes the processes by which diverse ethnic and religious communities came to be over 90 percent Polish and Catholic, and explores the effects of the tendency for different religions to be linked to ethnic distinctions: Catholic Poles, Orthodox Ukrainians, Jewish Jews, and Evangelical Germans. Correspondingly, even when “Polish tolerance” for diversity is celebrated—in recollections of earlier periods when Poland encompassed multiple ethnic and religious groups, and when inclusion has been encouraged as an important part of postsocialist democratization—the link between Polishness and Catholicism continues to be viewed as “natural” and “special.”

In ensuing chapters Pasięka focuses on everyday practice, seeking explanations for the stubborn persistence of religious hierarchy, where Catholicism maintains a privileged position as the “traditional” religion while other faiths are delegitimized as “threatening” or “new.” The specific focus is on the making and debating of religious pluralism in the Rozstaje (a pseudonym) district of the Beskid Mountains in southern Poland, a region distinguished by the presence of at least seven religious communities. Even here, Roman Catholics comprise the majority. The most numerous minority groups are Orthodox Christians and Greek Catholics, who are associated with

ethnic Ukrainians and Lemkos. Smaller groups include Pentecostals, Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and a handful of Buddhists. Jews comprise yet another religious community; they are no longer present, but their traces remain in cemeteries, in buildings, and in social memory.

Pasięka examines the making of pluralism in everyday activities in Rozstaje—for example, a project in which schoolchildren photographed places that were important to them, their older relatives, and their village. Other activities she describes include ethnic and religious gatherings, relations among neighbors, and intermarriage. In an innovative chapter that follows Lemko carolers as they sing to their neighbors, Pasięka uses their path through the village as a vehicle for a “mosaic of stories” (116) about historical events and religious pluralism.

Pluralism also resides in local places. For instance, villages that were abandoned during World War II and its aftermath take on a “second life” via tourism by those curious about their former multiethnic residents (87). Pasięka notes the importance of place for local residents: “In Rozstaje, attachment to place constitutes one of the most meaningful manifestations of ‘sameness’ and as such may lead to a temporary reconfiguration of majority-minority relations” (90). For instance, avoiding disruptions on the community and family levels can make residents “pragmatic about religion” in everyday practice.

In her exploration of pluralism from below, Pasięka challenges contemporary discourse about “multicultural Poland.” She argues this is a misapplication of the term because it conflates multiculturalism with the mere presence of different ethnic and religious groups; in fact, minorities remain subordinate to the overwhelmingly Catholic Polish ethnic majority. For Rozstaje residents, “multiculturalism” is a commercial slogan used only in the context of tourism. They favor the term *ecumenism* to describe the multiple religions in the area and to make claims about positive relations among them all. And yet, the normative entanglement of religion and ethnicity contributes to the fragility of local ecumenism. The most striking example of this can be seen in the controversy over a proposal to add Lemko place-names to official city and village signs in the region. Through a combination of opposition by Catholic priests and the failure of authorities to promote the proposal as a community measure, the vote failed. The case demonstrates “how religious communities’ demands for recognition may inadvertently perpetuate the discourse of exclusion” (208). The perpetuation of religious hierarchy is further seen in the Lemko residents’ comments afterward; although disappointed by the outcome of the vote, they said they never expected their Catholic neighbors to agree to the measure. Some practitioners of minority religions noted, “There is tolerance until somebody sticks his neck out” (196).

Hierarchy and Pluralism makes a valuable contribution to the anthropological literature on contemporary religion, practice theory, and postsocialism. It looks beyond common dichotomies (majority and minority, hierarchy and pluralism) and exposes “blurring” boundaries on the level of lived religion. Actual relations reveal shifting interreligious alliances and divisions, as well as conflicts within religious communities, not just between them. Hierarchical pluralism is so hard to challenge because of the way it is naturalized and reproduced in everyday practice, and in discourse from below and from the top down.

The Slain God: Anthropologists and the Christian Faith.

Timothy Larsen. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. 256 pp.

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KHALED FURANI

Tel Aviv University

What if the concepts anthropologists cherish actually supplant essential struggles raging within and about their souls? For example, in what ways is E. B. Tylor’s notion of animism a repudiation of Catholicism, or Mary Douglas’s *Natural Symbols* its vindication? In *The Slain God*, historian and theologian Timothy Larsen pursues this intriguing proposition.

In a 1984 interview, Edmund Leach noted that much of the history of anthropology will remain ungraspable if attention is not given to its practitioners’ personal histories. With the pitfalls and privileges of being an outsider to the anthropological “tribe,” Larsen attends to the personal life stories and faiths of six anthropological chieftains, and in so doing, he presents precious insights into the history of modern anthropology. Precious, because Larsen inquires into the lives of anthropological masters in ways necessary for comprehending not only the knowledge they have propounded, but also the entire enterprise of modern anthropological thought. For example, Larsen provides us with tools for assessing anthropology’s claims to being a secular discipline, one officially emancipated from theological questions ever since Tylor (1871) proclaimed as much in his *Primitive Culture*.

The anthropological sirdars whose lives—both scholarly and private—Larsen examines include Tylor, James Frazer, E. E. Evans-Pritchard, and Mary Douglas, each within individual chapters, with a fifth chapter dedicated jointly to Victor and Edith Turner. Larsen’s account runs two concurrent discussions, although they are not necessarily equally attended, and hence their straddling is at times bumpy: how these anthropologists related to a Christianity they either despised or defended, and how they personally

related to each other as professionals with discordant affiliations to their religious faiths.

The Slain God exposes us to Tylor’s wife’s diary narrations of their Quaker wedding and his Anglican funeral. Frazer’s letters reveal a concealed hostility toward both Tylor and, because of their religiosity, his own parents. Regarding Evans-Pritchard, the singular recipient of nine *Festschriften*, we learn of his publicly astringent views against Bronislaw Malinowski, his theft of classified British intelligence documents on faith minorities in the Middle East (Alawites and Druzes), the Anglicanism he shed and the Catholicism he adopted in Libya following his sojourn with Muslim Bedouins, and the omnipresence of books by spiritual authors such as the Desert Fathers on his bedside table. We are also treated to Douglas’s admiration for her Hindu and Jewish supervisors, M. N. Srinivas and Franz Steiner, respectively; along with Evans-Pritchard, they rendered Oxford University a refuge for Douglas’s flourishing Catholicism, the very Catholicism she championed via her work defending notions of natural symbols and hierarchy. If hierarchy was Douglas’s surrogate for the Catholic Church, *communitas* was Victor Turner’s code for Christianity, specifically its Pentecost. The tour Larsen begins with Tylor using Mexican paganism to invalidate things Christian he completes with Edith Turner marshaling paganism to defend Christianity, as when honoring Victor by hosting a Ndembu funeral ceremony for him at her home.

In the book’s architectural design there appear to be two governing patterns, one for the chapters and another for the book as a whole. With a subtle texture, each chapter weaves its way along by first opening into the protagonists’ personal lives, then discussing their ideas and works, and finally rebounding to the lyrical once again. As for the structure of the book entire, whereas Larsen identifies a ring composition, I think it more closely resembles a stone arch design. We can see the book’s first two chapters as comprising one side of the arch; they focus on Tylor and Frazer, two detractors of Christianity, specifically its Catholic traditions. The final two chapters, those focusing on Christianity’s defenders, Douglas and the Turners, form the other side of the arch, thus making the middle chapter on Evans-Pritchard a keystone. It is with Evans-Pritchard that a turning point occurs in the book’s progression, with implications for the discipline’s own unfolding. European rationality is not simply put in its place by Evans-Pritchard’s study of so-called primitives’ rationality; his own life repudiates rationality’s severance from religion. He poetically declares: “That faith now burns a stronger flame . . . / Till I can place in thine my hand / And feel today a child again” (118).

In a passionate and engaging prose, Larsen brilliantly upends the anthropologists’ language to explain their own thoughts—language that originally had been deployed to

explain the thoughts of others in distant cultures. This upending is evident when Larsen identifies Tylor's notion of animism as itself an instance of "survivals" from his Quaker past. We also see it when he links the Turners' transition from communism to Catholicism and from Manchester to Cornell with Victor's theory of liminality. One pedagogical profit of this technique is lively as well as masterly—even if at times awkward—summative presentations of these masters' thoughts that seem to come with Larsen's foreignness to the tribe. Consider, for example, his vivid presentation of Douglas's work as emblematically able "to steal the clothes, as it were, off her opponents: it is the modernizers who are prudes and the traditionalists who are sensualists" (144) and his depiction of Evans-Pritchard's project pointing to how earlier anthropologists such as Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, Tylor, and Frazer were wrong in "exaggerating both the extent to which Europeans are rational and the extent to which primitive people are irrational" (89).

But more than vivid summations useful for introducing anthropological theory and theorists to neophytes—and for reminding the forgetful—Larsen's reviews are resuscitative, in that he brings us to theological recesses of major cherished anthropological lore and lives. And this resuscitative power takes more than one form. One form is that of anthropologists professing their doctrines, as in the chapter containing powerful narratives of the aesthetic-maturation elucidating Evans-Pritchard's analytic thrust; when asked about becoming Catholic, he replies, "Bad Catholic though I be, I would rather be a bad one than not one at all" (92). Another form is the linking of intellectual pedigrees launched in theology to recognizably anthropological, which is to say secular, achievements (e.g., Eden and Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* in Victor Turner's concept of *communitas* and blessed sacrament in Douglas's *Natural Symbols*).

These intelligibility, clarity, and resuscitation effects do not preclude the book infrequently veering to distractions (such as the acrimony between Evans-Pritchard and Malinowski), drifting from the professed subject of the book of anthropologists' relation to the Christian faith, or occasionally resorting to obscure evidence whose presentation does not sufficiently support the proposed claims (e.g., criticism Larsen cites about Tylor's notion of survivals). Occasional diversions notwithstanding, the book converges into a gem of a question that it is not poised to answer: What has made catholicity of thought such a potent enabler of anthropology's vitality?

For this reason the book offers, if read carefully and patiently, nothing short of *thaumazein* (wonderment), going beyond eliciting sheer curiosity, about the thinking of anthropological thought. For example, it engendered for this reader the question: What are the ways that this reasoning otherwise known as anthropology is a form of survival, rehabilitation, or accommodation in the

encounter with modernity? Furthermore, might the answer lie in the realization that the Other whom anthropologists may confront does not necessarily reside beyond the modern intellectual metropolis, but rather in their discipline's own subject formation (e.g., Christianity, Middle Ages, Catholicism), superseding this or that object of inquiry?

Anthropologists do not generally need reminding about the power of vision that can emerge from vulnerable and unassuming foreignness, and this book holds just such a power. Thus Larsen convincingly demonstrates that Quakers, Dominicans, the Vulgate, St. Augustine, and Anders Nygren bear no less relevance than do studies of Anahuac, Nuer, Lele, or Ndembu for comprehending what anthropologists have been doing all along.

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Aurality: Listening and Knowledge in Nineteenth-Century Colombia. Ana María Ochoa Gautier. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014. 266 pp.

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WILLIAM HOPE

Knox College

Aurality: Listening and Knowledge in Nineteenth-Century Colombia is a significant contribution to the burgeoning field of sound studies. Ana María Ochoa Gautier adeptly guides the reader across complex scales of analysis using well-selected historical case studies. She argues that soundings, aural perceptions, and practices of listening of both the Colombian elite and politically marginalized populations were *inscribed*—what she defines as "the act of recording a listening into a particular technology of dissemination and transmission" (7)—across the written archives. These acoustic presences provide insights into local contestations regarding cultural policies of the postcolonial nation-state and the constitution of the "properly" and "less than fully" human. *Aurality* articulates these conflicts with a broader global history of changes in knowledge making during the 19th century, as new disciplines of Western modern science reconceived the place and role of sound at the intersections of "nature" and "culture."

The book does this via a series of chapters that work as self-contained essays. For example the first chapter, "On Howls and Pitches," disentangles complex social interactions between Creole elites (and their European counterparts) and the *bogas* (boat rowers) who navigated

Colombia's principal waterway, the Magdalena River, in long, hollowed-out canoes. These free men of mixed African and Amerindian origin ensured the movement of people, goods, and information between the Caribbean coast and interior populations, including Bogotá. Throughout the travel writings of natural and social scientists, among them Alexander von Humboldt, are inscriptions of their intrigue and visceral disturbance with the rhythmic stamping and call-and-response vocalizations the *bogas* used to coordinate their labor—sounds repeatedly characterized as “screams” and the “howls of animal.” This fascinating case study reveals the different ways sound mediates relations, as much between people as with the natural world. Not coincidentally, such subaltern voices disrupted conventional categories of speech, song, and “natural sounds” precisely at a time of consolidation of the Western disciplines of music and acoustics.

“On Popular Song” examines the power of song by attending to the ways Colombian intellectuals, in their novels, poems, literary histories, and popular songbooks, gave voice to competing visions of Colombia's national cultural expression. For the Catholic Conservative José María Vergara y Vergara, the question of the national character of popular expression entailed a revision of the colonial legacy that upheld the political and religious motives of the conquest while incorporating the cultural diversity of the country. This reproduction of colonial racial politics in the search for national “traditions” institutionalized the study of regional cultural expressions in a way that prescribed stereotypical associations of identity, place, and how people should (and should not) sound. In sharp contrast, the Radical Liberal Candelario Obeso, considered to be the nation's first major writer of African descent, deployed a politics of inscription that served as a powerful critique of the *costumbrista* national imaginings of Bogotá's lettered elite. Obeso's poetry accentuated the acoustic qualities of Colombia's African-Caribbean populations while simultaneously exposing the arbitrariness of orthographic conventions and the historical silencings embodied in such terms as *popular*.

“On the Ethnographic Ear” explores how two influential Colombian philologists, through novel approaches in their studies of indigenous languages, challenged the political authority of the dominant Creole elite and their marginalization of indigenous populations. These linguistic studies—based on an ethnographically informed “politics of listening” that argued for hearing indigenous voices—became ideological battlefields for conservatives and liberals, as exemplified by the intense dispute between Jorge Isaacs and the conservative “grammarian president” Miguel Antonio Caro. Caro attacked Isaacs's secular humanism, his appreciation of indigenous languages as a means of reimagining the history of the Americas, and his critique

of the governance of indigenous populations by fiercely asserting that the stability of the nation rested on the “interrelationship between grammar, faith, and science” (162). Accordingly, the lack of “elegance of sound” in the “barbaric languages” was offered as proof that such people were incapable of literary (thus fully human) expression, thereby legitimating the political-religious processes of conversion and state disciplining. These authoritarian grammarian orientations were enacted into law, thus codifying the governance of indigenous peoples and their displacement in the national imaginary.

Building on this discussion, “On Vocal Immunity” examines how the grammarian presidents enacted a cultural politics of socializing the senses with the purpose of educating national subjects; that involved training the ear, the voice, and their written expression through what Ochoa Gautier terms the *anthropotechnologies* of eloquence, etymology, and orthography. Such anthropotechnologies, understood by Ochoa Gautier as techniques employed to mark the distinctions between humans and nonhumans, were utilized to engender a sensory education of “appropriate persons” that standardized selected versions of the national voice as a means of unifying language and “the people.” This tactic simultaneously immunized hegemonic formulations of proper sounding and writing from potentially disruptive or undesirable cultural expressions coming from subaltern groups that constituted “the people.” On this point, some readers will perhaps find the language of *Aurality*, such as *anthropotechnologies* and *zoopolitics*, somewhat cumbersome and jargon heavy. My own sense is that these particular concepts could have benefited from more explication in the introduction to ensure greater intelligibility. Still, the overall argument is clear: the relation between the voice and the ear was reconceived during this time in ways that served to distinguish not only what was understood as uniquely human relative to the natural world, but also what was “not fully human” in the context of unequal social power relations and political conflict.

Ana María Ochoa Gautier has crafted a book that feels both intellectually relevant and highly relatable, establishing a welcome rapport with the reader as she recounts her own intellectual and personal journeys through the research process. (“This book was not initially about listening, the voice, or the nineteenth century,” she writes [ix].) Indeed, *Aurality* concludes with a deep sense of urgency regarding social and political engagements concerning current modes of knowledge making and the emergent uses of such knowledge as powerful tools of governance. By articulating the political and epistemic transformations of the 19th century, *Aurality* achieves its goal of establishing a critical vantage point for making sense of the contemporary transformations that are shaping the 21st.

Flowers That Kill: Communicative Opacity in Political Spaces. Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015. 255 pp.

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JASON DANELY

Oxford Brookes University

If culture is the primary object of anthropological analysis, then it is most readily grasped through the ordered meanings that allow people to communicate with one another. Communication is the means by which ideas and values are learned and reproduced, exchanged and negotiated. While meanings are frequently contested or resisted, they nonetheless constitute durable patterns, narratives of identity and belonging, metaphors that reach deep into the felt experience of the social world. The contribution of anthropology has been to show that such symbolic communication, while seemingly effortless and unproblematic from the perspective of the culturally fluent, entails meanings that are often ambiguous, partial or open-ended, and susceptible to distortion and manipulation.

Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney's *Flowers That Kill* examines symbols in the context of authoritarian political systems that consolidate and legitimate their power by identifying themselves with popular cultural symbols. The most interesting aspect of this book is the choice of symbols used to illustrate the central argument. Instead of the overt monuments to authority that are erected and later toppled in protest or the propaganda posters that are pasted up and then defaced or ripped from the walls, Ohnuki-Tierney explores symbols that are ubiquitous and quotidian, seemingly beyond critical consideration. Flowers, be they the cherry blossom in Japan or the rose across Europe, bend but do not fall. They possess another, perhaps more insidious sort of power that bears anthropological attention.

The central argument running throughout the book focuses on the seeming oxymoron of what Ohnuki-Tierney calls *communicative opacity*. Meanings, she argues, are "externalized" in such everyday forms as images, words, and objects, becoming part of the furniture: the food we eat, the political parties we support. They circulate between and within different strata of society, never fully revealing themselves, but offering polyvalent and polysemous idioms mapped onto our feelings and habits. The best example of this from the book is the cherry blossom, whose beauty has been celebrated in Japan in countless forms for centuries, and which condenses the meanings of love and youth, masculine and feminine, sorrow and madness, and the ephemerality of life as well as its transcendence. The book details how interest in the flower grew as leaders and commoners alike adopted the values, aesthetic sensibilities, and rituals of the cherry blossom, and how this changed

both the natural and ideological landscape of Japan. We are reminded here of Clifford Geertz's (2005) pithy description of culture as "metasocial commentary" or "a story they tell themselves about themselves" (82). As Japan became a modern nation-state and an imperial power, the story of the cherry blossom became a semiotic link between a new cultural identity and a mythological past, the violence of war and the most sublime beauty of life.

This meticulously researched, clear, and concise illustration of the political implications of communicative opacity is repeated consistently in the other examples Ohnuki-Tierney deploys, but perhaps most successfully in her comparison with the European rose, whose meaning she tracks from its native soils to its multiple disseminations across Hitler's Germany, Stalin's USSR, and the Socialist International. Ohnuki-Tierney's detailed descriptions in each of these cases are fascinating and fit beautifully with her thesis. While she owes much to Geertz's interpretativism, her appreciation for the ways these symbols condense often-polarized meanings is even more reminiscent of Victor Turner's conceptualization of symbols as forces that instigate social action; they do not merely represent or express ideas in a more familiar or palatable way, but also have real power to change society.

Aside from the exegesis on European roses, *Flowers That Kill* revisits material that will be familiar to readers of Ohnuki-Tierney's other books. While monkeys, rice, and the emperor are all fascinating symbols worthy of the books she has already written, there is a sense here that they might be interpreted to fit the argument. Rather than grounding the symbols in thick descriptions of firsthand observations or linguistic analyses of interviews or field recordings, the author compiled the symbols in this book from various documents and assembled them into a more coherent narrative. The reader might ask then, as I did at several points, why these symbols and not others? If flowers, then why not colors, or gestures, sports, or common words like *honor* or *love*? Just how broad our definition of communicative opacity must be or what might delimit it is never made entirely clear.

It is tempting to draw comparisons between *Flowers That Kill* and other works that focus on material culture and the transformations of meaning and value. But applying a political-economic framework similar to the late Sidney Mintz's work on sugar to objects like cherry blossoms or the emperor would not make much sense. Ohnuki-Tierney's focus on the aesthetics of ideology echoes Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of *habitus*, *distinction*, and *misrecognition* (as well as Friedrich Engels's *false consciousness* and Antonio Gramsci's notion that hegemony works through a lived system of values), but there is only passing mention of a connection between Marxist thought and communicative opacity. Again, given this rather loose, indirect connection to economic life and

the dearth of fieldwork data, these symbols (with the notable exception of rice) are easy to dismiss as peripheral to other forces. The flowers may have been painted on the plane, but did they make that plane a deadly weapon or the pilot willing to die to protect a national identity?

Ohnuki-Tierney is forthcoming about the limitations of her material in exploring the full implications of communicative opacity, but there is also much to appreciate about her contention that quotidian political symbols and the stories they tell mask as much as they reveal. The examples from Japanese culture are succinct and interesting, and they are made even more accessible through the cross-cultural comparative lens. *Flowers That Kill* is a timely reminder of the limits of resistance and the power of symbols in a time where entrenched ideologies continue to propel political conflicts from all sides.

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The Human Right to Dominate. Nicola Perugini and Neve Gordon. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. 200 pp.

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HILLA DAYAN

Amsterdam University College

In the midst of the refugee crisis in Europe in 2015, many recalled Hannah Arendt's potent critique of human rights. The ultimate failure of human rights, most glaring when it is mobilized by and for the stateless, is that for those whose citizenship is annulled, denied, or repressed, having human rights guarantees no protection but merely emphasizes a state of imminent danger. To have human rights is in fact to struggle for the right to have rights. Absent powerful actors who can enforce such rights, to merely be recognized as having them is to have no rights at all. Nicola Perugini and Neve Gordon's superbly engaging and inspiring account extends the critique of human rights far beyond this thesis that over time has become an ahistorical truism. Revisiting it and many other strands of critiques of human rights, the authors sharpen our understanding of its contemporary politics and enable a sobering assessment of notable developments in the field.

Perugini and Gordon analyze an array of mind-boggling phenomena. They cover, among other things, the remarkable rise of conservative right-wing human rights discourse and mobilization. They explore in depth the convergence of liberals and conservatives around shared

understandings of the human rights doctrine. They discuss *inversions*, situations in which organizations with radically different political agendas mobilize around similar articles of the doctrine. The authors also address the militarization of human rights that is most glaring in advocacy campaigns mobilizing state-sanctioned violence. This trend is not new, but today it is normalized to such an extent that it is hardly debated, and many mainstream human rights organizations subscribe to it. The state of emergency still in effect in France at the time of this writing, and the domestic and international militancy unleashed in response to the November 2015 attack in Paris, suggests that human rights rationalizations for war no longer simply sustain European democracies' impunity beyond borders, but also ensure state impunity and sanctions of its militaristic violence domestically.

This last point goes to the central argument of the book, which is that the expansion of human rights and its divergent appropriations paradoxically contributed to the unchecked increase of state power and sovereign domination more than to the protection and empowerment of human beings. True, the human rights doctrine has powerful framing effects, Perugini and Gordon claim, and these were always political in nature. This necessarily implies that what we are dealing with here is not brute force but a complex and contingent phenomenon of power with the potential for being appropriated by various agents. Hence the important clarification that "there is no historical or logical necessity in the relationship between human rights and domination or human rights and liberation" (16). Plunging the reader into the dark dystopia of human rights, nevertheless, this depressing account is a timely polemic against the increasingly detached from reality scholarly literature that celebrates any expansion of human rights as "an answer to war." But polemics is really not what is at stake here. The point is at once more subtle and more profound: we must forgo any notion of the purity of human rights—by lamenting its abduction by conservatives or corruption by militarization—for a more robust understanding that it is one of the manifestations of contemporary sovereign power.

Through a close examination of the politics of human rights in Israel/Palestine, the primary case study, some of the glaring consequences of human rights as sovereign power begin to unravel. To say that the case epitomizes human rights' "perplexities," as Arendt once put it, would be an understatement. Examining human rights in the context of Israel/Palestine, the authors show that rather than presenting any meaningful challenge to power, it fortifies the current Israeli regime. Human rights work detrimentally contributes to the "politicide" of Palestinians, as the late Israeli sociologist Baruch Kimmerling called it; among other negative effects, Palestinians are reduced to individual plaintiffs who seek legal protection from a state that

denies them human dignity. The doctrine is employed in ways that undermine their ability to survive and resist as a people. Israel/Palestine is symptomatic in that it quite possibly represents human rights' worst known record as a doctrine for the powerless and the stateless in postwar history. But the authors are also careful to show how this cumulative effect—domination—stems not from repression but from the dialectic between human rights opposition (both Jewish Israeli and Palestinian) and sovereign power. This argument, inspired by literature on governmentality, is eminently convincing. The conclusion they draw is far from offering a quick fix or moralizing admonitions, yet it is radical: human rights should be abandoned when it is aiding power, or it must be reinvented and reappropriated in ways that do not. Their most groundbreaking and original contribution is therefore in laying the foundation for a new epistemology of human rights that counters sovereign power rather than affirming it. It is worth mentioning that the authors are practitioners who had dirtied their hands and know very well the devil's dilemmas one encounters in the field. Their major contribution is not to push for reform but to revolutionize our thinking about human rights. Indeed, ways ahead for practitioners such as de-legalizing, democratizing and de-professionalizing the field are only briefly sketched in a second order of importance and at the very end of the book.

Some minor considerations worth mentioning pertain primarily to the analysis of human rights politics in Israel/Palestine. Israeli human rights NGOs illustrate for the authors both the proximity of human rights opposition to state power and more specifically, in the Israeli context, the liberal-conservative convergence that precludes any serious challenge to the perpetuation of Jewish supremacy and the occupation. Yet, the authors do not consider the fact that Israeli human rights NGOs (like many NGOs worldwide) are also bastions of privilege. Their demographic makeup, compounded overwhelmingly of the Ashkenazi elite, is a dimension of convergence with domination, yet this dimension remains obscured. Organizations such as the grassroots Mizrahi feminist Achoti (Sister) movement, for instance, are much less well funded and are in a less privileged position. Furthermore, one has to be careful not to inflate Israeli civil society power vis-à-vis the state. In this account all organizations that are not right-wing are bundled under the title "liberal" and hence treated as complicit in varying degrees with state power. In short, this portrayal glosses over some aspects of domination and the differences in tactics and politics between mainstream liberal Zionist organizations and more radical ones. The latter have been thoroughly ignored and vilified, so their part in the perpetuation of domination must not be exaggerated, especially in their current and incrementally worsening status as "implanted" and "foreign-funded enemies." Associating persecuted political dissidents with sovereign

power is rather problematic. I also doubt how much legitimization power their tokenistic existence still generates. Advocate Michael Sfard's observation (43) that the Israeli regime thrives on human rights opposition that enables it to assess and implement its policies was highly relevant and poignant until very recently. Yet, more and more the Israeli regime seems to not require any opposition whatsoever for legitimization. As I write this, good Zionist liberals such as the group of ex-soldiers "breaking the silence" are also characterized as objective enemies of the state, and there is little public outcry. Thus the very assumption of a liberal foundation to the state, which used to be the reason why deploying human rights ever made sense, is nowadays thoroughly shaken. So long as this trend of treating any form of opposition as anti-Israel continues to work politically, we will have to modify our understanding of the relationship between the idea of human rights and power in Israel accordingly.

A more generally applicable point of critique concerns the framing of right-wing tactics as conservative appropriations or right-wing human rights. Perugini and Gordon connect this phenomenon in Israel/Palestine to the global trend of human rights' expanding domination. It is, however, worth questioning whether the increasing effectiveness of settlers' groups at getting what they want is in fact due to an appropriation and reinterpretation of human rights by the Israeli right wing. Settlers' human rights activism is anchored in their very strong social and communal sense of entitlement infused by religious authority. The beneficiaries of huge investments from the state, foreign ultraconservatives, and a local alliance of capitalists and real estate mongers, settlers hardly need human rights for legitimization and power. The phenomenon seems to take place on the margins of otherwise more dominant and traditional forms of religious and communal organization. As such, the authors' framing of the organization Im Tirtzu (If You Will It) as conservative appropriation struck me as particularly misplaced. This "spin machine" is allegedly directly funded by the prime minister's office, so it is nothing more than one of the many propaganda tools of the Netanyahu government. It is by no means, even if it may claim to be so, a human rights organization, and it is plainly wrong to accept any such self-depictions at face value. That the human rights field opened up and expanded with appropriations of conservatives and the right wing is undoubtedly true in Israel and elsewhere. But we must be careful in what we can seriously consider an expansion and what must be regarded as naked sovereign power.

There is so much in this book that is disheartening, but this reader at least finds some glimmerings of hope in its analysis. The authors acknowledge that, while in general, Israel has used the human rights framework to work against the Palestinian cause, human rights rhetoric has aided it in at least two major ways: by globalizing the Palestinian

struggle and by forcing Israel into a diplomatic process in Oslo. For Palestinians, the possibility that the globalization of the struggle will eventually be the decisive game changer cannot be precluded. This globalization is what is at stake also for the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement, so it is hardly surprising that the BDS has not been critical of the human rights doctrine but is rather applying it. What are the chances that the Palestinians, of all stateless people, will develop human rights in a wholly different way that has not yet been thought of, tried, or tested as this wonderful book urges? Maybe this is not so unlikely after all. Those most disillusioned by human rights and most aware of its limitations are quite possibly in the best position for driving forward the rewriting of the history of human rights in seeking ethical, political solutions to their disenfranchisement.

Jaffa Shared and Shattered: Contrived Coexistence in Israel/Palestine. Daniel Monterescu. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015. 384 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/amet.12328

FIONA WRIGHT

University of Cambridge and Kenyon Institute, Council for British Research in the Levant

Jaffa Shared and Shattered is an impressive book based on over a decade of field and archival research that itself builds on the author's childhood in the "mixed town" that is the object of his study. Covering extensive historical and ethnographic ground, Daniel Monterescu paints a complex picture of Jaffa's Palestinian and Jewish residents that successfully disabuses readers of any essentialist or reductive understandings that all too often characterize popular and scholarly discourse on Jaffa as well as on Palestine/Israel more broadly. In this the author successfully achieves his aim of critiquing what he calls "methodological nationalism" (34), the habit of scholarly work to reproduce ideologically loaded categories of the nation-state in analyses of sites of encounter between ethnic Others. Instead, Monterescu argues, we gain a more accurate sociological insight through attention to Jaffa as an "open wound" (11) in which the relations among its inhabitants can be seen not only in national terms (Palestinian/Israeli, Arab/Jewish) but also as refractions of class, gender, and a multitude of political subjectivities.

The ethnographic focus of the book is thus wide-ranging and refreshing, introducing us to such diverse interlocutors as the elderly Jaffa civil society organizer who is the only remaining inhabitant of the town's pre-1948 Palestinian elite, the well-to-do Moroccan Jewish pensioner who eats breakfast every day with her impoverished Muslim neighbor, the Jewish and Palestinian gentrifiers who sometimes also cooperate with more veteran residents in

their anti-gentrification activism, and the many Palestinian and Jewish artists, poets, and activists whose words and reflections Monterescu often uses to frame his own analyses. The author weaves descriptions and interpretations of all of these into each of the book's three sections: a theoretical and historical introduction in part 1, a close study of processes of gentrification in part 2, and, in part 3, an eclectic pairing of two particularly ethnographically rich chapters—one focusing on the life histories of elderly Jaffa residents, and one an ethnography of the fragile coalitions that arose as Jaffa's response to Israel's 2011 social justice protests. This empirical range and the author's deft movement between historical and ethnographic modalities are the book's great strengths, and they effectively demonstrate one of Monterescu's main arguments about the need to unsettle prevailing modes of describing and theorizing in and about Palestine/Israel.

An equally ambitious attempt to develop a comparative analytic vocabulary for studies of mixed cities is less convincing, however, given questions it raises about the faithfulness of Monterescu's analysis to his ethnographic material as well as about certain blind spots in the ethnography itself. As part of his criticism of nationalist and ideologically driven representations of his field, Monterescu draws upon notions of ambivalence, hybridity, and indeterminacy, among an array of other conceptual terminology ostensibly drawn from sociology and cultural theory. Thus, for example, the intriguing case of Palestinian male teenagers adopting Jewish names in order to date Jewish girls is interpreted within the theoretical framework of hybridity and ambivalence as "a momentary liberation from the normative gendered chains of Arab society and culture" (56). This focus on the liberatory aspects of such practices only briefly acknowledges the history of oppression they also carry, failing to ask why such "hybridity" is embraced in this example only by Palestinians. Young Jewish men are unlikely to rename themselves in parallel ways, as they do not feel driven to hide their identity in the same ways as Palestinian teenagers sometimes do. A somewhat romanticized version of ambivalence thus comes to the fore as moments of disenfranchisement, symbolic and physical violence, and sadness are touched on but then subsumed into a broader analysis emphasizing the positivity of ambivalence and how it enables "creative urban agency" (286). It is certainly pressing to write a less monolithic view of both Palestinian and Jewish Israeli subjectivity and agency than is often proposed, as much of this ethnography does, but this must also account for the damaging effects of a troubled history.

To this end, further reflection on many of the narratives and subject positions described in the book would have enriched its theoretical scope. The author cites as a case of hopeful subversion, for example, the Palestinian filmmaker Scandar Copti's ironic tour of Jaffa's history—a semi-fictionalized history presented simultaneously as

performance and as alternative tourism but that is also charged with anger and political critique. In an interview, Copti describes this and other work as playing on the ways that “people are indeed strangers to each other” (93), such that Monterescu might also have lingered on the melancholy left behind by the violence this chapter of the book reveals. Jaffa’s “deathly tropes” (101) are present in many of the evocative epigraphs from poets and scholars that pepper the text, after all, but they are largely uninterpreted by the author himself. These limitations are highlighted in telling ways when, halfway through the book, one of the author’s interlocutors, a “philosopher-gentriifier” Jewish academic, Eitan, is presented as one of the key protagonists of the chapter on ethnogentrification. Eitan speaks about “dialectics,” “ambivalence,” and being a “stranger”; against discourses of “autochthony”; and using the language of phenomenology (170–73) to advance an analysis echoing that of Monterescu. His narrative is offered almost without elaboration by the author, such that we are led to read Eitan as the authoritative native informant who confirms the findings of the ethnographer. What goes unexamined here is the insensitive and politically contentious nature of what Eitan says: he talks, for example, of facing Jaffa’s conflicts close-up as entailing a “comforting” and “therapeutic” authenticity (170–71), without any acknowledgment that those who suffer the consequences of Jaffa’s gentrification might have a quite different interpretation of their experience of being evicted from or priced out of their homes. Although their plight is mentioned in passing as context, these people are barely part of the ethnographic work. One wonders how the analytic vocabulary developed by Monterescu would be different had these subjects’ words and life experiences been integrated into the book in the same way as those of Eitan.

Overall *Jaffa Shared and Shattered* is a rich and provocative addition to the scholarly literature on Palestine/Israel and urban studies. Yet, the “open wound” of Jaffa’s urban landscape perhaps requires another theoretical language that attends to the subjectivities of the most marginalized and wounded of its variously positioned inhabitants.

Mediating the Global: Expatria’s Forms and Consequences in Kathmandu. Heather Hindman. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013. 277 pp.

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AMANDA SNELLINGER

University of Oxford

When I was in Nepal on a Fulbright research grant, I frequented the American Club, which my diplomatic visa

afforded me. The reprieve from Kathmandu’s congested streets and polluted air allowed me to exercise in relative comfort, avoiding the stares of curious onlookers. My observations of other patrons were made from a distance rather than based on substantial interaction. They were an insular group that seemed to have little interest in Nepal or the various communities that inhabited it, including fellow Americans such as myself who had come with other agendas. My opinion of them was not very generous. I would watch them play tennis, sunbathe with a half eye on their rambunctious children, and listen to small kids authoritatively make demands of the wait staff. I could not help thinking of Albert Memmi’s (1965) description of the colonizer, particularly of the mediocre who set the general tone of interaction in the colonies. The mediocre were the most invested in the colonial project because they recognized that they would never amount to positions of privilege in their home countries that allowed them chauffeured cars, domestic staff, and private schooling.

Heather Hindman’s ethnography has effectively proved me wrong. She begins with a vignette describing a conversation over dinner with senior anthropologists during which one asserted that the practices and traditions inside the American Club are just as unique as those of tantric priests. Debate ensued. Why had nobody studied this community? After all, there was nothing inherent within anthropology’s scope to keep expatriates from being a worthy research topic. Hindman took up the charge to study Kathmandu’s Expatria, whom other anthropologists have dismissed to her as “those people.” She artfully demonstrates this community, like any other, is worthy of “contextual understanding” (5). Her analysis pushes readers to face their own biases regarding who are legitimate research subjects, what comprises culture, and how global knowledge is produced.

Expatria, Hindman argues, is a “social unit, but its limits are determined by labor, especially the expatriate package and pathway” (204). Her study of Expatria benefits from research over the *longue durée*, spanning over a decade and half (1994–2012), thereby allowing her to narrate the shifting economic and labor practices of global capitalism at the turn of the 21st century. Hindman grounds her ethnographic research in the history of British policies of colonial deployment in India to demonstrate that labor and family management were themselves political. She takes into account employer labor policies to show how mundane bureaucratic practices shape expatriate daily life. The contours of this daily life are defined by compensation and consumption, but as Hindman asserts, in ways that unsettle the dyads of public/private and global/local. The labor of Expatria is not merely that of the breadwinner; it is also the labor done by the trailing spouse to make a home in a faraway place, the labor of the family to create social networks embedded in the expat community, the labor of

children to adjust to new schools and to not fall behind. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, expatriate workers' compensation packages were a sizable investment, justified to compensate displacing entire families, but they also vindicated employers' benevolent paternalism meant to stem failure. Hindman traces the institutional, technical, and financial impingements that transform expatriate life, including the market-basket survey that decontextualizes consumption from the local milieu and pushes expatriate families to consume "as if they are at home" (115).

While Hindman deftly demonstrates how labor policies structure the expatriate experience, she relies on her anthropological grounding in her intervention on globalization. She argues against the perspective that flows between one site and another are what constitute globalization. Globalization is not passively flowing; it is mediated, actively, by people. In this case, "expatriates exist precisely at the moment of exchange and are transformed as part of their labor of translation" (219). This book pairs nicely with Thomas Hylland Eriksen's (2007) *Globalization: The Key Concepts*. Many of these key concepts are ethnographically illustrated: standardization, time-space compression, dis-embedding, and re-embedding. Yet flexibility and precariousness, the concepts Hindman most compellingly elucidates, were not central to the discourse of globalization when Eriksen published his book. She foregrounds these two affective states in the shift from the company man with expatriate packages and family in tow to the "international citizen" who is devoid of company loyalty, is unencumbered by family, and forges an individual career through contracts, expected to go anywhere at any time. Hindman credits the changing transnational labor practices to both global and local causes: "economics in the Global North, changing gender-labor alignments, militarization and local political tensions in Nepal, rather than the economic rationalities of international human resources" (217).

This book also provides a sophisticated analysis of how global knowledge production has transformed the *culture concept*. Hindman analyzes "culture" from three complementary angles. The first is how culture is typologized in international employment practices as a signifier that excludes considerations of power, history, and belief to avoid unsettling "meaningful domains, such as the operation of global capitalism" (147). This logic assumes that the business practices of neoliberal global regimes are universal and value free, and thus not vulnerable to critique in the way specific cultures' traits are. The second angle is how expatriates—those who are mediating their employers' "expectation of cultural specificity for products" and "an understanding of the universality of business practices" (145)—navigate "culture contact" (19). Culture for expatriates marks difference, something that is both a "barrier and to be celebrated" (145). They learn to be culturally

appropriate, which, Hindman argues, extends beyond abiding cultural relativism to embodying an orientation that "avoids having culture" wherein distinction is something that "Others" are seen to possess (82). The third angle from which Hindman analyzes cultures is that of Expatria, whom she aims to prove is a worthy research subject. Hindman did not find "cultural rules" that anthropologists may seek, but rather she discovered expatriates are "not rigid followers of either home or host country logics" (204–5). This flexibility allows them to navigate a life in which they seek out consistency as they shift from place to place while constantly in a setting where public/private are irrelevant and global/local are not so far apart.

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The Viral Network: A Pathography of the H1N1 Influenza Pandemic. Theresa MacPhail. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014. 232 pp.

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CAROLYN ORBANN

University of Missouri–Columbia

In this book, Theresa MacPhail takes on the challenge of writing about the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic and its impact on global health networks by framing its progression as a pathography. Normally, a pathography focuses on a single human and investigates the progression of illness (typically a psychological or other chronic condition) within that person, paying special attention to background, life course, or timeline of notable achievements. In this case, MacPhail swaps the roles of individual and illness, using influenza as the focal point and the global public health community as the agents of change. At its heart, this book is about how global public health professionals create, shape, share, and challenge biological information.

MacPhail spends some time laying out the structure of the book and her reasoning behind using the modified pathological approach instead of a more traditional ethnographic approach. The book is organized into sections according to a metaphor of viral genetics, so each chapter begins with a short discussion of a particular gene in the influenza virus and how that gene relates to the text in the chapter ahead. It is an interesting strategy for thinking about the relationship between the physical structure of the virus and the more ethereal aspects of information creation

and sharing. She introduces a number of ideas that are sure to be at least somewhat controversial but that are in keeping with current shifts in science and technology studies—particularly actor-network-theory—including the notion of considering viruses as having a form of agency, the inadequacy of ethnographic or ethnohistorical methods for doing the kind of study that she presents, and the idea that “viral anthropology” is an approach that is distinct enough to warrant its own subspecialty name.

The book contains a prologue, six chapters, and an epilogue, each tackling a specific domain MacPhail identifies. The chapters can be taken individually and do not necessarily need to be read in the order the author presents them.

Chapter 1 considers the genetic structure of the influenza virus and the way that genetic information passes between virologists and epidemiologists. The tension between changing influenza genetics and real-world outcomes of influenza outbreaks is a major theme here. How are virological data translated to public health action? It turns out there is no single guiding rule to determining if a particular mutation will yield virulence in a particular strain of the virus. It also becomes clear that reliance on incomplete genetic information will not provide all the necessary details for predicting basic facts about an influenza pandemic. Genetic mechanisms, even when completely understood, can never be completely predictive because pandemics result through a combination of host population behavior and disease-causing agents.

Chapter 2 is a straightforward ethnography of knowledge creation through laboratory science. Here, MacPhail considers the routines of work in the laboratory and the people who create the basic units of virological knowledge through environmental testing and gene sequencing. This chapter might be quite useful as an example for a methods class for those who wish to apply ethnographic techniques to research settings in modern societies.

The role of Hong Kong in influenza epidemiology is the next chapter's focus. A historical perspective addresses Hong Kong's identity as a former colony and its current status as part of China, although with an independent identity. Having laid out that historical context, MacPhail then describes the role of the medical community in Hong Kong in regards to several significant past epidemics as a way of explaining the centrality of that city's current position in influenza research.

Historical context appears again in chapter 4, in which MacPhail connects the 2009 pandemic planning with earlier epidemics, including the 1918 flu and 2003's severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak. Here, we see how past experiences lead experts to make assumptions about future pandemics. This section includes a discussion of the geography of emerging infectious diseases and the creation of nodes of expertise based on past experience.

The concept of “strategic uncertainty” is central to chapter 5, in which we see experts in the global public health community using uncertainty to maintain their authority in the public sphere. MacPhail describes instances in which institutions and individuals fall back on uncertainty in ways that enhance their own prestige in the public arena. Here, the text highlights the behavior of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In communications about the 2009 pandemic, the CDC frequently employed a strategy of telling both what they knew and what they did not know. Other public health entities saw this approach as a form of transparency and felt that it enhanced the reliability of CDC recommendations to the point that the CDC is considered the “gold standard” of epidemiological science.

Chapter 6 contains a discussion of the creation, use, and maintenance of data in modern global public health. Here, we see how experts gather data and assemble them into units of analysis for sharing with the public. The larger discussion of how one decides to employ data of varying quality is particularly interesting, as it exposes how personal networks play a strategic role in supporting public health decision making. It seems that even data that should be considered “objective” (for example, disease incidence reporting) can be burdened with a kind of metadata that helps or hinders them from being considered at the global level. For example, the Global Disease Detection Operations Center at the CDC employs a ranking system. Data are ranked on a scale of “good” to “bad” in order to understand how much weight any particular report should receive in global context. Information from unknown labs or unknown public health systems tends to be ranked lower than information from labs that are “verified” with a history of submitting “good data” or labs that are well-known by the person doing the ranking. In this way, the personal and professional networks of CDC scientists play a role in determining how much consideration is given to individual pieces of information.

Throughout the book, MacPhail situates her arguments within a larger philosophical conversation about how knowledge is created and agreed upon. She references a deep bench of philosophers and historians of science. The writing is always clear, but at some points readers unfamiliar with these philosophical themes may find themselves needing to refer back to the foundational texts of science philosophy for context.

Generally speaking, the book is aimed at graduate-level students and beyond. Some portions of the book, particularly chapter 2, might be useful for undergraduates thinking about the process of ethnographic research and participant-observation. Readers looking for specific types of epidemiological information about influenza are not likely to find what they need in this book. However, readers thinking about the roles of both individuals and

institutions in the practice of global public health should find the book compelling in how it illuminates the narratives that are implicit in so much of what public health professionals actually do.

Ordinary Medicine: Extraordinary Treatments, Longer Lives, and Where to Draw the Line. Sharon R. Kaufman. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015. 305 pp.

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KATHERINE A. MASON

Brown University

In this follow-up to her seminal 2005 work ... *And a Time to Die: How American Hospitals Shape the End of Life*, Sharon Kaufman delivers a haunting and provocative meditation on the peculiarly American obsession with highly technologized longevity. Through a combination of historical analyses of debates in health policy and health economics, bioethical argumentation, and powerful ethnographic examples, Kaufman meticulously demonstrates the rise over the past few decades of what she calls *ordinary medicine*. That term refers here to complex medical interventions like organ transplantation and the use of implantable cardioverter defibrillators that are anything but ordinary, but that nonetheless become constructed as not only effective but also necessary interventions for extending the lives of even the very old and feeble. Kaufman traces the process by which this ordinariness is systematically constructed in such a way that a failure to use or at least offer certain technologies to elderly patients is rendered unthinkable and unethical—even in cases in which death is certain, relatively imminent, and not necessarily undesired. The end result, Kaufman argues, is that patients and their families are given an exceedingly unfair choice: agree to an extreme intervention, or take on the responsibility of hastening the death of oneself or a loved one.

Kaufman attributes a great deal of the blame for this untenable situation to the US system of health financing, and particularly to the role of Medicare in determining what is reimbursable and therefore what becomes folded into routine care of the elderly and, by extension, the young and middle-aged (as private insurers tend to follow Medicare's lead in deciding what services to cover). And yet Medicare coverage, according to Kaufman, is also but one link in a chain of events by which experimental therapy becomes normalized. Other important links include the pharmaceutical and medical devices industries, which constantly strive to bring new products to market or to prove that old products can have new applications; the Food and Drug Administration, which approves these products; and physicians, who then feel obligated to offer them on the basis of findings from the randomized controlled trials and other forms

of evidence-based medicine on which they increasingly rely to make medical judgments. The result is that patients, their families, and doctors become caught up in what Kaufman refers to as the *medical-industrial complex*. They find themselves unable to refuse more and more complex interventions at later and later stages of life—despite plenty of indications that the overall well-being of patients and their families may actually be harmed in the process.

One of the most productive theoretical contributions of Kaufman's book is her discussion of the bioethical tensions between an individual's desires to extend his or her life and the needs of the society as a whole. Despite public assertions to the contrary, it turns out that most people, when faced with either taking a chance on a risky intervention with uncertain benefits or accepting certain death, will choose the former option. This is true even for patients who are in their 80s or 90s and who will face great pain and suffering if they proceed with further treatment. These are wrenching decisions that Kaufman convincingly argues are often thrust upon patients and families who are ill-equipped to handle them. And yet these types of decisions also impact strangers who have no say in the decision-making process. This happens both indirectly (through rising costs and overuse of resources) and directly (through, for example, claiming an organ or another scarce resource that might better be used to extend the life of a younger and healthier person). In one of the book's more disturbing passages, Kaufman traces how patients as old as 85 are receiving livers or kidneys from anonymous donors half their age, simply because, as she puts it, "The goal of medicine and the physician's duty ... was to provide the best medical care for the patient at hand at this moment. The conflicting goal—to ensure that each transplanted organ achieves the greatest life span possible—was a lesser imperative" (224).

Kaufman's book constitutes an important and troubling addition to current bioethical debates on health financing and the distribution of medical resources. At its heart, this book seems to be about how and why US health care costs have spiraled out of control—a topic of great timeliness and political interest. Writing against many arguments from progressives who attribute the excessive health care costs of the United States to the wastefulness or greed of private insurers and who see a single-payer public health insurance system as a panacea for the United States' health care ills, Kaufman locates much of the problem instead within Medicare, one of the country's two current single-payer systems (the other being Medicaid, which she more or less leaves out of her analysis). She suggests that while waste among private insurers is real, the much deeper problem, at least when it comes to care for chronic conditions and end-of-life care, is that insurance pays for too much, rather than too little.

While Kaufman acknowledges several times that this problem does not apply nearly as well to the millions of Americans who remain uninsured or underinsured, her

provocative suggestion that perhaps we should be covering less rather than more will be sure to raise some hackles. The book also may court allegations of ageism for its suggestion that health care resources are in fact, at least in some cases, being wasted on those who are elderly and nearing the end of life. The careful reader, though, will find that Kaufman's nuanced argument, and her moving documentation of the angst, uncertainty, and discomfort inherent in making end-of-life decisions, helps to guard against any suggestion of callousness. The truth is that Kaufman does not know, any more than the rest of us, how to best solve the crisis of aging and dying in the United States. But she insists that the reader recognize that it is indeed a crisis, that the primary victims of this crisis are the sick elderly themselves, and that it is incumbent upon all of us to figure out a better way to move forward in caring for those lingering at the edge of death.

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Sinophobia: Anxiety, Violence, and the Making of Mongolian Identity. Franck Billé. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015. 272 pp.

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ANDREA CHIOVENDA

Harvard University

In Europe and elsewhere there is a resurgence of right-wing, nationalistic, and xenophobic political and ideological movements. Franck Billé offers us a view onto what a similar trend looks like in Mongolia (the first country to become "socialist" after the Soviet Union, in 1921, and its satellite until 1990). Billé's ethnography concerns itself with a specific case of xenophobia, which targets Chinese living in Mongolia and characterizes China as an inconvenient and potentially dangerous neighbor.

Billé mostly uses Lacanian psychoanalytic theory to make three main claims about Mongolian anti-Chinese xenophobia. First, the acrimony against all things (and people) Chinese on the part of the Mongols is in fact a synecdoche for a "distaste" of all things Asian in general. Second, such acrimony is in reality directed against that degree of Asian-ness that every Mongol truly harbors (unconsciously) within (and the more conscious fear thereof). Third, the main means through which such an apparently existential divide was created is the forced lack of interaction between Mongols and Chinese, with the Mongols' consequent increasing lack of knowledge about China. Billé explains that Mongols were kept artificially separated from

China by centuries of government policies. Thus, while acknowledging the importance of historical, economic, and sociocultural roots for the development of anti-Chinese xenophobia (e.g., mutually initiated conflicts, abusive Chinese trade in Mongolia, Chinese perceived expansionism in the second half of the 20th century), he finds in such separation the main reason for a long-standing tradition of anti-Chinese sentiments in Mongolia. Furthermore, Billé tells us, the ideological principles and prejudices that originated directly in Moscow (and that were inculcated into Mongolia's postrevolutionary generations) depicted Asia, in general, as a backward, feudal, and reactionary place. Mongolia was considered backward even in comparison to the rest of Asia. Soviet authorities played the part of the civilizing, modernizing power that was to lift Mongols from their supposed "barbarism" and "lack of culture" (through their transformation into "good" socialist subjects). Hence the propensity in Mongols today to see their Russian neighbors as almost kin, and any Asian as a "bad" version of the self. To put it differently, Billé argues that the lack of personal experience with China is responsible for the propensity of Mongols to abstract China and Chinese-ness, and make it the scapegoat for a deeply uncomfortable (to say the least) relationship that they (Mongols) have with their own Asian-ness. Mongols staunchly and vociferously deny being "Asian," protesting instead their closer connection to Europe and the Western world.

The summary I just sketched cannot do justice to the numerous, interconnected theoretical threads that Billé weaves (although sometimes confusingly) throughout the book. The intellectual explorations that he attaches to each of these threads are no doubt elegant and sophisticated. His ethnography also offers a valuable historical look at political and ethnic dynamics in the prerevolutionary, socialist, and postsocialist periods.

There are some potential epistemological and methodological problems in this otherwise compelling book. The xenophobia of which Billé tries to make sense is intimately linked to individual psychological dynamics. Yet throughout, Billé focuses on public expressions of anti-Chinese sentiments taken from newspapers, TV programs, music videos, Internet forums, wall graffiti in Ulaanbaatar (where he conducted his fieldwork in 2007), and the like. He supplements these sources with "a number of 'indirect' interviews on particular aspects tangentially related to [his] main theme" (13). Initial interviews of Mongol informants about anti-Chinese rhetoric and sentiments obtained "poor" results and were abandoned. Indeed, he writes that interviews, in general, are "poorly suited" to explore "sentiments and affects" (12), which he admits are the very focus of his research. "Interviewees remained guarded and self-conscious, uneasy about voicing sentiments they perceived as negative and ugly," he writes (12). If one wants to make sense of—and even better

understand—an individual's subjectivity (“sentiments and affects”), what has to be reached and engaged is precisely that: the person's subjectivity. This can be done (and has been done) by exploring the private, often at first unspoken (even unconscious) inner dynamics of our informants. Nobody opens up immediately to anybody—let alone to the analyst or the ethnographer. A painstaking effort at construing an intersubjective space is often necessary to dive deeper than publicly expressed narratives (frequently strongly driven by political and cultural idioms).

The unit of analysis Billé chose for his fieldwork (i.e., public narratives) seems somewhat inadequate for the goals that he set for his research. No individual subjectivity fully emerges in the book, and consequently most of the ethnographic material presented has a vague and generic flavor to it. We are told about commonly held stereotypes, convictions that “people” maintain, what “Mongols say,” what “Mongols feel,” rumors, casual comments by “people,” and the like (except a few passages from isolated informants, especially in chapter 7). The irony in all this is that the ethnographic material is then analyzed mostly through the lens of Lacanian psychoanalytic theory (and the interpretation given of it by Slavoj Žižek and his colleagues in Ljubljana), which obviously rests within the realm of individual subjectivity. To overcome this discrepancy, Billé states that he uses Lacanian theory “as a parallel” between individual and societal processes, and that he is not “claiming to ‘analyze the Mongols’” (65). Yet what is this “parallel” other than the “as-if psychology” for which Edward Sapir criticized anthropologists in the 1930s?

With all that said, it remains true that, within the epistemological and methodological paradigm that Billé chose for his work, the book offers subtle and sophisticated intellectual interpretations and elaborations. The historical evidence interspersed through all the chapters opens an interesting window onto the intricacies of ideological politics and policies between the Soviet Union and China, of which Mongolia paid the dire consequences. Its shortcomings notwithstanding, *Sinophobia* is worth reading for those interested in the geographical area and in a broad sociocultural study of contemporary xenophobic phenomena.

Wild Life: The Institution of Nature. *Irus Braverman.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015. 344 pp.

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CAROLYN A. JOST ROBINSON

University of North Carolina Wilmington

Anthropocene is a contested term, asserting that in the current geological era humans are primarily responsible for

environmental and climatic change. This idea is becoming increasingly accepted among the general public, attaching itself to a critique of human dominance over nature. Embedded in the idea, however, are enduring dualisms of nature-culture and animal-human, among other binary categories that reflect the often anthropocentric versus *zoo*-centric focus of life writ large in Western scientific perspectives. In contrast, contemporary scholars in anthropology, law, and science and technology studies, Irus Braverman among them, examine the mutability of these contested, codependent categories from a posthumanistic perspective that seeks to highlight the role of power, subjectivity, and regulation in defining human-environment interactions. In *Wild Life*, Braverman draws on her expertise in law and materiality to reframe our understandings of conservation and the management of “wild life.” Further, she challenges our understanding of traditional and institutionalized notions of *in situ* versus *ex situ* (captive vs. wild) approaches to the maintenance of biodiversity.

Braverman draws on more than 120 ethnographic interviews with conservation personnel who grapple with tense division of *in situ* versus *ex situ* at institutional, physical, philosophical, and even personal levels. While the history of the fraught relationships between *in situ* and *ex situ* approaches to conservation is beyond the scope of this review, it is implicitly important when considering the historical, political, and cultural aspects of conservation regimes—past, present, and future. Braverman's inclusion of conservation narratives (e.g., golden lion tamarin, black-footed ferret, red wolf, northern white and Sumatran rhino, Puerto Rican crested toad) highlights the codependent, co-constituted core of *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation, of notions of wild and captive. Further, lived examples of conservation programs undergird her aims to explore “the impact of the *in situ*–*ex situ* divide on contemporary conservation practices and the recent attempts to bridge and even collapse it” (3).

However, while the “collapse” of these axiomatic binaries that bifurcate the bodies of nonhumans and nonhuman lives into wild or captive may be partially related to conservation practice, it is more likely that a critical analysis of the biopolitics that reproduce these relationships plays a greater role in blurring the dividing line between wild and captive. As Braverman demonstrates in her book, conservation practitioners in zoo, aquarium, and field settings have indeed tried to bridge the divide between *in situ* and *ex situ* approaches to conservation; however, they are ultimately constrained by “regimes of authority,” regulatory semantics, and species concepts.

Many scholars refute the applicability of biopolitics and notions of biopower to nonhumans, arguing that animals are not subjects of disciplinary subjectification, but Braverman identifies myriad modes through which to examine species conservation using such a theoretical

framework. Specifically, she takes up the reified juxtaposition of in situ and ex situ conservation. Placing in situ/wild/nature or the “human experience of life” opposite ex situ/captive/culture or the “human management of life,” the life of the former is identified as truly wild, and life forms located in the latter are, by virtue of geographic location, deemed less wild, if they are wild at all. Through this continuum of wildness, locations of intersitu conservation are highlighted. In these examples we see the true embodiment of Foucauldian biopower, “make live; let die.” For example, the recovery program of the endangered Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrisi*) was spurred by mass die-offs that resulted from naturally occurring carcinogenic tumors in wild populations. While these populations are “let die,” free-ranging, managed individuals are protected (“make live”) for propagation of the species. Such biopolitics goes a step beyond “let die” when, for example, nonnative fish are routinely removed from US river systems via electrocution for the protection of native fish species.

In *Wild Life*, Braverman offers something for advanced and emerging scholars, as well as conservation practitioners and policy makers. The text itself shifts between theoretical examinations of various inter-situ nodes along an in situ to ex situ continuum and strategically placed conservation case studies that mirror theoretical threads woven within the text. The alternating arrangement of chapters and narrative allows the reader to ease into the application of Foucauldian concepts of biopolitics and surveillance to conservation management and the viability of wildlife populations. Although some may prefer more direct theoretical engagement throughout the text, Braverman’s subtle discussion of critical theory provides an interesting, more reflective and nuanced application of biopower that is both accessible and provocative.

Regardless, Braverman inspires an engaging stream of theoretical consciousness in applying a typically human-centric theory to nonhuman bodies in a unique and stimulating manner. The parallax logic inherent in considering in situ versus ex situ or bifurcated versus integrated life suggests that when it comes to considering the validity of wild-captive, nature-culture, and other dualisms, the truth lies not at the ends of the continuum nor along the middle, but at multiple nodes simultaneously. Regulatory mechanisms within conservation biopolitics obfuscate one binary while replacing it with another. As such, effective examinations of the complex nature and relational constitutions of wild or captive, wild or less wild, must begin within these complex zones of bifurcation/integration, where humans—through practice and policy—shape and reshape the nature of non-human life.

Artifacts and Allegiances: How Museums Put the Nation and the World on Display. Peggy Levitt. Oakland: University of California Press, 2015. 244 pp.

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GEOFFREY WHITE

University of Hawai‘i

In *Artifacts and Allegiances*, Peggy Levitt has produced an important book on the politics of the museum in the 21st century, with its amped-up pace of connectivity and flow. Levitt, a sociologist known for her writing on globalization and nationalism, is primarily interested in the problem of *difference* and the ways museums represent and create difference in the context of diverse national imaginaries. The book’s central analytic is *cosmopolitanism*—here set in opposition to nationalism to create a continuum along which museums are analyzed for their openness to difference.

The book frames its purpose with statements about the intensification of migration and increase in displaced peoples—of relocation and dislocation—that are changing the face of world urban centers, remixing nation, class, and race in ways that pose challenges to national and global policies. Levitt writes, “In a world where one out of every seven people is an internal or international migrant, the challenge for getting along, both inside the nation and out, grows greater by the minute” (141). Given the rising tide of refugees from the violent upheavals of the Middle East, as well as increasingly vitriolic debates about immigration policies in the United States and Europe, the book’s introduction asks, “How do we learn to live in increasingly diverse neighborhoods and to connect that experience to people living on the other side of the world? How and where do museums help?” (6).

To get at these questions Levitt has designed an elegantly comparative study to examine museum practices in five nation-states: the United States, Denmark, Sweden, Singapore, and Qatar. Whereas national identities and global postures are the central concern, cities provide the locus of social and historical analysis (Boston, New York, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Singapore, Doha [Qatar]). The latter four cases are grouped into two distinct regions on the basis of their social characteristics and historical trajectories. In the Scandinavian countries that are “postempire” with no “pretensions of superpower status” (10), cultural institutions represent difference “from a starting point of [domestic] similarity.” Singapore and Qatar exemplify rapidly modernizing city-states where “ethnic and racial diversity is strongly managed by the state” (11). Rather than focus on the Smithsonian Institution as the US national museum, Levitt turns her attention to Boston’s Museum of

Fine Arts and the Brooklyn Museum as regional institutions whose scale of urban-national relations she sees as more comparable to the other cases taken up: the Museum of World Culture in Gothenburg, Sweden; the National Museum of Denmark in Copenhagen; the Asian Civilisations Museum and the Singapore Art Museum in Singapore; and the Museum of Islamic Art and the National Museum of Qatar in Doha.

Clearly this ambitious research agenda, spread across five nation-states, does not afford the kind of in-depth museum ethnography that one finds in, for example, Richard Handler and Eric Gable's (1997) study of Colonial Williamsburg or Sally Price's (2007) book about the formation of the Quai Branly Museum in Paris. Instead, Levitt interviewed "nearly 185 curators, policy makers, academics, museum directors, and educators in seven cities" (10) over the course of four years (2009–13), discussing their exhibitions and the social and political factors that shape them. The result is not a "grand theory" that explains the orientation of museum policies, but rather a set of cases showing connections between sociohistorical context and modalities of museum self-representation. The Qatar and Singapore museums, in particular, afford an opportunity to reflect on areas where Western and non-Western practices diverge, including opportunities to problematize the concept of cosmopolitanism.

Even though the author relies on the singular idea (and value) of cosmopolitanism, she is not naive about its ethnocentric valences. By the time one has read through the comparative case studies, the idea is thoroughly historicized and relativized. US institutions are shown to have gravitated toward a posture of openness, so as to minimize the reproduction of hierarchies rooted in the cultural authority of museums as national temples. Singapore and Doha, by comparison, can "look global ... without granting certain freedoms to [their] own people" (142). In Singapore, for example, one finds an "Asian cosmopolitanism" that rejects individualism (138). In these cases cosmopolitanism is a construct, defined by actors in the museum sphere to be consistent with and advance a national vision of itself in the world. By the end of the book Levitt acknowledges that cosmopolitanism is a "flawed term" (142) now rejected by many, but she uses it to advocate a pragmatic approach

to cultural policies. Nonetheless, she sees it as desirable so long as it pushes people to "try to figure out how and where people become competent and committed enough to engage with others who are different, both near and far away ... to move from idea to practice to cosmopolitics" (6). The author's interest in museums is thus ultimately prescriptive, motivated by a desire to see cultural institutions play an active role in addressing the conflicts and confusions of global displacements.

Some anthropological readers will find this study frustrating in its breathless itinerary, moving from museum to museum with little opportunity for learning more about the actors and the places they work. Levitt's discussion of methodology seems to anticipate this criticism. She positions her study as a multisited project taking on messy problems of globalization that cannot be grasped with single cases pursuing a depth-first strategy. Citing Tony Judt citing Isaiah Berlin, Levitt notes the value of the broad-ranging approach of the "fox" as opposed to the singular focus of the "hedgehog": "We also need accounts that are more foxlike, that do not pretend to capture every detail of the places they describe, but that produce valuable insights precisely because they see the forest and the trees—and the patterns that unite them" (13).

In addition to her research strategy, Levitt also writes with a style that eschews theory-laden language to reach a broader audience. It is, she explains, an interest in reaching "beyond academic borders" (12) that leads her to place much of the academic argument in footnotes (50 pages of them, compared with just 142 pages of text). Given the evident failure of cultural institutions to stem the rise of populist xenophobia in the United States and Europe, one can only applaud Levitt's effort to write a book that may reach students and readers of all sorts concerned with a critical understanding of the global role of museums today.

References

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