

# Book Reviews

**Muslims and Matriarchs: Cultural Resilience in Indonesia through Jihad and Colonialism.** Jeffrey Hadler. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008. ix + 211 pp.

**JOHN R. BOWEN**

Washington University in St. Louis

There is a short and a long way to convey the import of this fine new historical study of Minangkabau society in West Sumatra. The latter will constitute the rest of this review; the short is that the historian Jeffrey Hadler answers two puzzles concerning the Minangkabau: (1) How did matriliney survive determined critiques and attacks by both reformist Muslims and patriarchal colonizers? and (2) Why has this region produced political, social, and literary leaders for Indonesia far out of proportion with its population?

In answering these two puzzles, Hadler treats us to a lively, concise history of politics, religious reform, education, family life, and women's activism in West Sumatra, a region that is on the edge of both Indonesia and the trans-Indian Ocean world of trade and religion. He makes a methodological point well worth taking seriously by anthropologists: that a slice-in-time sense of a matrilineal "social system" can blind us to historical processes of challenge and response. Hadler's reminder is particularly important for understanding West Sumatra because the many prominent Indonesian writers who came from the Minangkabau region—historians, anthropologists, scholars of Islam and of education—have fashioned their own tropes for understanding their society. If these tropes emphasize an essential cultural trait—"spiraling outward," openness to the world—Hadler emphasizes contingent events and processes.

Although Hadler traces his themes over two centuries, he brings particular clarity to two struggles: the three-way battles among Islamic reformists, defenders of culture, and Dutch colonizers in the first three decades of the 19th century, and the fast-paced social and political changes culminating in the Communist-led uprising in 1926–27. In many respects, the former fashioned the terms of the latter.

Far from being isolated in the Islamic world, Sumatran towns and cities were caught up in vigorous debates over the limits of legitimate mysticism within Islam. In Aceh,

West Sumatra, and everywhere that trade brought new ideas and critiques, leaders of Sufi orders competed with more strict shari'a-minded reformists from the early Islamic presence in the 15th century through today. But the matrilineal institutions of the Minangkabau, which ensured that rice land and titles would pass through sisters' children, offered a particularly clear target for some of these reformists. When Wahhabis occupied Mecca in 1803, the first echoes in the archipelago were in West Sumatra, where the "Padri" reformists led armed attacks against longhouses and killed customary leaders. By the 1820s the Dutch entered the fray on the side of customary institutions, and by 1838 they had taken control.

This story is well known, but Hadler frames it not as a story about colonial victory but about disillusionment with the Wahhabis. In 1832 the reformist leader Imam Bonjol (today celebrated as a national hero) learned that the Wahhabis had fallen from power in Mecca and renounced his reformist cause. Although he eventually turned against the Dutch, he did so to repel an invader, not to impose a new understanding of Islam. The Padri War led the Dutch to try and impose a new understanding of Minangkabau culture, one epitomized by the longhouse and by matrilineal inheritance. But this struggle also gave an impulse to both the Islamic reformists and the defenders of Minangkabau institutions to sharpen their respective arguments, and it allowed the latter to resist universalist (and only in part colonial) pleas for modernity.

Hadler's more general argument is that in part because of the upheavals occasioned by the Padri War, in part because of the intrusive and invasive Dutch response to those upheavals, in domains from public health to schooling to legal codification, Minangkabau boys and girls growing up in the late 19th century were exposed to a sometimes dizzying array of arguments. They might be raised in a traditionalist home environment, learn reformist Islam from religious teachers, and they enter a Dutch school. As a result, many of them became intellectuals, used to defending positions against contrary arguments, and they succeeded far more often than did their counterparts elsewhere in the archipelago in formulating religious, social, and nationalist critiques in newspapers, novels, and religious writings, as well as organizing new associations in the homeland or in cities such as Medan and Jakarta. Much of Hadler's

book looks at the new schools, writings, movements, and prominent critiques made by women. He gives us a sound sense of everyday life for girls and boys in houses and at school, particularly during the early decades of the 20th century.

He writes in a lively, sometimes breezy tone and brings to the reader years of sound scholarship. Writing new works on Minangkabau society is not an easy task, as it has been a major site for historical and anthropological work since colonial days. Moreover, the “Muslims and matriarchs” tension has been the key topos for most of that work. Yet Hadler brings a certain freshness to the case, and admirably brings together the major topics explored in depth by earlier scholars: the role of cash cropping in promoting new Islamic ideas, the structure of longhouse life, debates over older and newer ways of schooling. His key achievements, I think, are at two levels. First, he emphasizes the “path dependent” nature of this history, showing how the fissures and debates of the 1820s set West Sumatra down a certain path. Secondly, he views the vicissitudes of this pathway through the writings of Minangkabau men and especially women, and in particular regarding diverse ideas of the “modern.” Above and beyond the intrinsic interest of his historical analysis, the work gives us a superb model of how to build on the work of our predecessors, neither resenting its presence nor pretending it does not exist but, rather, asking how we might see the same puzzles afresh.

**Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria.** *Brian Larkin.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008. xi + 313 pp.

**DOROTHEA E. SCHULZ**

University of Cologne

This insightful, highly stimulating, and well-written book examines how media technologies entered into 20th-century northern Nigeria society, and how their initial association with colonial rule, and also their material qualities and the cultural possibilities they enabled, transformed public and social life in sometimes unexpected ways. While firmly grounded in an ethnography and history of media in northern Nigeria, the book makes a highly innovative contribution to anthropological scholarship on media. Most significantly, it offers a critical reconsideration of established media theory that assumed universal validity for insights drawn primarily from the study of cinema, radio, and other media in Western societies. The book emphasizes instead that technologies' uses and significances need to be understood within specific historic circumstances and conjunctures.

Conceiving of media and other technologies whose introduction into colonial society Brian Larkin explores as “infrastructures,” he compellingly demonstrates the tensions and indeterminacies that accompanied the uses and cultural meanings these infrastructures gradually acquired. What makes his understanding of media as infrastructure so insightful is his emphasis on its mediating capacities and effects. Because of the disjuncture between an infrastructure's material qualities, its technical functions, the sense experiences it generates, and the social and cultural meanings that emerge from its adoption by actors, its use and effects do not necessarily follow the logic guiding its introduction. One way in which the book's title *Signal and Noise* can be read, then, is that “noise” refers to the interferences that religious and cultural values generate in the adoption of a new technology and that lead to particular technological and cultural forms and conventions. The title's reference to “noise” also signals a departure from a prevailing focus in media studies on the efficiency and transformative effects of media technologies and explores the implications of poor, discontinuous, and messy infrastructural connections on the cultural and social significance of individual communication technologies.

Chapter 1 situates the introduction of cinema and radio within the British colonial endeavor of bringing the technological benefits of European civilization to Nigeria. Larkin interprets large-scale infrastructure projects, such as railways, bridges, and power plants as a key moment in the production of what he calls “the colonial sublime,” that is, in the generation of a sense of awe, fear, exaltation, and incomprehension in the face of the display of colonial absolute power. In this political spectacle of colonial rule, two separate realms, that of religion and tradition, and that of modernity, were drawn together in the generation of political legitimacy and of the colonial sublime: a new kind of authority was generated, one located in technology “as the visible evidence of progress” (p. 19). According to Larkin, the close connection between technological infrastructure and the colonial project is a characteristic and distinct feature of the historical setting in which media technologies were introduced in Nigeria and, by implication, in many other areas of the colonial world. The association by many Hausa of the British infrastructural projects with a Christian and therefore un-Islamic identity, set the stage for a highly contested social field into which radio and cinema were to be introduced and interpreted. Yet this technological infrastructure, although tied to the colonial project and its logic of rule, also gave rise to new sensual experiences that extended the logic of its association with colonial rule.

Chapters 2 and 3 explore the implications of the initial association of radio and cinema with colonial modernity. Chapter 2 reconstructs the material history of radio and of its role in technologizing public, not domestic, urban space and examines its “reception” by different groups of

the population, as well as the multiple cultural meanings of radio communication generated along the way. Simultaneously, the chapter offers an insightful reflection on the importance that transmission failure, the disruption of sound, interference, and breakdown play in giving a technology a technical function and a social and cultural significance. Here again, Larkin cautions against the universalizing assumptions often associated with technological innovation, and, as illustrated by much recent work on radio broadcasting and democracy in Africa, with the introduction of radio technology in particular.

Chapter 3, along with chapter 4, offers a nuanced account of the different social and political objectives that may be tied to one media technology—film—within the same political context of colonial rule; of the new forms of sociality and leisure generated by these technologies; and of the new cultural possibilities and meanings that these technologies offered, meanings that sometimes threatened their initial *raison d'être*. The chapter focuses on *majig* (mobile film) and explores its intricate links to the project of colonial rule through a thorough analysis of its screening, presentational formats, and aesthetics. The material treated in this chapter allows Larkin to critically engage theoretical work based on early cinema in the West, particularly the tendency of theorists to associate, even equate, early cinema with the commodity form. Arguing that mobile cinema in Nigeria was tied more intimately to the colonial political project rather than to processes of commodification, Larkin offers a compelling critique of founding assumptions of Western film theory. He also enters a plea for a more complicated genealogy of media theory by reminding scholars of the complex relationship between colonial understandings of the purpose and function of film and technology, on the one hand, and central ideas in media and film theory, on the other hand.

Larkin favors an analytical framework that makes room for the different potential, significance, and implications that media such as film unfold in different discursive traditions, discursive traditions that may be shaped in varying degrees and to different effect by the state, the commodity form, or a religious tradition. Common to early cinema in the Euro-American West, and mobile films in colonial northern Nigeria was an emphasis on the novelty of film technology and the role of this technology in making modern subjects. However, whereas early cinema addressed spectators as consumers, the addressee of mobile film was the subject of the colonial political project—a subject in need of enlightenment, one that is future oriented and politically quiescent. Through mobile film, political relations between colonizers and colonized were constantly remade.

At the same time, Larkin demonstrates, while British colonialists and officials of postindependent Nigeria relied on mobile film for purposes of education and control, these

visual technologies bore technical qualities that generated cognitive and affective experiences at variance with what officials had envisaged as the major purpose of mobile film screening. Audiences evinced consumer preferences and responses that sometimes made them unruly political subjects. Here (again), Larkin illustrates forcefully the “disconnect” between a technology, its cultural meanings and (sometimes unintended) social consequences. In spite of the “unintended consequences” of the adoption of film technology into the colonial project, the political legacy and the language of mobile films are still palpable in present-day TV presentational formats, in television’s association with the political project of the state, and in its weak link to the commodity logic.

Chapter 4 focuses on another history of film in northern Nigeria, that is on commercial film screened in cinemas and examines the controversial integration of this infrastructural technology into urban physical and social space. Larkin takes a view of commercial cinema as a social space and a mode of leisure that emerged only gradually, and as a result of the interplay between the material qualities of the apparatus and its modes of exhibition and the particular social setting in which they developed. He thus discusses the materiality of the cinema theater, its formal and sensual features, to elucidate what emotional experiences and cultural meanings this sensory environment, itself a product of a rapidly transforming urban landscape, enabled and reflected. The chapter also explores how mostly urban Nigerians adopted and made sense of these technologies, and to what disagreements and contestations their media engagements gave rise. While certain Hausa in the 1940s and 1950s reacted with great ambivalence to the introduction of cinema theaters in urban Kano, others vehemently objected to it, considering it an imposition of a colonial urban and moral architecture on Muslim social and religious space. Many Hausa resented the unsettling of former axes of hierarchy and gender division that cinema theaters, and the practice of going to the cinema, fostered. Simultaneously, however, and precisely because the cinema theater was considered by many an illicit moral space, it became a center of attraction for those segments of the urban population who sought to side step or ignore standards of respectability.

By documenting the contested integration of commercial film into emergent colonial forms of leisure, and the specific practices of sense making and sociality that accompanied this process, Larkin powerfully refutes views of cinema as a technology with universal and uniform effects that generates the same modes of engagement, attention, and emotional experience everywhere.

Chapter 5 brings the study to the present, exploring the consequences of the material infrastructure of cinema for contemporary experiences of cinema going. Larkin’s main interest lies on the sensorial and affective experiences that

are generated in people's actual inhabiting the material infrastructure of urbanism. As he argues, cinema going cannot be understood as a popular pastime in any simple sense. Instead, cinema—as a material infrastructure and as a practice—congeals the modes of affect that suffuse and animate everyday urban experience and should be studied as such. Stressing the affective importance of the material infrastructure of cinema for spectators' engagements with film, Larkin argues that the significance of "cinema" emerges at the intersection of a technology and of the social practices that ground this technology in the material and experiential here-and-now.

Chapter 6 examines the narrative language and aesthetic of the most dynamic visual media form in Nigeria: the video film. Extending on his earlier work on the enormous popularity of Hindi films in northern Nigeria, Larkin compares and discusses the "film language" of southern English-language, and northern Hausa-language video films. He shows that, while relying on divergent narrative aesthetics and norms, these different film productions all speak to a common sense of vulnerability and insecurity that permeates Nigerian everyday life. In this, they can be treated as a national media form that emerged outside the control of the state. Based on melodramatic modes of presentation, this media form addresses economic and social insecurities through a moral framework and, thereby, forcefully claims a place for moral and religious belief in a seemingly rationalized world of politics and economic transaction.

Chapter 7 provides a unique account of the rise of piracy as a mode of infrastructure that is intricately related to the success of the northern Nigerian video film industry. What makes Larkin's account so innovative and compelling is his proposition to address media piracy not as an aberrant practice but, rather, as constitutive of a particular form of infrastructure and of a film aesthetic. Nigerian video industry, Larkin argues, could not exist without the infrastructure created by the illegitimate reduplication of videos. He thus insists on the productive effects of piracy in generating a dynamic, decentralized field of cultural creativity. The infrastructure of piracy should not be understood as a neutral conduit but, instead, as one that sets particular conditions for storing, transmission, and retrieval. Under conditions of piracy reproduction, layers of "noise" and degraded images blur the "signal" of media content. Yet these interferences do not so much "disrupt" a film viewing experience than create an aesthetic on their own, that is, "a set of formal qualities that generate a particular sensorial experience of media marked by poor transmission, interference and noise" (p. 218). Larkin's investigation of video piracy thus presents a complex account of a technology's "consequences": its productive effects may derive as much from its seeming failure or breakdown as it resides in its success in transporting media content.

The theoretical scope and analytical depth of this work, and the many insights it grants into the complex relationship between the material qualities and the cultural and social meanings of technology, mark it out as a highly innovative study of colonial and postcolonial urban culture in Africa. It also makes it a highly welcome contribution to scholarship on modernity and postcoloniality, on media and public culture, and to analyses of global media forms and consumption. It will fascinate a wide range of readers, granting stimulating analytical insights into the place of media in urban life.

**Moroccan Households in the World Economy: Labor and Inequality in a Berber Village.** *David Crawford.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008. 210 pp., maps, photographs, figures, tables.

**DEBORAH KAPCHAN**

New York University

In the history of anthropology there is no lack of ethnography on North Africa, and on Morocco, in particular, from the theorization of segmentary society to markets, marriage, gender, and human rights. While a majority of these ethnographies post-1970 are on the Arabic-speaking populations, several recent works have highlighted the life of rural Berber populations, their rituals, their music, their migration patterns, their language, their discursive styles, and their gendered practices. What then might a new ethnography on a Moroccan Berber village reveal?

All ethnographies are accounts of one person's experience of a place and its inhabitants. David Crawford's book, *Moroccan Households in the World Economy*, is a particularly poetic rendering of this exchange and deserves to be read for its evocations alone. Yet Crawford's contribution goes much further: he asks us to reconsider our thinking about social structure and temporalities, providing an analysis of how villagers in the High Atlas Mountains "decide to become involved in the larger world economy, and what [this global economy] does with and for them" (p. 3). Throughout the book, he tracks the transformations that villagers experience in a fast-changing and globalizing world.

Not far from the busy tourist center of Marrakech, the village of Tadrar (a pseudonym) is, in Crawford's view, a place that is "freshly globalized" (p. 2) and as such has much to teach us about how social transformation comes about—viscerally and structurally (p. 7).

In chapter 1, Crawford provides a poetic evocation of life and place—the way gendered identities arise from and inhabit the physical and social environment in Tadrar:

Babies are born in the darkness on the carpets they will live on for years to come, blankets hand woven by mothers and grandmothers from wool sheared from sheep raised on the mountainsides above them, blankets that growing children will sleep under, fold, wash, stack, and shake out for themselves or guests countless times. But at first the world will be dark, the window, if there is one, shuttered, Neighbors and family visit, voices in the gloom. There will be eating and talking, the smell of mint tea and henna, wood smoke, women's sweat, warm bread and boiled eggs, women's voices mostly, and whispered prayers rolling from individuals and small clusters of the pious, submitting themselves to the will of God in the lambent poetry destined to form the soundtrack of every major life transition to come. [p. 29]

Prose like this infuses the book and draws the reader in to the world of the Tadrar and its inhabitants.

Crawford builds much of his analysis on the notion that time—being coeval everywhere—nonetheless is lived differently in different locales (“Tadrar,” he says, “operates with its own temporalities and inequalities” and those who migrate to the city exchange “one frame of inequality . . . for another” [p.17]). Crawford returned to Tadrar over several years, and, thus, the reader gains insight into the very physical and technological changes that take place, such as the construction of new dwellings, the installation of indoor water pipes in residences and of a solar water heater and electricity in the mosque, and the openings of a tourist hotel and school.

In chapter 2, Crawford turns from place to inhabitants, that is, he examines the household as a unit of labor. Drawing on the work of David Graeber, he notes that although late capitalism in the West is characterized by the social separation of production and reproduction, in the village of Tadrar the two categories are hard to keep apart. Labor emerges from the household and extends to the field but is centered in the power of the patriarch (and, to some extent, the matriarch). Unlike Bourdieu's stereotypical rendering of Kabyle life in Algeria into home and field, female and male, wet and dry, for example, Crawford demonstrates that the extended household of male and female labor constitutes the basic unit in the village system. Labor (including reproductive labor) is managed in the extended household according to gender and age hierarchies and one's place in this hierarchy is regulated by relations of economic and affective obligation. Crawford elucidates these relations by describing a day in the life of one household, its men, women, and children. As other ethnographies on Berber village life have also shown, Crawford's stories illustrate that overall women work harder than men, despite or perhaps because men have much more power.

In chapter 3 Crawford outlines some tribal history as well as the relation of four households to property and

inheritance. While men inherit more than women in Islam, Crawford doesn't stop there; by tracing the lineage of one family he demonstrates that female inheritance is important to household structure and continuity. He also attempts to gauge the relative wealth of several households in the village through land and property assessment, although this proves to be a difficult task as the villagers “did not want such calculations written down” (p. 83). He thus estimates wealth according to water rights and how much canal use is designated to each household. It becomes clear that some households own considerably more land than others and that equality does not exist either in the household or the village at large.

The crux of Crawford's theorizing lies in chapter 4, where he builds on his insights on inequality in the household to examine theories of segmentarity that have been extremely influential in the anthropology of Morocco. Crawford's contribution to this literature is to show that the inequality of the household is balanced by the equality that the people of Tadrar create when they invoke the concept of “lineage.” By employing four men from every household in the public labor of the village, the notion of “bone,” or lineage, is actualized. Crawford adds his voice to those of other scholars (Hammoudi, Munson) in overturning Gellner's Durkheimian assumption that societies based on lineage reiterate their social structures at all levels of society. Rather, he demonstrates that while the basic unit of the Tadrar village is the hierarchical household, another mode of social labor and cooperation is the model of the lineage, which depends and moves toward equality. What's more, Crawford asks whether these models of social structure have anything to contribute to contemporary debates about globalization, power, and freedom (or lack of it). Are the villagers in Tadrar more independent because less specialized than the citizens in cosmopolitan centers? Are cosmopolitans freer because they are not imbricated in the strong patriarchies and gerontocracies of the village household? “All societies valorize certain kinds of fairness,” notes Crawford. “In the case of Tadrar, equality between lineage segments is valued . . . [while] equality between men and women, or older and younger men, is not valued” (p. 109).

In chapter 5 Crawford delineates the relations that villagers have with the state, providing as well a short cultural history of both Morocco's political situation since independence and the absence of much of that history in the ethnographies of anthropologists. Drawing on history, stories, and interviews, Crawford reveals that the villagers of Tadrar deal with the state much as they do with the household and lineage. With the state, bribes are like gifts rendered to those higher up in the hierarchy in a series of relations of patronage from village to King. “Dealing with the state is thus like encountering vivified, dominating ancestors rather than the safely dead patriarchs

who normally link a man to his contemporary equals. This may be why most villagers see this 'eating' [bribery] as corrupt and yet feed their extortionists with exaggerated hospitality. . . . Everybody talks about bribes as gifts" (p. 128).

Much of the state's power is experienced first hand in projects of state-guided development, involving not only Moroccan officials but also representatives of NGOs and foreign companies. For Crawford, the state is not a purely hegemonic power but, rather, consists in a series of relations that are complex, contested, and often exploited for unintended use.

"Globalization at Home" is the title of the penultimate chapter in which Crawford makes sense of theories of globalization in light of the presented ethnography. He notes that between 1999 and 2004, 10 percent of Tadrar "abandoned the village for the city" (p. 158) and goes on to look at the three households that left. As he notes (drawing on James Scott), "capitalism happens to (regular) people," and he proceeds to analyze three migrating families as well as three families who sent a single member to make money in the city—what he calls "articulated households" (pp. 166–167). We learn how girls are sent to the city to work as maids and young men find work in bakeries or dairy farming. He concludes by stating that in "both cities and the mountains of Morocco, death stalks the poor. In ways that are both horrifying and mundane, globalization begins at home" (p. 174).

Crawford's book does not end on an entirely disheartening note. In his conclusion he brings back the large issues that motivate his study—the effects of globalization, the transformation of social structure as well as "shared understandings of space and time" (p. 182). We learn that since 2004, two sons have broken with a household in Tadrar to create their own in Marrakech, ones not dependent on the extended family or the patriarch. Structure is changing because of globalization at home.

But is this change positive or negative? Homogenizing or diversifying? Crawford says that the answers to these questions are "tied to understanding why it happens, how capital comes to reorganize (rationalize some would say) the spatial, temporal, and interpersonal moorings of human beings" (p. 184). Crawford answers the questions of how and why globalization happens to people through gauging its effects on the people of Tadrar. In the transition from a village household reliant on the labor of its members to a wage laborer in the city, much is lost and much is gained. Crawford's ethnography is a passionate exploration of the costs of both of these systems. With astute theoretical analysis and deeply moving prose, he not only gives a literary life to Tadrar and its people but also asks us to make sense of global change not only in their lives but also in our own.

**Kurdistan: Crafting of National Selves.** *Christopher Houston.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008. 248 pp.

**DIANE E. KING**

University of Kentucky

This book is a success, but not if judged by its cover. It appears to be an ethnography about Kurdish life and nationalism across Kurdistan, but it is not. Although written by a sociocultural anthropologist, it contains little evidence of the ethnographic fieldwork among Turkish Kurds that the author has carried out (p. 155). Secondly, the title of this book suggests that it will cover "Kurdistan" in a national and comprehensive sense. Most of Kurdistan, the area ethnic Kurds recognize as their homeland, stretches across parts of four states: Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey, but this book is mainly about Turkey and its predecessor the Ottoman Empire, as well as the capital cities (but not the regions where most Kurds live) in Iran and Iraq. Further, Kurdish nationalist movements and their leaders are not the focus of this book.

What *Kurdistan: Crafting of National Selves* does do is to focus on nationalisms that adhere to the state—Arab, Persian, and Turkish—and how Kurds and Kurdishness have been portrayed and manipulated by them. It offers a fine analysis of a variety of assertions regarding ethnicity, nationalism, and Kurdishness in the Ottoman Empire and its successor state, Turkey—an analysis that is clearly informed by anthropological sensibilities. It is a book about how Turkishness and Kurdishness and Turkey and Kurdistan have been represented by Turkish and Kurdish nationalists, historians, and political scientists and anthropologists. This work is not so much about "selves" in the individual sense as the title might imply but, rather, about how the collective identities of people living in a particular locale (Anatolia to a greater extent than Kurdistan, once again despite the title) were shaped and spoken for by writers ranging from representatives of empires and nationalist movements to western ethnographers.

Houston begins chapter 1 by summarizing some authors' ideas about the Ottoman Empire's early ethnic composition, the role of Islam in its founding and expansion, and the role of its struggle with its Christian neighbors. He then examines the role of the Kurds under Ottoman suzerainty, arguing that it was under the Ottomans that Kurds came to cohere as a group and eventually to see themselves as a nation. Ultimately, Houston argues, "Pre-modern imperialism as a political project (such as the early Ottomans) . . . was neither able to fabricate nor interested in fabricating culturally homogenous imperial subjects, except perhaps on doctrinal grounds" and "the rise of particularistic identities" are "products of globalization itself"

despite analyses of globalization that fret about “(global) cultures of sameness” (p. 34). The stage is thus set for the rest of the book, in which we see Kurdish national identity taking shape even as it remains stateless.

In chapter 2 (most of which previously appeared in Houston 2007), Houston addresses three events: the dividing of Kurdistan between the Ottomans and the Safavids in the 16th century, changes in the Ottoman-Kurdish relationship in the 19th century, and the fate of non-Kurdish and non-Turkish minorities around the turn of the 20th century.

Chapter 3 summarizes several of the main ethnographies on the Kurds, including work by the Turkish ethnographer Ismail Beşikçi and Westerners Edmund Leach, Fredrik Barth, and Martin van Bruinessen. This chapter represents the main “anthropological” content of the book. While I find some of its critical assertions a bit harsh, it is nice, however, to see these ethnographies, which represent ethnographic work carried out in Kurdistan from the 1930s to 1990s, compared and contrasted. Curiously, as well as ironically because this book is so Turkey focused, Houston omits a classic ethnography of Turkish Kurds: *Tribe and Kinship among the Kurds* (1991) by Lale Yalçın-Heckmann. This is a strange and glaring omission in a chapter that purports to offer an overview of Kurdish ethnography.

In chapters 4 and 5 (both of which contain previously published material, e.g., Houston 2002, 2005) Houston applies the concept of “Kemalism,” a term referring to the modernizing political doctrine of the founder of modern Turkey and usually only used in reference to Turkey, to “projects of nation-building emanating from the modernizing capitals of Baghdad, Tehran and Ankara” (p. 97). His main argument is that in the 20th century the Kurds ran afoul of ethnic-infused nationalisms housed in strongly modernizing ideologies, which Kemalism in Turkey exemplified. In chapter 5 he argues that many of the architectural forms in the capitals were expressions of ethnic chauvinism that excluded Kurdish expression. While *Pahlavism*, *Ba’thism*, and other terms are arguably more appropriate for their respective settings, I do find Houston’s expanded use of *Kemalism* to be an intriguing way to think about the nationalisms “emanating” from these cities.

I will close by pointing out an omission and offering a commendation. In 1991, Iraqi Kurds set up an autonomous region in the north and northeast part of the country, which is now an officially recognized region in the federal Iraqi system known as the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). This represents a major achievement for Kurdish nationalism. However, Houston barely mentions the KRI. Although it is clearly not his focus, the lack of coverage of such a significant development in the history of Kurdistan is conspicuous. So too is the absence or only cursory mention, in a book that purports to be about Kurdish nationalism, of the 20th century’s main Kurdish nationalist leaders.

Finally, this book represents an act of courage. The term *Kurdistan* is politically provocative in Turkey, and some authors who might otherwise use it refrain out of fear. Despite this, Houston uses it liberally. He exercises courage in another direction as well by covering the role of some Kurds in perpetrating the Armenian genocide despite the risk of alienating his Kurdish readers.

Very few sociocultural anthropologists work among Kurdish people, in Turkey or anywhere, so Christopher Houston’s work is valuable as salvage anthropology. One hopes that we will see more ethnographic work from him in the future.

## References cited

- Houston, Christopher  
2002 Legislating Virtue, or Fear and Loathing in Istanbul? *Critique of Anthropology* 22(4):425–444.  
2005 Provocations of the Built Environment: Animating Cities in Turkey as *Kemalist*. *Political Geography* 24:101–119.  
2007 “Set Aside from the Pen and Cut Off from the Foot”: Imagining the Ottoman Empire and Kurdistan. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27(2):397–411.
- Yalçın-Heckmann, Lale  
1991 *Tribe and Kinship among the Kurds*. European University Studies, series 19, Anthropology-Ethnology, vol. 27. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

**Hollow Bodies: Institutional Responses to Sex Trafficking in Armenia, Bosnia and India.** Susan Dewey. Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2008. 281 pp., notes, index.

## PARDIS MAHDAVI

Pomona College

Susan Dewey’s *Hollow Bodies: Institutional Responses to Sex Trafficking in Armenia, Bosnia and India* details the contrasts between discourses, lived experiences, and institutional responses to sex trafficking in three very different contexts. In this ethnographic tale of three cities, Dewey, an anthropologist-activist working voluntarily for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) travels to Armenia, Bosnia, and India to take a closer look at the processes, policies, and rhetoric about trafficking, and how these discourses create additional obstacles for persons who have survived trafficking into the sex industry. Dewey asks some important and difficult questions in this book such as: Why are people so compassionate toward trafficking victims yet revile prostitution? How do gendered structural inequalities manifest themselves in the form of sex trafficking? And, why are responses to trafficking worsening the lives of those they purport to help? She demands a lot from both her colleagues in the field and the reader who will no doubt be left

with many questions and a critical lens through which to examine them after finishing the book.

As a multisited ethnography that asks us to rethink an important policy issue, *Hollow Bodies* is applied anthropology at its best. Dewey uses her ethnographic work to point to the shortcomings of international organizations, governments, and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in responding to the needs of those who have been trafficked. The author especially hits her stride in the chapter about India where she points to various organizations that have been more successful in addressing the sex aspect of trafficking and asks the reader (and, implicitly, policy makers and activists) to look to these groups as a model for best practices. The book will no doubt be of interest to students and faculty in political science, anthropology, sociology, and women's studies. Because of the global reach of her work, globalization scholars and researchers with an interest in transnational migration will also find the book engaging and important.

At the heart of the book, Dewey seems to be focused on how and why the responses of those who seek to address the issue of sex trafficking seem to be perpetuating and worsening the problem. She looks at both global rhetoric on trafficking (which conflates sex work, labor, migration, and trafficking) as well as local responses and policies in her three field sites. In the first chapter entitled "Why Feminist Questions Are Human Questions," Dewey situates herself within debates that conflate sex work and trafficking. In this chapter and the next, the author provides the theoretical and historical framework for the study. She asks the reader to look more closely at larger macrosocial forces such as poverty, postwar and conflict settings, economic turbulence, and government corruption in structuring transnational female migration. Within this framework, Dewey notes that the tropes of trafficking emerging in global rhetoric and international organization responses paint all women in the sex industry as victims without agency, in need of "saving." The "savior" in these cases are usually large international organizations such as the IOM, whose programmatic paradigms rest on the caricatures drawn about trafficked women that do not recognize their capacity as active agents. Rather than a book perpetuating the worn-out trope of the fallen woman, or duped or tricked migrant who is now chained to a bed because of her ignorance, *Hollow Bodies* instead looks at larger structural forces at play that result in women who have to make difficult choices and live and operate within complicated family and societal networks.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 showcase Dewey's ethnographic research in Armenia, Bosnia, and India respectively. In her case study of Armenia, she describes the sad case of a growing number of NGOs that are vying for international donor aid that often does not make it to local grassroots efforts (and, instead, further supplements the larger umbrella organizations such as the IOM). Dewey notes that this heavy

reliance on donor aid can blindside NGO and international organization staff who will do whatever it takes (even if that means false prosecution of alleged "traffickers" or forging statistics of numbers of "victims") to secure funding. Dewey summarizes the situation in Armenia by highlighting that the real problem is not economic but, rather, infrastructural.

Chapter 4 looks at the politics and conditionality of funding and the establishment of postconflict civil society in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Dewey notes that women's bodies came under harsh scrutiny and abuse during the time of the Balkan conflict and emphasizes the lack of government or civil society responses to sex trafficking within the region. She calls for aid that is not predicated on religion or ethnic group and ends the chapter with a look at a particularly marginalized population, the Roma, who have not been able to access any social services despite high rates of abuse within their community. Perhaps the strongest chapter in the book is chapter 5. In this chapter Dewey highlights success stories from members of civil society in India who have sought to build an infrastructure for trafficked persons that does not hinge on race, class, or caste. She points to several organizations that have emerged and are working with women who are survivors of trafficking and notes that the approach of these organizations seeks to recognize female migrants as active agents and laborers.

In *Hollow Bodies*, Susan Dewey has taken on a sensitive and highly charged subject. The issue of trafficking is one that has gained increasing attention not only at the policy level but also within the media and in activist circles. Rather than contributing to rhetoric that seeks to fuel moral panics about sexualized women's bodies, Dewey uses careful ethnographic data to situate the lives of transnational sex workers and ways in which female migrants, in particular, are vulnerable to abuse, structural and physical violence because of gendered and racialized rhetoric about the movement of women's bodies, and their work in the sex industry. In recent years, however, scholars and activists who have taken up the issue of trafficking have been critical of studies and policies that focus exclusively on sex trafficking—an act that serves to hyper scrutinize women in the sex industry while eclipsing the experiences of migrants in other situations of forced labor. To that end, this book does not assist these scholars in escaping the focus of trafficking on sex and the sex industry. That said, however, Dewey has clearly gained entry into a difficult to reach population and should be commended for brokering this access. Although the book would have been strengthened by a larger discussion of trafficking (not just of women and not just into the sex industry), labor and immigration, in documenting institutional responses to the issue, Dewey has filled an important gap in our knowledge about discourses on trafficking at the local and global level.



**Above the Death Pits, Beneath the Flag: Youth Voyages to Poland and the Performance of Israeli National Identity.**

Jackie Feldman. Oxford: Berghahn, 2008. 320 pp.

**RONA SHERAMY**

Association for Jewish Studies

Holocaust youth trips to Poland have become a popular means of transmitting memory of the Holocaust to generations of Jews born well after World War II. Part educational trip, part tourist experience, part secular pilgrimage, these highly structured expeditions immerse teens from around the world in the history and culture of prewar and wartime Poland. The forerunners of these programs were the trips pioneered by the Israeli Ministry of Education in the 1980s, meant to inspire in young Israelis a sense of identification with Jewish wartime victims, survivors, and witnesses, and to reinforce participants' commitment to Israel and Jewish national survival. The programs have since been replicated and reinterpreted by Jewish communities around the world, forging new rituals and liturgies of Holocaust memorial culture.

The social anthropologist Jackie Feldman closely analyzes the goals, methodology, and impact of the Israeli Ministry of Education trips in *Above the Death Pits, Beneath the Flag*, a study based on his dissertation. Drawing on participant-observer research, interviews, questionnaires, student journals, and a wealth of other sources, Feldman offers an exhaustive study of student trips from Israel to Poland, and back to Israel again, through the lens of one 1995 delegation. Beginning with overviews of the place of the Holocaust in Israeli society over the past 60 years and the role of various state institutions (e.g., schools, museums, and memorial days) in articulating and conveying Holocaust narratives, Feldman analyzes the Ministry of Education programs, delving into curricular materials, planning processes, infrastructure, staffing, and itinerary. The heart of Feldman's book is his ethnography of a 1995 trip, which takes the reader virtually hour-by-hour through an eight-day trip with a group of 30 high school students.

Feldman argues that the "trips to Poland can best be understood as a *ritual reenactment of survival*," one that walks participants through the various sites of the Holocaust in Poland and returns them "finally, [as] *olim* (immigrants; ascenders) to the Land of Israel" (p. 3). The youth trips unite participants through symbols, ceremonies, and performance, creating a powerful common experience that binds Israeli youth to each other and to a redemptive image of their country (p. 223). The voyages present the Holocaust as a national legacy that transcends participants' background (e.g., Ashkenazi, Sephardi, or Mizrahi), giving students a new sense of themselves as Israelis (p. 74). In contrast to the death, chaos, and destruction embodied by

the itinerary in Poland, "Israel is appreciated [by the end of the trip], not as the taken-for-granted birthplace of the native-born *tzabar*, but as the sole giver of life and value" (p. 256).

Feldman notes at the opening of his book that he "came to the Poland trips carrying [his] own baggage" (p. xv), having made pilgrimages to Eastern Europe to explore his family's prewar and wartime experiences. Indeed, Feldman's "empathy for the personal search for roots and identity" informs his work: he is keenly interested in how individuals' perceptions, motivations, and historical consciousness interact with national narratives and objectives, noting that the journey to Poland can "become the scene of a sincere, deep, and creative search for personal identity" (p. xviii). He is concerned with both the master-narrative that the trip presents (through text, ritual, ceremony, symbols, and location), and the manner in which students respond to this narrative. Thus, on the one hand, Feldman argues convincingly that the journeys' performative aspects—the rituals, ceremonies, symbols, and travel—transmit messages and memories in a manner that textbook lessons and "bureaucracy" simply cannot (p. 262). On the other hand, Feldman demonstrates that the creation of collective memory—and, by extension, national identity—is not simply a one-way street, with the state as the only actor but, rather, a dynamic process of transmission, reception, interpretation and, at times, resistance. Feldman's incorporation of teens' comments and questions points to the fact that "not all students emerge from the voyage affirming the same political opinions or ideologies, [although] they do learn to identify themselves with the same symbols . . . [that] can then continue to work on and in the students in the life world" (p. 258). Indeed, Feldman predicts that some students will question the trip's messages, either in their teenage years, or later, when they "don backpacks at age twenty-one . . . and experience other alternatives, which are neither Israel nor Auschwitz" (p. 266).

Feldman's work speaks directly to the fields of Israel and Holocaust studies, illuminating the place of the Holocaust in Israeli culture and society, and the role of Israeli education—and youth trips, specifically—in transmitting national ideals, myths, and values. *Above the Death Pits* is also deeply engaged in theories of collective memory, pilgrimages, travel, and historical narrative. As such, the book addresses a wider audience of anthropologists and historians interested in the role of schools, travel, ceremonies, symbols, and rituals in the creation of national memory and identity. Finally, Feldman's study provides critical data for scholars across disciplines interested in examining similar youth trips from other countries. The Israeli programs have had a profound influence on the content and structure of Holocaust trips originating from around the world, and Feldman's study provides an extremely valuable basis of comparison.

**Indians and Leftists in the Making of Ecuador's Modern Indigenous Movements.** Marc Becker. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008. 303 pp.

**LÊDA LEITÃO MARTINS**

Pitzer College

Ecuador has been a hot bed of indigenous activism for decades, and Marc Becker's new book *Indians and Leftists in the Making of Ecuador's Modern Indigenous Movements* provides a rich historical context to current events. These days everything about indigenous rights seems to converge to Ecuador. The 2009 documentary *Crude* by Joe Balingier attracted a lot of attention to the misdeeds of Chevron and other oil companies that caused massive spills in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Last September civic protests against a new water bill proposed by the government left one Shuar teacher dead in a confrontation with the police. President Raphael Correa invested a good deal of energy to resolve the internal crisis, certainly having in mind that indigenous peoples were involved in the overthrows of the last two presidents. Recently a group of Achuar Indians were featured in a BBC story about the similarities between indigenous struggles in Ecuador and James Cameron's *Avatar*. All this political mobilization, Becker argues, should be seen not as new occurrences but, rather, as struggles rooted in decades of community organizing.

Becker offers a historical perspective to the multivocality that characterizes indigenous activism in Ecuador. The book explains, for example, why we should not be surprised that the heroes in Balingier's movie are not only indigenous communities but also a local and self-made rural mestizo lawyer as well, and international support groups, including Sting's Rainforest Foundation. The protests last September were organized by the National Teacher's Union (UNE) and the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities (CONAIE), an example of exactly the long-term collaboration between the Left and indigenous leaders that Becker focuses on. He argues that the collaboration of indigenous peoples with other political groups is not the result of some form of inauthenticity and corruption, as some critics have claimed. On the contrary, the relationship between Indian leaders and socialist militants is one of equality and collaboration, with one group shaping the other in the political arena.

Students will benefit from Becker's demystification of the often imagined sense of purity and cohesion in indigenous uprisings. Becker portrays indigenous peoples as "historical actors" and as such they "have always identified with a wide array of ideological perspectives" (p. 12). Therefore, he concludes, "it is a mistake to speak of a singular united Indigenous movement" (p. 12). The internal diversity of indigenous movements is often overlooked. Becker's narrative emphasizes the different constituencies of different indigenous organizations and how they change through

time and space. The highland organizations, which are the main focus of the book, are not the same as their lowland counterparts, for instance. The original indigenous associations changed as the social and political contexts have been transformed over the last 60 years.

His main question points to the old debate among academics and activists about class and ethnicity: are indigenous movements manifestations of ethnic conflicts or are they at heart class struggles? His answer is both. As Becker himself puts it, "these categories blur to the point where . . . they appeared as two aspects of a lived identity" (p. 15). Becker believes that we need to look at both ethnicity and class to see a more complete picture of the Indian experience during and after the colonial period including the process of political organizing. The book is centered in the interdependency of Indigenous peoples and leftists in the creation of political movements that attempt to transform the social orders that produce different classes and different ethnic groups.

One of the rich aspects of the book is the attention paid to the ability of indigenous leaders to navigate the quagmire field of categories, as they attempt to escape being framed by one term to the detriment of others. Being called an Indian can obscure the exploitation they experience as rural workers. For example, in describing Jesus Gualavisí, an indigenous leader and influential figure in the Ecuadorian Socialist Party (PSE), Becker notes that in the founding congress of PSE, Gualavisí proposed "a salute to 'all peasants [*campesinos*] in the Republic'" and suggested that "the party create an office to defend the interests of peasants and workers" (p. 17). Gualavisí, who according to Becker "was deeply involved in leftist politics and class struggles, [but] retained his ethnic identity and mannerisms," possessed a "double consciousness" (p. 25) and like other activists was able to invoke a political solidarity as both Indians and peasants.

Becker himself attempts to evade fixed or singular categorization of the people he historicizes. Although the title of his first chapter is "What Is an Indian?" there is no clear definition of what an Indian was/is for Becker. Perhaps it is the anthropologist in me that expected a definition of Indianness, something beyond a political identity. The closest I found to that appeared in the discussion of attachment to land. Citing activists, academics, and novelists, Becker notes the deep connection of Indians to land, to the point that they "were willing to work for lower wages in order to have access to land" (p. 65). Becker cites cultural and economic reasons to explain "a great love for the land that flowed in their blood," as the novelist Aníbal Buitron describes it (p. 65). But Becker touches on culture only to reinforce that political organizing, and perhaps a political culture, is at the core of what being an Indian in Ecuador means, at least at this historical moment. It is after all the very struggle for land that caused the strikes in the 1930s

that led to the First Congress of Peasant Organizations, which not by coincidence happened in the same region where Gualavisí had organized five years earlier the Peasant Workers Syndicate. That was the beginning of the process that would result in the creation of the Federación Ecuatorina de Indios (FEI) in 1944, and that would eventually culminate in the Patchakutik movement in the 1990s. Land strikes are the origin of the indigenous organizations of today and are formative to who Indians are in the Ecuador.

As if forced by the facts he narrates, Becker moves from using both the terms “Indians” and “rural workers” (or “peasants”) in fluid if not ambiguous ways at the beginning of book to having them side by side, in a complimentary form at the end. As several failed land reforms resulted in a political disenchantment in the 1980s, the movements were reorganized on the basis of ethnicity. In a contradictory way, fluidity of identities seems to be less of an option as political mobilization centers around the idea of indigenous nationalities and a plurinational state, which are nowadays key topics in the political agenda of the indigenous organizations in Ecuador. So, is class dead now?

His answer again is no. What happened is that “ethnicity became a rallying cry for what were essentially class demands, and contrasting class with ethnic identity results in a false dichotomy” (p. 192). Although Becker recognizes discontinuities—there is, for instance, a diminishing presence of indigenous women in the ranks of protesters and leaders—he is emphatic in asserting important continuities between old and new indigenous politics. The recent alliances with international organizations, like Sting’s, are an evolution of past collaborations with socialist parties and the church. The indigenous leaders of today still claim that social problems will only be solved through fundamental economic changes and land reform like FEI did in the past. The road blocks of last September were aimed to protect the rights of not only local communities but all Ecuadorians to their national water sources against transnational privatization. Class, ethnicity, and, now, nationalism are a trinity in indigenous activism, and why not?

### Reference cited

Ballenger, Joe  
2009 *Crude*. 104 mins. n.c.: Entendre Films.

**Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power, and the Acting Subject.** Sherry Ortner. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006. 200 pp.

### FRAN MASCIA-LEES

Rutgers University

Sherry Ortner has provided us with a guide to the state of social theory and its trajectory for several decades now. She

continues to do so in her collection of seven essays, *Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power, and the Acting Subject*. Five of these chapters were previously published, some as long ago as 1991, reminding us of changes in anthropology in the last two decades. We see the development in Ortner’s own reasoning in four chapters in which she weaves together analyses of theory with a description of her own grappling with it over time. She trains her analytical eye on class in the United States in the remaining three chapters, which are more ethnographic. Regardless of specific focus, each argument is presented in a crystal clear voice. And it is this voice that makes *Anthropology and Social Theory* such a pleasure to read.

Ortner begins with a new introduction on “Updating Practice Theory,” which chronicles changes in anthropological theory through her own work, identifying and analyzing the three particular “shifts” she sees as most influential since the 1960s: the “power shift,” the “historic turn,” and the “reinterpretations of cultures” project. It is the last that primarily concerns her in this volume as she develops a theory of the subject that transcends the limitations of traditional practice theory, one that provides a richer conceptualization of subjectivity as well as a more nuanced understanding of the relationship of power to agency.

This is especially clear in “Subjectivity and Culture Critique,” one of the most significant pieces in the collection. Acknowledging the importance of work focused on individual actors and the psychological constitution of their subjectivities, Ortner turns attention to a classically Geertzian concern: how certain cultural formations produce particular modes of consciousness and forms of subjectivity, such as anxious Balinese gamblers. To overcome the shortcomings of the “interpretation of culture” approach, especially its neglect of power and its essentialism, Ortner marries Geertz’s “culture” to Gramsci’s “hegemony” (via British cultural studies), a move signaled by the “culture” and “power” of the book’s subtitle. Her third concept, the “acting subject” is the agent who, while subjected through its subjectivity, can, at times, overcome its subjection.

This is because, unlike Bourdieu’s subjects, Ortner’s are at least “partially ‘knowing’ ” with “some degree of reflexivity about themselves and their desires, and . . . some ‘penetration’ into the ways . . . they are formed by their circumstances” (p. 111). And it is these kinds of subjects who play Ortner’s “serious games.” Ortner goes beyond the idea that subjects are capable of resisting power by looking at what she calls “full-blown serious games” or “projects,” in which people’s intentions, purposes, and desires direct them toward culturally meaningful lives, albeit within relations of power, whether Sherpa, Tswana, or Filipinas as described in her final chapter on agency and intentionality or the Gen Xers she writes about in “Generation X: Anthropology in a Media Saturated World.”

The chapter “Generation X: Anthropology in a Media Saturated World” provides the most extended example of subjects situated within relations of power pursuing projects and being thwarted along the way. Ortner starts by complicating the notion of what constitutes “Generation X.” In contrast to media representations that homogenize (and, indeed, construct) this generation and represent them as slackers, Ortner distinguishes between lower-middle-class Gen Xers and upper-middle-class ones and understands each as subjects struggling with the on-the-ground reality of U.S. economic decline in the 1970s. As the neoliberal policies of the 1980s pulled the middle class further and further apart, lower-middle-class women and men whose “project” was to class climb became frustrated, depressed, and enraged as upper-middle-class Gen Xers became insecure and fearful, even terrorized, as their desire to maintain their parents’ class standing became more and more allusive.

Although Ortner’s insights into Gen Xers are compelling, it is a shame that she does not provide the kind of context that she champions in her chapter “Resistance and the Problem of Academic Refusal,” which critiques the failure to aspire to “thickness” and “density” in ethnographic representations. Ortner is especially concerned with the “thinness” of studies of resistance, which she argues, ironically, sanitize politics by focusing primarily on relations between dominant and dominated to the exclusion of other sites of tension. Neither do these studies, she claims, sufficiently explore the cultural richness of groups nor of the subjectivities of the actors involved in such struggles. Although Ortner does explore the tension between upper middle-class Gen Xers and their parents, suggesting that the media representation of the slacker is a reflection of parental anxieties, her analysis relies on others people’s writings and on slight interview data, providing us with little sense of the intersubjective context within which actors’ intentions, desires, fears, and projects are enacted, thwarted, or achieved. Nor, bewilderingly, does she provide a rich picture of the practices that construct and propel their projects.

However, when “Generation X” is taken together with “Reading America: Preliminary Notes on Class and Culture” and “Identities: The Hidden Life of Class,” what does emerge is a vivid picture of the ideological formation of “class” in U.S. popular and scholarly discourses and its submersion within other categories of identity. She shows how naturalizing class by emblazoning it on raced, ethnicized, or gendered bodies renders it invisible as the source of social and economic inequalities. It also has real consequences for lived experiences, as when, for example, working-class women, seen as more aligned with middle-class values, pressure their husbands toward middle-class respectability, creating tensions in their marriage, or when African

Americans who, despite high-status jobs, see themselves as lower class.

Ortner is masterful at locating connections between currents in contemporary social theory and at teasing out their similarities and differences, their limitations and potential. *Anthropology and Social Theory* is a highly valuable text, an accessible reckoning with some of social theory’s most fundamental but slippery and problematic concepts. It will be a welcomed read for scholars who also continue to wrestle with issues of subjectivity, agency, and power, and for students seeking a map to the theoretical struggles that will likely continue to vex anthropology in the 21st century.

**Missing: Youth, Citizenship, and Empire after 9/11.**  
Sunaina Marr Maira. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009. 336 pp.

**KAREN LEONARD**

University of California, Irvine

Sunaina Maira has written a passionate, politically engaged, and ambitious book, one ostensibly based on ethnographic work with South Asian Muslim youth after 9/11 in a New England urban high school. Maira combines three strands or modes of writing: narratives about and by the youth; analysis based on her fieldwork and theoretical and political ideas; and accounts of her own involvement in community and political issues relevant to questions of youth, citizenship, and empire (p. 36). Of these strands, the second dominates. Thus, the first substantive chapter lays out Maira’s analysis of U.S. empire “to highlight the importance of this framework for research on a range of issues related to citizenship, culture, and politics in this historical moment, and to reinsert an approach into the study of youth and immigration that has long gone missing” (p. 36). Her discussions of politics and theory are well written and wide ranging. She proposes new concepts or new phrases to capture themes she attributes to the student interviews: imperial feelings, cultural citizenship, transnational citizenship, polyculturalism, and dissenting citizenship.

Maira has used pseudonyms for the town and high school that she studied in 2002–03 with a grant from the Russell Sage Foundation and the help of three research assistants. Her appendix on methods specifies interviews with 38 high school students and 29 adults, chiefly parents, schoolteachers, and staff; Indian, Pakistani, and Muslim community leaders; and a few employees in government youth programs. Narratives from 14 of the 38 students interviewed are reproduced, two students appearing five times each (a Romeo and Juliet duo) and the others once

each. Three of these students were from Bangladesh, three were from Pakistan, and eight were from Gujarat, India. By the end of the book, one does have a sense of the lives of those who are recent immigrants, their struggles in school, at work, and in their homes. However, in contrast to another recent ethnographic study of South Asian students in an American high school, Shalini Shankar's *Desi Land: Teen Culture, Class, and Success in Silicon Valley* (2008), there is no systematic presentation of the high school student body, staff, policies, or of the family and community patterns in which the students are embedded.

Selected student narratives do open each chapter and engage us, but then Maira moves into analytical mode, focusing on current politics and theory and only occasionally referring to the student narratives to illustrate her views. Given her strong criticisms of the United States, its imperial thrust, its discriminatory policies toward Arabs and Muslims after 9/11, and its neoliberal economic positioning of the students in low-wage service-sector jobs, it was striking (at least to me) that the selected narratives lent rather weak support to her generalizations. Yes, some students stated that they thought the war in Afghanistan was not justified, and, yes, some spoke of expressions of prejudice toward themselves, friends, or relatives. But on the whole, as Maira says herself several times, their criticisms were implicit rather than explicit (she explains this by fear), and all or most said they liked where they were living and valued or intended to get U.S. citizenship.

When a student showed her a cartoon about Bush, saying he did not dislike Bush but found it funny, Maira muses for several pages about what the student could really have meant by this "ambiguous dissent" (pp. 210–214). In another place (pp. 190–197), following three narratives from students from India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan who had been in the United States from eight to 14 years, Maira discusses them as having expressed a "critique of the anti-Muslim backlash" and states that their "dissent" was driven by two factors: first, they were forced to deal with discrimination "soon after arriving in the United States," and, second, they were from a "region" that was "experiencing a U.S. military invasion" (pp. 197–198). One might find her generalizations are overstatements, but to her credit she has given full enough statements from 14 of her interviewees so that we can assess the stances for ourselves.

Maira, like the recent book by the Detroit Arab American Study Team, *Citizenship and Crisis: Arab Detroit after 9/11* (2009), is intervening in, as the latter puts it, "a process of normalization that obscures the dangers, opportunities, and sociopolitical transformations now reshaping the post 9/11 world" (p. 26). Maira invokes Arabs and the situation in the Middle East frequently in her political and theoretical discussions, although unlike the book just mentioned, her focus is on South Asian and not Middle Eastern Muslims,

and the student narratives have little or nothing to say about the Israel–Palestine situation. It seems to this reviewer that the connections made to the student narratives are rather weak.

The third theme of the book, Maira's own activism, is a strong one and strongest in the final chapters. The photos in the book all illustrate this activism, but information about it is scattered and one never learns who exactly the "we" are that are carrying out South Asian Mentoring and Tutoring (SAMTA) and South Asian Committee for Human Rights activities.

Maira tells us of her leading role in setting up school and community events that she subsequently analyzes with respect to student reaction and participation, and some might find it problematic to stage events that one then investigates. The book ends with Maira's account of attempts to visit a Bangladeshi man arrested for immigration violations, a man who turns out to be "missing" when the activists finally arrive at the prison.

In sum, Sunaina Maira's book offers a well-argued analysis of immensely important political issues and compelling discussions of current theoretical work on these issues.

## References cited

- Detroit Arab American Study Team  
2009 *Detroit Arab American Study Team's Citizenship and Crisis: Arab Detroit after 9/11*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.  
Shankar, Shalini  
2008 *Desi Land: Teen Culture, Class, and Success in Silicon Valley*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

**Transnational Tortillas: Race, Gender, and Shop-Floor Politics in Mexico and the United States.** Carolina Bank Muñoz. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press–Cornell University Press, 2008. 202 pp.

## PAUL ALLATSON

University of Technology Sydney

Tortimundo is the inspired pseudonym proposed by Carolina Bank Muñoz in *Transnational Tortillas: Race, Gender, and Shop-Floor Politics in Mexico and the United States*, to designate a successful, and "real," transnational tortilla company with factories in southern California, United States, and Baja California, Mexico. Identifying these factories as "Hacienda CA" and "Hacienda BC" respectively, Muñoz enters into the murky worlds of their divergent factory regimes to identify how globalization, neoliberal policies, and state power, have transformed factory labor

conditions on either side of the U.S.–Mexico border in the wake of NAFTA's inauguration in 1994.

Muñoz's thesis is that both factories manage their labor forces through *hegemonic despotism*, a term she adapts from Michael Burawoy's 1985 influential study, *The Politics of Production: Factory Regimes under Capitalism and Socialism*, where it signifies how under globalization, and despite state policies intended to provide workers with certain securities and protection, employers control labor with the threats of shutdown or moving operations offshore. But, influenced as well by such studies as Steven McKay's *Satanic Mills or Silicon Islands? The Politics of High-Tech Production in the Philippines* (2006), which demonstrated the enormous variations that factory gender regimes could take, Muñoz advances Burawoy's class-centric thesis by arguing that immigration and ethnicity are now pivotal factors in the production of labor regimes under globalization. Muñoz thus proposes, with laudable clarity, that Hacienda CA is categorized by a coercive immigration regime, whose labor hierarchies and fault lines reflect the legal and ethnic divides between the documented (Chicano) and undocumented (Mexicano) status of the mostly male workforce, while the predominantly female workers at Hacienda BC operate within a repressive gender regime managed through harassment, employment insecurity, and competition, the latter at times evident as an ethnicized rivalry between pale- and dark-skinned workers.

As the distinctions between the labor regimes operating in these tortilla plants indicate, Muñoz's analytical and ethnographic approach attends to the complex intersections between labor market forces, class, gender, and racial discourses and hierarchies, evolving immigration controls, and the pivotal role played by rival, yet interlinked, state interventions into economic structures on either side of the U.S.–Mexico border. Muñoz's framing of her study in terms of an intersectional analysis, moreover, is a neatly articulated contribution to the practice of ethnographic work more generally. It permits her to contextualize her ethnographic research into the microlevel conditions on the factory floors of the two tortilla plants in relation to the macropolitical levels of neoliberal change under globalization, and to the mesolevel of state policies as they have configured labor markets on either side of the U.S.–Mexico border since 1994. The author's discussion of her ethnographic methodologies is also worth noting for its sensible attention to the institutional challenges she encountered, which prevented her from undertaking work on the assembly line and limited her opportunities to interrogate more deeply the views of shop-floor managers and supervisors.

As befits the intersectional approach, Muñoz's discussion of the transborder Tortimundo factories is neatly contextualized along a number of fronts. Chapter 2 provides a marvelous overview of the political economy of corn

and tortilla production in an era that has seen neoliberal policies and trade agreements in North America radically transform Mexico's agricultural sector and effect the transnationalization of its corn industries, at the expense of biodiversity, traditional farming and manufacturing traditions, and small-scale family enterprises. The chapter also provides fascinating, if sobering, insights into the rise of the tortilla and other corn-based products in the United States, as exemplified by the invention of the "wrap," a de-Mexicanized revision of the tortilla for mass consumption that is now an ubiquitous presence on fast-food menus across the globe.

The third chapter continues the necessary background by discussing U.S. immigration policy and its historical capacity to shape the labor market through the literal production of undocumented workers. While most of the discussion refers to immigration legislation in the United States since the Immigration Act of 1965—a watershed moment that by removing quotas on Latin American immigration, inaugurated a new epoch in transborder movements from Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean—the Mexican state's inevitable imbrication in U.S. policy is also outlined. As Muñoz argues, Mexico's quasi-colonial relationship with the superpower to the north has meant that U.S. immigration policies have always had profound consequences for Mexico's own internal migration patterns and labor policies. For example, the militarization of the U.S. side of the U.S.–Mexico border from the early 1990s, and the renewed criminalization of undocumented immigrants after 9/11, led paradoxically to a gender imbalance in undocumented immigration over the border. That is, men were much more likely to make the move; concomitantly, there was a dramatic increase in the numbers of women from all over Mexico remaining in the northern border cities rather than face the perils of border crossing. The experiences of the workers in the two Hacienda plants detailed in chapters 4 and 5 confirm how such historical processes and state directives have translated directly into divergent regimes of labor control. Thus, Muñoz shows that the superexploitation of undocumented workers in many industries on the U.S. side, which prevents them from moving into the broader labor market in California, is paralleled by the class immobility of female workers in a Mexican border zone where unions are often in corrupt league with transnational corporations, and labor law violations result from the state's selective noninterventions. The final chapters of *Transnational Tortillas* are also fascinating for their deromanticized analysis of the worker resistances—some successful in their generation of independent union structures, others demonstrating that small-scale resistances are factored by plant managers into their operating costs and procedures—that the border region more generally, and the two tortilla factories specifically, have witnessed over the last two decades.

*Transnational Tortillas* makes important analytical contributions to ethnographic border, labor, immigration, and transnational studies. It is also an ideal study for teachers in multiple disciplines who require a text that negotiates and lays bare the complex local manifestations of globalization in an accessible and lucid way.

## References cited

- Burawoy, Michael  
1985 *The Politics of Production: Factory Regimes under Capitalism and Socialism*. London: Verso.
- McKay, Steven C.  
2006 *Satanic Mills or Silicon Islands? The Politics of High-Tech Production in the Philippines*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

**Genocide: Truth, Memory, and Representation.** *Alexander Laban Hinton and Kevin Lewis O'Neill*, eds. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009. 341 pp.

### DANIELLE De LAME

Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren (Belgium)

This is an extraordinary book, anthropology at its best, drawing on the extreme to enlighten more common features of memory, representation, and the variability of truth. As the title indicates, while genocide and other occurrences of mass violence (such as ethnic cleansing or the mass killings of political opponents) are at the core of the collection of chapters, the themes, the perspectives, and the very high quality of each chapter make this text an indispensable tool to think about theoretical and methodological aspects of collecting, describing, and analyzing data from “experience-near perspectives” of research under (post)traumatic circumstances. The comparative approach fosters a nuanced reflection not only about the definition of *genocide* and its legal and social consequences but also about the political and personal ways of tackling with the aftermath of such violence. The recent, still “burgeoning” anthropological interest for mass violence is easily put within the recent development of the discipline, its greater interest for globalization, “and a greater commitment to reflexivity, historicity, and engaged anthropology” (p. 9).

Confronted with the truth of genocide, the main question is about how “discourses about the truth have been deployed”; how representations have played a role both in the mobilization and in the thinking of what happened; how suffering is, or not, qualified for recognition or compensation. A silence forcibly imposed, a discriminatory categorization of victims, the fabrication of an official truth: states produce representations that can hardly mend the social

fabric, while the representation of dead bodies, either in “Body Worlds” (Germany) or on some memorial sites (Murambi, Rwanda) further objectifies humans in their acts of life and remedies to the unease that empathy could arise in the spectator, as U. Linke demonstrates.

The case of Guatemala, treated in two chapters, by V. Sanford and D. Rodman, respectively, illustrates aspects of postgenocide situations that are quite common: an official version of the past combines the denial by people in power of their own role with a representation of the past that can serve their positions. Sanford goes further than this general consideration as she illustrates various forms the threatening of witnesses can take to deny any suffering that does not fit into the official version of what happened; but she also shows that courage surging from the feeling that nothing is left for them to lose can challenge suppression collectively and successfully. If, however, in the case she describes, forensic investigations provided ground for challenge, in the case of Sudan, as described by S. Hutchinson, international monitoring can have “pervert” effects, and the setting of priorities and strategies should prevent monitoring missions from reinforcing military impunity. One might argue that, on this field, the “near to experience” anthropological approach would be of high significance.

The case of Rwanda certainly combines the caveats expressed by Hutchinson as far as official monitoring is concerned with those J. Burnet expresses when considering the divisive effects the state monopoly on truth produces. As dissent is erased in a discourse on national unity that practices contradict, the suffering of victims who do not fit into the promotional discourse is denied. In the Rwandan case as in the other ones, the state-build image aims at obtaining economic advantages, such as international aid given for various political motives or as the benefits of streamlined tourism. On several respects, Suharto’s Indonesia presents traits that are similar to Rwandan policy of words. In Indonesian Bali, silence imposed on themes or terms leads to the assignment of new meanings to words, forging a “semiotic of terror” as in the example given by L. Dwyer, the word for *allotment* becomes the word to tell the number of victims of a paramilitary group. In a thoughtful and highly competent chapter, Dwyer explores the “challenges of including ethnographies of silence and forgetting in our approaches of the aftermath of violence” (p. 121). Trials, truth commissions, and other transitional institutions, as E. Drexler demonstrates through her analysis of the case of East Timor, contribute to “the production of the truth they appear to discover” and, according to her, fail because the complex logics of collaboration and betrayal remain unexamined. Thus, facts are channeled, and a hegemonic truth is produced, leaving victims and perpetrators (often the same persons) alone with remorse and grief, and those who fit in none of the dichotomy alone with their unacknowledged suffering.

All these representations pave the way for partial amnesia, for a “cleansing of experience” that, in its turn, will facilitate a mobilization for renewed violence, as P. Ballinger tells us with reference to Istria (former Yugoslavia). Many examples could sustain the demonstration of the mobilizing power of unelaborated past experience built into representations of acceptable reactions to collective events. This is especially the case when past experience has contributed to build an “affective citizenship,” as the massacres in Northern Sudan analyzed by C. Casey show. This case points to the role of colonial categorizing in the upsurge of current mass violence, and on the importance of the media in the collective mobilization for murder. Pointing at a scapegoat is, I would say, part of mobilization and of elusion before, during, and after mass violence, and this brings to mind again the problem of the “cultural” facilitation of mass violence, an aspect that is being shunned off politically correct anthropology. Would the representation of experience not be part of social “habitus,” while also being embedded within broader contexts, and work as it does with other acts, under the paradigm of “glocalization”?

Doing justice to such a book is a challenge. This well-constructed book will be of interest to many, especially to all social anthropologists who try to grasp the complex intertwining of imagination, action, and comprehension and their individual and societal nexus that the last chapter hints at. Theoretical distance may help them cope with, at times, painful or troubling empathy.

**Polluted Promises: Environmental Racism and the Search for Justice in a Southern Town.** *Melissa Checker.* New York: New York University Press, 2005. xi + 275 pp.

**WALTER E. LITTLE**

University at Albany, SUNY

Hyde Park is an Augusta, Georgia, neighborhood, located in a swamp and surrounded by commercial industries carelessly dumping toxic waste. Yet this neighborhood, built on land deemed undesirable, became a cohesive community for the descendents of African American slaves and sharecroppers, many of whom worked in the industries surrounding Hyde Park and for wealthy white Augustans who patronized The Augusta National Golf Club and Masters Tournament for which the city is best known. This is the setting for *Polluted Promises*, Melissa Checker's ethnographic account of Hyde Park's impoverished residents' grassroots activism to improve the conditions of their community.

From the outset, Checker positions herself as an activist ethnographer, not there to just report the conditions

or test scientific concepts but, rather, to join in the struggles of community members and to volunteer for the primary grassroots organization, the Hyde and Aragon Park Improvement Committee (HAPIC). Activist ethnography is controversial among anthropologists, as Checker herself comments, because it can raise doubts about objectivity of the study. There are many ways in which to conceive of just what an activist ethnography would be and if there is any compromising of scientific objectivity. It is obvious that Checker empathizes with Hyde Park residents' struggles, and that by becoming a volunteer for HAPIC she would be able to give back to the community, not just extract information that would not return to the residents themselves.

Checker's activist stance reminded me of George Orwell's opening to *Homage to Catalonia*, his essay about the Spanish Civil War in which he decides that just being a journalist was not enough and enlisted to fight against Francisco Franco's nationalist forces. Like Orwell, Checker is confronted with a moral dilemma of what is the appropriate role of an anthropologist who is conducting research on social justice.

*Polluted Promises* is written in a straightforward style, reminiscent of the New Journalism of Tom Wolfe. Checker's writing is plain and avoids jargon. Each chapter begins with personal vignettes of community members' memories and experiences. At the same time, she drew me into the story to such an extent that I had forgotten that she did not join the Hyde Park residents until 1998. So seamless and fluid was the story of the residents' roughly 40 years of grassroots activism that it is jolting when she reminds readers again near the end of the book when she had begun her research there.

At its most basic level, *Polluted Promises* is a captivating story about poor African Americans' tireless and optimistic resistance to a long history of social, political, and economic isolation that has unfolded within conditions of personal and structural racism. These conditions play out in ways that link concepts and discourses of race and racism to the environment. Despite being surrounded by toxic waste-producing businesses and lacking in basic public services for most of its history, these poor residents built a close-knit community that took pride in their humble homes and bountiful gardens. As environmental contaminants encroached ever more on the residents, they realized that many of them shared common ailments and medical conditions. Deaths by cancer rose and more children developed learning disabilities. At the same time, the low-paying jobs that permitted them to eke out their economically and politically marginalized began to disappear.

Rather than subsume to social chaos or behave in counterproductive ways, as culture of poverty theorists would have predicted, Hyde Park residents organized



themselves and took on the city officials that persisted in ignoring them and the companies who through neglect and intentional dumping of toxins contaminated the community's land and water and poisoned them. The accounts of community members' political activism, especially their efforts to confront large companies around issues of environmental justice, should be of great interest to many scholars studying social movements and the environment throughout the world.

As a Latin Americanist who works in Guatemala, Hyde Park is culturally far removed from the Mayas I know. However, like Hyde Park residents, many indigenous communities throughout the Americas have struggled under similar conditions, ignored by politicians and relocated in toxic wastelands or in places that become wastelands because of economic development initiatives. Checker's discussion of grassroots community activism is a powerful critique of social movement theory and practice. Here is an example of how community members with few resources are able to organize and sustain the HAPIC from their 1960s Civil Rights movement participation through their recent campaigns for environmental justice. Class and race persist as powerful ways of self-conceptualization throughout their campaigns for justice and to become political visible.

Checker's account of Hyde Park draws on grim statistics about African American life in the United States. As unsettling as these data can be, her account goes behind the numbers to show the faces and dreams of people who are suffering from the perpetuation of inequalities. At the conclusion of the book, Checker admits to feeling overwhelmed by the paucity of successes but is reminded by one of the HAPIC activists how to gauge the gains the community has made and remain positive about the community's future.

*Polluted Promises* articulates with a number of debates relevant to current anthropology that I will only mention here that go beyond concerns for environmental justice within conditions of environmental racism. Checker challenges scholars to rethink conceptual categories: *land* and *environment* as antonyms, collective memories as mixtures of nostalgia and debilitating economic and health conditions, technology and science as part of power regimes that exclude rather than expand community activism, and participatory citizenship as a space for even ones enemies to speak.

In the conclusion of the book, Checker writes, "Places like Hyde Park are seen not only to breed maladaptive behavior but also to lack . . . the social networks that lead to local power. But . . . such neighborhoods are actually close knit, highly organized, heterogeneous places, with extensive social networks" (pp. 186–187). Indeed, they are the very places that can point to better futures.

**Crying Shame: Metaculture, Modernity, and the Exaggerated Death of Lament.** James M. Wilce. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. xv + 274 pp.

**SASCHA GOLUBOFF**

Washington and Lee University

*Crying Shame: Metaculture, Modernity, and the Exaggerated Death of Lament* is a fine addition to the ethnography of lamentation. James W. Wilce probes the development of modernity through the repression, disappearance, and resurgence of "traditional" laments for the dead. Wilce takes a dual investigative approach by studying lament and those who research it. In doing so, he places himself as an object of investigation, revealing how lamentation has become a personal, as well as professional, passion. He draws on cross-cultural and historical accounts of lament practices to propose "a new model of modernity" as "a constant oscillation between exuberant 'advances' based on sweeping away 'tradition,' and a mass form of mourning over 'progress' as loss, a *loss of confidence* that defines *postmodernity*" (p. ix). Modernity aims to eradicate "uncivilized" communal crying while it also looks back longingly at such collective expressions of bereavement.

Part 1 acquaints the reader with lament as cultural and metacultural practice, both local ritual and an object of anthropological investigation. In defining lamentation as "a discursive and musical genre linked with crying and with funerary observances, but also used in other contexts" (p. 25), Wilce opens up discussion about the feelings surrounding lament—those of the practitioners (mostly women), the intended audience, and the anthropologist. Discussion about the parameters of lamentation via Dell Hymes's SPEAKING mnemonic and historical and contemporary accounts of how "women's improvised lament has been erased from nearly every society on earth" (p. 70), while instructive, seem overinformative, so that by the end of this section the reader has a sense of what lament is generally but is farther away from understanding what it might mean in specific societies. This overabundance of generality is furthered by how Wilce supplements his own research on lament in Bangladesh and Karelia, Finland, with the retelling of other people's work, and inclusions of brief conversations he had with taxi drivers, repairmen, and passersby as examples of the physical and emotional effects of lamentation and differing attitudes toward it.

In part 2, Wilce explores why proponents of modernity seek out and destroy traditional laments. He notes that the global circulation of attitudes that "combine a personalistic model of feeling with a valorization of rational, verbal expression of emotion" explains the "disappearance of improvised women's funerary laments from Europe" (p. 74). As for his own field site in Bangladesh, urbanization and

increased emphasis on religious texts have led to the systematic “forgetting” of the integrative and critical functions of lamentation (*bilāp*) among rural Bangladeshis and the “remembering” of it as iconic of “irrational” female emotionality. More specifically, he argues that modernity stresses authenticity over sincerity, so that the “reflexive self” who interiorizes emotions is more authentic than the over-boisterous grief work of a community of women. This is why, Wilce suggests, the newly urbanized feel shame toward their rural relatives who lament (p. 110) because identification with the dead is considered to be backward and primitive, a sentiment grounded in the Enlightenment ethos, which is fully incorporated by the media-influenced local middle classes who have the need to maintain respectability.

Part 3 traces modernist discourse as lament since “the moment the European bourgeoisie began to conceive of itself as modern, it noticed what it had lost,” and it began to look for “lost treasures” in laments (p. 158). With an “Otherizing discourse” (p. 166), the intellectuals attempted to recapture lost *Gemeinschaft*. Drawing on Greg Urban, Wilce understands modernity as the circulation of the meta-cultural discourse of the “nostalgic we” (p. 192), through which societies and individuals make something new out of laments. He then turns his attention to the postmodern bereavement movement, focusing on communities and societies that have revived ritual wailing for personal and nationalist ends. At the insistence of the Lamenters’ Society in Finland, Wilce and his wife enrolled in a course aimed at teaching Karelian Finns how to lament. Participants aimed to overcome their shame to participate, to become more “emotionally expressive” (p. 211).

Wilce creatively moves readers from the modernizing rural Bangladeshis shamed by the expressive bereavement of their women to Karelian Fins who look to lament to rid themselves of the constraints of modernity. Indeed, the real ethnographic and theoretical force of the book comes from these two brief points of ethnographic engagement. The book begins with his inspiring encounter with Latifa, whom he met in the Bangladeshi village of Chandpur. Her relatives labeled her as “mad” for wailing too much over her brothers’ forcing her to leave her husband because they refused to pay the rest of her dowry. Wilce is interested in why her kin misrecognize the traditional nature of her lamentations, a typical forum for female critical commentary, and deem her actions too excessive. His drive to find out the causes of this disconnect (modernity) culminated in the composition of this book. At the conclusion, he provides a vignette of the incorporated lament revivalist group *Äänellä Itkijät*, and its attempt to reclaim old and invent new ways to communally grieve so as to reconnect with “the old culture” (p. 213). In this setting, he moves from observer to participant as was demanded by the leaders of the revivalist group. I would rather have seen a publication focused on exploring these

two dichotomous “modern” interactions with lamentation rather than a generalized account of how lament is important to modernity.

I wonder if Wilce has taken the tradition–modernity argument too far. What will researchers miss by placing communities who lament (or lament over the death of lament) on the continuum of modernity? The formulation of Europe and the United States as the source of Enlightenment values ignores minority groups, like African Americans and Native Americans, who have continued to practice communal forms of bereavement inside and outside the church setting, in opposition to shifting regimes of racist domination. Overall, though, this book is a helpful source of information about the history and current status of the lamentation, and it will be of value to graduate students studying the genre.

**Migrant Media: Turkish Broadcasting and Multicultural Politics in Berlin.** *Kira Kosnick*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007. 240 pp.

#### JEFFREY JURGENS

Bard College

Over the past two decades, anthropologists have devoted considerable attention to electronic mass mediation as a central feature of the global present. One important strand of this literature (represented, e.g., by the work of Lila Abu-Lughod, Purnima Mankekar, and Debra Spitulnik) has examined the role of mainstream media environments in the formation of dominant national imaginaries, while another (illustrated by the writings of Faye Ginsburg and Terence Turner, among others) has offered rich insights into the subaltern media practices of “first peoples” and other indigenous groups. Significantly, the existing scholarship has engaged less rigorously with media production by recent migrants and their descendants, although this line of inquiry offers another productive perspective on the cultural politics of public life in pluralist nation-states. Building on a subtle analysis of Turkish migrant radio and television broadcasting in Berlin, Kira Kosnick makes a number of thoughtful inroads into this emerging subfield. She delineates the contradictory processes through which media forms by and for migrants from Turkey come into being in the realms of public radio broadcasting, city arts programming, and open-access cable television. In addition, Kosnick traces how migrant media producers situate themselves in relation to the transnational politics of Turkish and Kurdish nationalism and to German state policies that promote migrants’ local affiliations. In the process, she provides a trenchant challenge to any presumption that

state-supported multiculturalism is a wholly emancipatory mode of recognizing difference.

Kosnick's analysis hinges on three critical interventions. First, she questions the notion that migrant media necessarily challenge regnant conceptions of nationhood and cultural difference in Germany and Turkey, even as she acknowledges their very real capacity to articulate alternative viewpoints and forms of knowledge. Situated in the interstitial zones between Germany's mainstream media infrastructure and the landscape of Turkish media imports, migrant media producers typically lack the economic resources and state or corporate sponsorship to attain a high degree of public visibility. More important than these material constraints, however, is the extent to which these producers must align themselves with hegemonic discourses of difference to be seen and heard. These discourses essentialize "culture" as a set of categorical identity markers that can be readily equated with bounded ethnic communities, and they sharply limit the migrant "voices" that are regarded as authentic and appropriate. Kosnick's analysis of these discourses is not especially novel, but she sharply illustrates their effects in her discussion of the public radio station *Multikulti*, which represents Turkish migrant difference through moderators who speak standardized German with a "foreign" accent or have a native command of standardized Turkish. Ironically, these aesthetic standards lead the station to rely on staff members who have been raised and educated in Turkey, despite the claim that its programming is "made by Berlin Turks for Berlin Turks" (p. 73).

Second, Kosnick highlights the ideological implications of scale in media production and multicultural policymaking. One of her central contentions is that even as state agencies in Berlin encourage migrant populations to adopt local affiliations as their most promising route to integration, many migrant media forms still operate within transnational and diasporic frames of reference that commonly strike their critics as historically and politically retrograde. These contrasting scales intersect, and grind against one another, in the programming on Berlin's Open Channel, which is particularly popular among amateur producers of Turkish and Kurdish backgrounds. Like other open-access television stations in Germany, the Open Channel is explicitly committed to local broadcasting and the democratization of public discourse, but many of its programs contain "extremist" nationalist and religious content—oriented to cultural-political debates in Turkey—that strains the station's liberal principles. Kosnick convincingly argues that the Open Channel thereby "tests the limits of the dominant notion of multiculturalism in Germany, which accepts diversity only within a tightly delineated frame" (p. 157).

Third, Kosnick relates the prevailing discourse and practice of multiculturalism to the distribution of migrant media forms in the German public sphere. As she rightly insists, it is no coincidence that the viewpoints that are

most unpalatable to German state agencies and multicultural advocates circulate in the most marginal zones of media production. Varying regimes of discursive regulation, in tandem with divergent concepts of appropriate diversity, create a patterned dispersal of migrant media forms across the circuits of commercial, public service, and open-access broadcasting. A similar structuring is evident in Berlin's arts programming, in which local migrants and their descendants are commonly perceived as representatives of ethnonational groups rather than as artists who can be judged against purportedly universal standards. As a result, they are generally unable to access "high cultural" showcase institutions but must instead display their work in lower-profile venues committed to the social (rather than aesthetic) goals of communal harmony and cross-cultural exchange.

On the whole, Kosnick's book provides a cogent set of tools for understanding how migrant media forms engage with prevailing institutional and discursive hierarchies. This is particularly the case in her balanced treatment of mass-mediated religiosity, which vividly traces the competing claims of authenticity and moral integrity articulated by Berlin's migrant broadcasters, but also challenges the notion that Islam is the inevitable focus of their production. Nevertheless, there are a few points where criticisms can be raised. Even as Kosnick effectively examines the metaphorical "whitening" of Berlin's high cultural establishment that is enabled by the containment of migrant artists (pp. 81–82, 97), she does not address the wider processes of racialization to which migrants from Turkey (and other Muslim-majority countries) have been subjected after German unification and 9/11. In addition, Kosnick would like to demonstrate that migrant media produced in Western Europe have transformed public discourse in Turkey (pp. 107–108, 114), but this portion of her argument is somewhat forced and only loosely tied to her ethnographic material. Despite her efforts to pursue a thoroughly transnational analysis, then, Kosnick's book is most effective when it locates migrant media production in the German public sphere. This is no mean feat, however, and her contribution is well worth readers' attention.

**Countering Development: Indigenous Modernity and the Moral Imagination.** *David Gow.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008. 300 pp.

**TOM PERREAULT**  
Syracuse University

In *Countering Development*, David Gow presents a carefully researched and clearly written account of development planning among three indigenous communities in Cauca,

Colombia. Based on ethnographic work spanning some seven years, the book documents processes of development planning and resettlement among members of three Nasa communities following a devastating earthquake. In recounting these processes, Gow examines the often uncomfortable relations between indigenous communities, state agencies, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and probes conceptual categories such as modernity, planning, the “local,” and of course development itself. As one of his central analytical concepts, Gow describes the process of “counterdevelopment” as “resistance to the state [that] is not in opposition to it; rather it is the demand to be recognized as indigenous and to be treated as citizens, to become a vital part of the nation” (p. 3). In examining counterdevelopment in this way, Gow juxtaposes processes in Cauca to the notion of “antidevelopment,” promoted by authors such as Arturo Escobar (whose *Encountering Development* [1995] provides an intellectual framework to which *Countering Development* will inevitably, and no doubt intentionally, be compared). Gow goes on to explain that, while practices of counterdevelopment question and criticize conventional development approaches, “the proposed alternatives do not call for unrealistic radical transformations [à la Escobarian ‘antidevelopment’]. Rather, they offer proposals for countering development, for thinking about it in a different, more human, more constructive, and more sustainable way” (p. 17). Counterdevelopment is, then, a sort of politicized pragmatism, tempered no doubt by the ever-present existential threat of Colombia’s military, paramilitaries and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC).

*Countering Development* is a book of impressive intellectual and personal depth, which reflects years of research under difficult and frequently dangerous circumstances. Gow provides a careful, sensitive ethnographic account of disaster and displacement, of development planning, resettlement, and reconstruction. Perhaps the book’s greatest strength lay in its detailed examination of indigenous mobilization and community development. As an ethnography of development, it is exemplary. In this, *Countering Development* is an important contribution to the growing body of literature on indigenous mobilization and “ethnodevelopment” in Latin America, which takes seriously the role of indigenous peoples as political actors engaged in shaping and, simultaneously, carving out some measure of autonomy within the societies from which they historically have been excluded. *Countering Development* will no doubt be of enduring interest not only to anthropologists, geographers, and other social scientists, but also to planners, development practitioners, and activists.

In spite of its many contributions, however, *Countering Development* falters on a number of counts. In essence, the book is a comparative case study of three communities, and although Gow’s ethnography is often richly tex-

tured, his analytical focus on community at times comes at the expense of microscale complexity. As if against his better judgment, for instance, Gow occasionally refers to the communities as unitary subjects (e.g., “Tóez Caloto shared Juan Tama’s desire to control the substance of children’s education” [p. 244]). This issue points to another: the book’s tightly focused ethnography is at once a strength and a weakness as it seldom opens out to a broader discussion of Colombian history and politics, or the histories (and geographies) of indigenous mobilization in Colombia and Latin America more generally. Nor does the book provide much historical context for understanding the broader debates within development planning in Colombia. Without a more general understanding of the processes detailed in the book, the reader has scant basis to assess their significance. One has the distinct impression that these processes matter, but is given precious little context to understand why. This is an opportunity missed. Gow began his fieldwork in 1995 (a year after the earthquake), in the middle of a decade that brought immense change for indigenous peoples in Colombia and throughout Latin America. A wave of constitutional reforms swept the continent, restructuring the terms of citizenship and social identity. Indigenous movements—particularly in Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Guatemala, and Mexico—brought world attention to 500 years of injustice. These mobilizations have been imperfect, to be sure, but they provide important context for understanding the uneasy and evolving relations between indigenous peoples and states in Latin America. Gow alludes to many of these processes but provides little detail and less analysis, making it difficult to assess their relationship to events discussed in the book.

Moreover, whereas *Countering Development* is rich in ethnographic detail, its most important analytical categories remain largely undertheorized. Such concepts as “indigenous modernity,” “moral imagination,” and even “counterdevelopment” remain, ironically, underdeveloped. Gow provides little critical engagement with these most vital of concepts, and they remain undertheorized throughout his ethnographic analysis. Other concepts less central to the book’s argument but nevertheless important for understanding the processes it discusses, fare little better: space and place, civil society, and social capital are all employed but seem to be taken for granted rather than adequately problematized. Finally, the concept of “modernity”—a complicated notion if ever there was one—could do with some unsettling. I’m simply not convinced that this is the most useful (or even a useful) analytical framework for examining indigenous development. For example, Gow discusses the development plan prepared by one of the communities, and the planners’ eagerness to provide quantifiable indicators to “prove that [the plan] was modern, striving after their own form of indigenous modernity” (p. 116). But just what modernity means, from the

perspective of the community or the state, or why numbers are an indicator of modernity, remains uncertain. As Bruno Latour and others have long argued, modernity is itself a deeply problematic concept and requires thorough and critical theorization. Insofar as the very concept of “modernity” infers the existence of the “traditional,” the notion of “indigenous modernity,” highlighted in the book’s subtitle, brings to mind its deeply problematic (although unspoken, at least in this book) obverse: “indigenous tradition.” One wonders if it is not possible to discuss development without recourse to modernity, or indigeneity without recourse to traditionalism. *Countering Development*, although a richly textured and at times brilliant ethnography of indigenous development, leaves this question begging.

### Reference cited

Escobar, Arturo  
1995 *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

**Slipping Away: Banana Politics and Fair Trade in the Eastern Caribbean.** Mark Moberg. New York: Berghahn, 2008. 250 pp.

**KATHERINE E. BROWNE**  
Colorado State University

Global food markets present a challenging landscape to comprehend because, like many other commodity markets, they tend to move across the globe in confounding patterns, shaped as much by political as economic realities. The result is a confusing patchwork of protected and unprotected markets and products, more visually consistent with global hopscotch (à la Ferguson 2006) than the common view of global “flows” as currently conceived by many social scientists.

In the world of banana politics, Mark Moberg’s new book *Slipping Away: Banana Politics and Fair Trade in the Eastern Caribbean* offers an excellent model of the multiple optics, historical sense, and varying scales of analysis needed to fully frame the dynamic and intricate field of banana production. Using mixed methods of informal and formal interviews, large-scale surveys, and multisite ethnography, and studying up as well as down the hierarchy, Moberg presents a penetrating investigation that is an important study for Caribbeanists, Latin Americanists, and economic and political anthropologists. Through careful interweaving of ethnographic detail with broad-frame analysis, Moberg offers readers insight into the vagaries of a fast-changing commodity chain, the political maneuverings that rattle

this chain, and the local adaptations and strategies of island growers who struggle for control in the links they are bound to.

The context for this study is the eastern Caribbean, where, despite a curiously thin scholarship, the Windward Islands of St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Dominica are well positioned to offer useful insights about banana politics and globalization in general, and about banana livelihoods and adaptations in particular. To some, perhaps, the limited literature about the role of eastern Caribbean bananas may appropriately reflect the fact that only a very small portion of the bananas traded in world markets are grown in these islands. Yet Moberg’s work brings a compelling set of data through which we can freshly consider questions about globalization. How does it figure, for example, that in the United States, we are unlikely to eat a banana that originated in any of these islands in spite of their proximity? How is it that the same single fruit could be produced in neighboring regions of the Americas in unspeakably exploitive and dangerous conditions on the one hand (Central America), and relative safety and sustainability on the other (the eastern Caribbean)? And how is it that our usual dismay at the process of individualization embodied in new land tenure arrangements (e.g., individual land titling) could, in fact, increase the possibilities for community well-being (as in local transitions to fair trade production)?

*Slipping Away* tells a sobering tale of rapid change experienced by Caribbean banana farmers. We learn in the first chapters that these small-scale banana farmers enjoyed “green gold” during a short-lived era of prosperity in the 1960s–80s. This was a time when British subsidies ensured producers a good price and a sure market. But by the early 1990s, prompted by free trade battles between the United States and the newly formed European Union, the sustainable livelihoods associated with banana cultivation in the islands began to decline.

Within a decade, sweeping changes undermined the rights of European nations to guarantee markets for produce from former colonies or to impose tariffs on competitors. By 2004, protections granted these small farmers were completely eliminated. Their loss of protections exposed island growers to grueling competition from Latin American banana growers whose cheap price comes at the cost of horrible working conditions for the wage laborers, routine exposure to chemical toxins and miserable earnings. To explain these shifts and their profound implications, Moberg draws back the curtain on the global players who sit at the table of banana policy, deciding the fate of ordinary producers they have never met. These players include regulator agencies like the WTO, national “consumer” governments, and the handful of multinationals like Chiquita, Dole, and Del Monte.

But global politics are only part of the story. Moberg also identifies the impacts of national and local-level

players in “producer” countries whose survival often relies on accommodating global-level players. He points out that in most banana-producing areas of the eastern Caribbean today, a devastating double punch has forced island producers to not only suffer the erosion of product subsidies but at the same time, to also accommodate a punishing new series of demands for producing fruit. These intensely ratcheted up demands for standardization and quality of bananas come from local-level Banana Governing Boards and designated local “buyers” who are compensated based on the amount of perfect fruit that arrives in Europe or the United States. Thus, producers must now ensure their bananas are cultivated according to strict standards of growing, field maintenance, processing, and packaging.

The shrunken livelihoods of banana cultivators in the eastern Caribbean provoked an exodus in which many fruit producers abandoned their crop altogether in search of a better living. Some of these have turned to the more lucrative drug trade despite its concomitant risk and association with the rise in local crime; others have migrated out, leaving children with grandparents and provoking different social problems such as “elder abuse.” Those who remain farmers have had to endure a diminished sense of control over their work and severely reduced income from doing it.

Both the dismantling of price and market protections and the intensification of product standards reflect the increasing orientation of neoliberal governance and policy that Moberg explains in detail. These new, market-driven realities privilege low world market costs and high profits for multinational corporations at the expense of sustainable livelihoods for local producers. Changes of this scope and impact demonstrate the willful ignorance of those who assert that the world of economic opportunity is “flattening.” To the contrary, one is led to wonder how producers of agricultural exports can make a sustainable living in today’s world? Yet, as Moberg points out, these farmers’ dependence on local and global politics does not resign them to the place of disguised wage workers. If it were that simple, he argues, we wouldn’t see the variation of adaptive cultivation strategies across these similarly impacted islands. Theoretically, his distinction is important, for rather than closing off the agency available to these farmers by labeling them helplessly victim to forces beyond their control, Moberg identifies key spaces of latitude in which independent decision making can occur and, thus, potential transformations.

One hopeful space for transformation lies in the locally emerging fair trade movement. The final chapters in the book address the opportunities as well as the problems associated with fair trade. Moberg presents abundant data about the demographic patterns associated with those who have chosen to join a Fair Trade community and the results are largely positive.

The primary focus of *Slipping Away* is economic and political. Moberg does describe the St. Lucian cultural context in which English and Kwéyòl, urban and rural, and the cherished notion of autonomy all contribute to the landscape of banana farming. I would have been interested to learn more about how these cultural constructs interact with the economic and political changes he details, but perhaps that is another book.

What makes this book so compelling is the author’s intentional focus on process, how lives and strategies for livelihood shift depending on the alternatives available. Moberg summons a tour de force of data to construct this messy landscape and offers it back to the reader with intelligence, compassion, and clarity.

### Reference cited

Ferguson, James  
2006 *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*.  
Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

**Sheltering Women: Negotiating Gender and Violence in Northern Italy.** *Sonja Plesset*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006. 264 pp.

### MADELAINE ADELMAN

Arizona State University

*Sheltering Women* is neither an “ethnography of violence” (p. 4) nor a comparative study of liberal and conservative antiviolence nongovernmental organizations. It is not a thick description of the everyday lives of women and men in Italy. And it is not a history of Italian feminism. It is a unique study that encompasses each of these areas of inquiry to produce a contextualized anthropology of gender, modernity, and violence. Rather than attempt to isolate an abstract academic or legislated category of “intimate partner violence,” Plesset has immersed herself in the historical, political, economic, and cultural life of Parma, Italy. In doing so she is able to understand how “ordinary Italians used the categories of tradition and modernity as organizing tropes to talk about gender, hierarchy and violence during a time of significant social and political change” (p. 7). In other words, *Sheltering Women* reveals the particular post–Cold War conditions that generate what it means to be a good woman or man, what she refers to as “gender proficiency” (p. 75). In turn, gender proficiency shapes how *Parmigiani*—neighbors or friends, apolitical students or lifelong activists, newly married or veterans of marriage, leftist or Catholic—make individual and

collective sense of, organize against, and respond to intimate partner violence.

Plesset's study is part of the new wave of anthropological work on gender violence that has emerged over the last decade (see, e.g., Adelman 2000; Lazarus-Black 2007; Merry 2006). Central to this anthropological approach to newly criminalized behaviors, such as intimate partner violence, is the notion that local understandings of crime are inextricably linked to struggles over social identities and structural inequalities. In Parma, the contest over identity and power is played out across the generations as men and women struggle not only with the contemporary "ambiguous political climate" (p. 73) in which political parties proliferate in a place Catholics and communists used to dominate but also with the unfinished legacy of Italian feminism.

Italian feminists, Plesset learns, may have succeeded in changing laws associated with marriage, divorce, work, and violence, but the movement seems to have been less successful at transforming the gendered nature of everyday life (p. 133, and see ch. 2). Women within the upper class, for example, remain responsible for *bella figura*, the Parmigiani cultural performance of "taste." However satisfying the enactment of *bella figura* may be for family members, mothers and wives in Parma are attuned to ensuring that their children (including those upward of age 30 who remain at home until they are able to purchase a home and marry), husband, in-laws, and parents are cared for, fed homemade epicurean meals and wear fashionable, pristine clothes. University professors (and their students) who have misplaced their ironing boards may be awed by the emphasis placed on self-presentation. However, the analytic point here is not how some families in Italy value the output of women's invisible domestic labor. The takeaway is the tension between legal enhancements to women's status, glossed as "modern," and the desire to minimize cultural transformation, understood as maintaining "tradition." Women are perceived negatively if "their men" do "women's labor" (see p. 130), and both women and men oppose the feminization of men. As a result, contemporary Parmigiani are caught in a form of gendered "structural nostalgia," a desire to return to a putative time of harmonious and well-balanced relations between men and women, that is, before gender relations were irreparably unbalanced by modern ideas that erased traditional conceptions about what it means to be men and women (p. 153).

A similar tension is observed between "modernity" and "tradition" for the people of Parma. Here, the notions of tradition and modernity are paradoxically used to explain violence. Local explanations of violence point to both traditional and modern gender relations. This way, gender violence is displaced retrospectively as a leftover from a previous time period (or place, such as the south of Italy) when men's violence was taken for granted, and as a predictable

consequence of changing expectations of gender relations that are perceived to have left men behind.

A third parallel tension between tradition and modernity is embedded within the interlocking stories of women organized against gender violence. Plesset volunteered in two organizations, Women United and Family Aid, both of which support women seeking safety from intimate partner violence. Women United began in the early 1980s as an organization stemming from the communist party (PCI) and its women's union, *Unione Donne Italiane* (UDI). Women United's founders were self-defined leftist Italian feminists who valued "*la differenza di genere*" (gender difference). Their primary goal was to enhance women's autonomy, and for those women who sought separation, to help make it possible to leave men who were violent.

Family Aid, based on the Catholic party (DC) and its women's group, *Centro Italiano Femmine* (CIF), came to Parma in 1979. It sought to support the "sanctity of life" (p. 77) and help nurture young women (often unmarried and pregnant) so they could become capable mothers in the short term, and remarried in the long term. Family Aid staff took on a parental role, despite calling clients *mamme* or mothers (p. 100). Over time, their clientele base shifted to older women lacking custody of their children and immigrant women. Regardless, the staff maintained their identity, at least symbolically, as a tradition-oriented organizational bulwark against Women United's feminism, focusing on valuing motherhood, rather than seeing it as an obstacle. Despite distinctions in their respective approaches to women's safety, central to Plesset's analysis is the "dynamic interplay" among the oppositions of tradition and modernity found in the work of the two organizations (p. 201).

*Sheltering Women* will be of interest not only to students of gender violence inside and outside of anthropology, and women's and gender studies scholars more generally, but also to the growing field of nonprofit studies and the interdisciplinary study of social movements. Scholars also will want to take advantage of Plesset's project to help gender Italian culture and history, as well as the ongoing analysis of the tradition-modernity opposition.

## References cited

- Adelman, Madelaine  
2000 No Way Out: Divorce-Related Domestic Violence in Israel. *Violence against Women* 6(11):1223-1254.
- Lazarus-Black, Mindie  
2007 *Everyday Harm: Domestic Violence, Court Rites and Cultures of Reconciliation*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Merry, Sally  
2006 *Human Rights and Gender Violence: Translating International Law into Local Justice*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

**The Intimate University: Korean American Students and the Problems of Segregation.** Nancy Abelmann. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009. 216 pp.

**YOON S. CHOI**

University of San Francisco

In *The Intimate University*, Nancy Abelmann examines the complexity of racial politics in American universities today. She focuses on the segregation of Korean American undergraduates at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and their self-diagnosed failure to exit the intimate “comfort zones” (p. 5) of race, family, and community. These students waver between self-criticism and disillusionment with the university’s failure to help them transcend their particularities and make them “fully human” (p. 2). Thus, the reader is urged to consider Korean American student segregation not simply as a matter of choice or cultural comfort but also how it is “sculpted by forces far beyond their own making” (p. 4). The “racialized burdens” (p. 160) her research subjects face include parlaying their identities in relation to the largely visible Korean American presence on campus and non-Koreans, the church, their families, and American society writ large. Central to this process is what Abelmann dubs “intra-ethnic othering,” a practice that signals students’ desire to be distinct from other Koreans–Korean Americans and claim full American belonging.

In chapter 1, Abelmann depicts the narratives of four students to provide a social geography of her research subjects, situating them in the mainstream and margins of Chicagoland Korean America. Further, she cogently maps the University of Illinois, describing how it figures into their college imaginaries: a state-school, a safety, and to re-(in)voke the theme of race, a comfort zone. By emphasizing that the “college ethnic intimacy of the Korean Americans featured is a resolutely local story” (p. 5), she carefully avoids reductionist claims that her subjects’ experiences speak for all Korean Americans, ethnic groups, or universities. However, for readers unfamiliar with the diversity of the Korean American college experience, it is important to keep in mind that the level of specificity in this work should inspire an equally specific set of questions about the struggles among Korean Americans elsewhere, other populations, schools, and places. For example, Korean Americans from predominantly non-Korean backgrounds attending Columbia University, a metropolitan school that draws a diverse pool of Korean American students, may feel positively about how their college experience afforded them the opportunity to interact with others of the same ethnic background for the first time. How, then, can we understand segregation in relation to the university in this particular context?

To move toward a broader understanding of the complex intersection of race, segregation, and the university, Abelmann leads us to ponder how stereotypes contribute to segregation and how the university should respond. In chapter 2, the reader is led to query why students seek the fulfillment of “human development” in campus churches as a response to the perceived shortcomings of the secular university, and discern appropriate university action. The role of the evangelical church within the Korean–Korean American community is a social phenomenon that merits further research; Abelmann’s description of how it plays out at the collegiate level in relation to ethnic segregation is a valuable contribution to that area of study.

The remainder of this book is a journey into the intimate lives of specific individuals and their families. Chapter 3 describes Mary, an outsider to the largely successful and suburban Korean American student population. Chapter 4 chronicles the life of Owen, who, like Mary, feels disappointed by the lack of opportunities the university provides to exit the ethnic fold. In chapter 5, Abelmann focuses on Owen’s brother John and their cousin Tony to demonstrate how family influences college dreams. She follows by charting the education and immigration history of Owen’s father to show the intergenerational and transnational connections that structure college imaginaries. In the last chapter, she hones in on three women in the Han family, creating gendered contours in her previous discussions of the Korean American college experience. Here, “gender matters” complements the “race matters” argument that Abelmann makes throughout her text. Because of the somewhat idiosyncratic nature of these stories—“it is their particularity that is at the heart of this book” (p. 1)—it is natural for readers to question the extent to which the university is accountable for their “shattered liberal dreams” (p. 66). However, the implication is that people like Mary and Owen speak for others in similar situations. Abelmann argues that the “task of scholarship is to ask how these college lives are patterned and historically specific, students’ feelings aside” (p. 9) and flags the urgent need for university response.

The significant contribution of this book is that it catalyzes important conversations about race and the university: Korean American identity in relation to the university, the university in relation to larger racial tensions in U.S. society, and how we as readers and members of society relate to those tensions inside and outside the university contexts in which many of us work. This book also effectively demonstrates the strengths of ethnography, particularly its ability to portray the multiple scales and dimensions of often taken-for-granted social phenomena. Abelmann’s rich ethnographic descriptions illustrate how racial segregation is colored by more than physical appearance, reminding us that people of the “same” skin color or ethnic heritage experience segregation differently.



In her conclusion, Abelmann asks how the university can make good on its promise both to foster diversity and to push students beyond their comfort zones—interrelated goals that often come across as opposed. She acknowledges the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's creation of curricular–extracurricular spaces for Asian American studies as one solution. There is no panacea for racial segregation in the American university, and, of course, segregation in higher education. These issues cannot be solved by one ethnographer or university alone. The ethnographic material in this work exceeds the boundaries of the university or Korean America. The stories speak more broadly to the immigrant experience, coming of age in the contemporary United States, and the tension between the secular–religious worlds, especially as inflected in the vision of a liberal arts education. The diversity of Korean Americans parallels the diversity of universities in the United States, and, therefore, this book is an impressive overture rather than a comprehensive overview.

**Transforming Displaced Women in Sudan: Politics and the Body in a Squatter Settlement.** *Rogaia Mustafa Abusharaf*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. 183 pp.

**TRICIA REDEKER HEPNER**

University of Tennessee

Sudan has for decades loomed large in the “conflict narratives” characterizing popular portrayals of Africa and sundry fears of violent Islamist expansion. The very sounding of names like Darfur and President Omar el-Bashir evoke the grimness of genocidal catastrophe and the pursuit of retributive justice. While there can be no denying the reality of Sudan's internal political struggles, largely driven by the traumatic process of crafting national identity amid the dominance of a state project increasingly defined by the “propagation of Arabization and Islamization anchored in *El-Mashru El-Hadari*, ‘the Civilizational Project’ ” (p. 29), Rogaia Mustafa Abusharaf's ethnography demonstrates the ability of anthropology to reveal greater complexities and offer examples of solidarity and hopefulness in situations of protracted violence.

In a beautifully written analysis that weaves Sudan's political history with the narratives of women actively remaking lives, identities, and a vision of the New Sudan amid displacement and trauma, Abusharaf makes a distinctive contribution to feminist ethnography, African studies, and the anthropology of forced migration and human rights. She does so, moreover, by bringing together these interrelated dimensions in such a way as to demonstrate the very inseparability of processes like nation-state building, dis-

placement, cultural transformation, rights claims, and the gendered self.

Defining her approach as “urgent anthropology,” Abusharaf presses public anthropology still further by noting not just the accountability of the anthropologist to the communities she has studied, but the necessity of “placing victims front and center in the analysis of the institutionalized power of the state over citizens” (p. 6). Her approach “explicates the intricacies of complex emergencies and examines the woefully inadequate public responses” (p. 7) to refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), and women in particular, who make up the bulk of Sudan's displaced population. Her explicit focus is on women of southern Sudanese origin who have made perilous journeys to the North and reconstituted women-centered communities as squatters in Khartoum's urban shantytowns. Amid daily struggles for survival alongside northern compatriots, southern women forge new cultural, economic, and kinship relations across ethnic, regional, and religious divides, forming pan-southern and, indeed, pan-Sudanese identities. As they adapt to their surroundings by taking on or rejecting body modification practices predominant in the North such as the smoke bath (*dukhan*) and female circumcision, and as they continually negotiate whether and how to maintain practices formerly central to southern identities, such as brewing alcohol, displaced women in urban Khartoum actively transform their own gendered and national subjectivities. While clearly showing the problems women face, Abusharaf goes beyond documenting impoverishment, vulnerability, and the gendered, cultural rights dilemmas associated with displacement and legacies of political violence. In keeping with some of the best anthropological approaches to crisis situations, she shows women's creativity and agency amid their struggles for survival and consistently relates their intimate first-person narratives to the histories of conflict that characterize the country's trajectory.

The book opens with an introduction and a background chapter in which Abusharaf situates her fieldwork, the theoretical framework of urgent anthropology and feminist ethnography, and the historical and political context that structures problems of forced migration and especially internal displacement in Sudan. Abusharaf pays particular attention to the way in which southern IDPs, among all forced migrants, have suffered greater neglect and isolation because of their vulnerability and dependence on the state structures and policies that caused their predicament. Within this already marginalized population, moreover, her work addresses unaccompanied women who have entered the labyrinths of urban slum dwelling—thus becoming thrice-removed from the forced migrant subject who is male, encamped, and across an international border.

In the following chapter, we are presented with the words and pieces of life stories of several women as

Abusharaf constructs a composite portrait of pathways to displacement in the North and women's efforts to secure their economic and cultural rights amid enormous challenges. In the process, their cultural practices, social networks, and, hence, gendered, national subjectivities shift and change in unpredictable ways, deessentializing who and what it means to be Sudanese.

In chapter 3, Abusharaf provides more fine-grained detail on the nature of these changing subjectivities as she explores how and why displaced women adopt or reject bodily modifications in their efforts to "fit in" or negotiate difference between themselves and their northern counterparts. In an especially interesting discussion of female genital cutting, Abusharaf counterpoises northern women's narratives against southerners' to show how some displaced women adopt circumcision in the context of marriage, or as she suggests, to reestablish bodily integrity and purity following the violence (and, likely, rape) these women experienced in war and flight. While showing the decentered and inchoate nature of the ongoing debate about female genital cutting among diverse Sudanese women and critical clerics and activists, Abusharaf nonetheless explicitly holds back critique, arguing that the practice cannot be "traced to patriarchal power or values, for no singular, oppressive patriarchal system leads women to perpetuate their own injury" (p. 88). The reader is left feeling somewhat unsatisfied here, as Abusharaf clearly holds a strong (if unstated) opinion and could potentially have contributed to a culturally appropriate, feminist, and human rights-based critique of both the practice itself and how southern women's adaptation of it accommodates power of some kind—if not patriarchal.

In the latter chapters, Abusharaf continues her foregrounding of women's words and experiences but moves away from daily life in the squatter settlements to examine how some displaced women have become community-based and internationally recognized leaders in grassroots movements for reconciliation, peace, and justice. In her exploration of how these women become public political agents, Abusharaf relates quotidian struggles documented in earlier chapters to organized social and political movements led by Sudanese women.

Struggling to emerge as a democratic, pluralist political project that reflects the country's ethnolinguistic, religious, and cultural diversity in the shadow of the central government's "Civilizational Project," the new Sudan is clearly embodied in the women at the center of Abusharaf's ethnography. Indeed, in her unique positioning as a northern Sudanese feminist anthropologist who stands in urgent solidarity with her southern compatriots, Abusharaf and her work also reflect and embody this vision. The result is a rich, lucidly written, empowering, and deessentializing portrait in which anthropologists, and Sudanese alike, should take pride.

**Words upon the Word: An Ethnography of Evangelical Group Bible Study.** James S. Bielo. New York: New York University Press, 2009. 187 pp.

**EILEEN LUHR**

California State University, Long Beach

In recent years, books such as Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone* have lamented the decline of American civil society. Others have noted that while participation in, for example, bowling leagues has decreased, other types of community groups have remained strong. Over 30 million Protestants participate in bible study, an institution that is particularly strong among evangelical Protestants. Yet, despite widespread participation, there has been relatively little academic notice of the importance of bible study in American religion and society. Scholarly attention has, instead, focused on evangelical culture, rhetoric, congregational life, political activism, and institutions. Anthropologist James S. Bielo redresses this neglect in *Words upon the Word: An Ethnography of Evangelical Group Bible Study*. Bielo examines the importance of bible study for evangelical belief, institutional life, and interaction with nonbelievers. In analyzing the vitality of these groups, Bielo also adds complexity to our understanding of the intellectual processes of biblical literalists.

In conducting his research, Bielo attended 324 bible study meetings with 19 groups in 6 Protestant congregations (3 United Methodist, 1 Lutheran/Missouri Synod, 1 Restoration Movement, and 1 Vineyard Fellowship) in Lansing, Michigan. After a chapter on methodology, each subsequent chapter of *Words upon the Word* focuses on a single study group while showing the interconnections between institutions, reading practices, and discourse (pp. 10–14). Each chapter relates to Bielo's overall claim: "Evangelical Bible study is organized by a series of practices, logics, and tensions that are deeply embedded in the broader cultural scene of American Evangelicalism" (p. 33). Rather than focusing on the impact of such practices on American culture or society, Bielo instead seeks to identify the inner workings of a critical evangelical social activity and process of cultural production.

The strongest sections of *Words upon the Word* complicate our understanding of evangelical reading practices, thus adding to existing work on language and religion by Vincent Crapanzano and Susan Harding. For example, in "Reading the Bible," Bielo examines the "social life of the Bible" as practiced by a Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod men's group. Bielo explains that biblical literalism provides a marker of religious identity rather than a hermeneutic for reading, although it "stresses the ability of words to accurately convey inner states of intention, sincerity, and moral character" (p. 50). The main interpretive action of study

groups is to locate relevance: members want to apply biblical texts to their lives and to use biblical logic as a basis for decision making. Evangelicals believe that the bible “tells a cohesive story about the nature of God and humanity, the purpose of history, and the unfolding of time. . . . Biblical texts are read within the context of this unifying narrative, providing an interpretive frame to situate any verse, chapter, or story” (p. 64). However, despite the belief in the authority and relevance of the text, Bielo locates instances of tension within the group, which suggests that “literal” readings of the bible have less stability than one might expect. Moreover, as Bielo notes in a later chapter, biblical literalists are active and engaged readers whose reading practices (and, therefore, interpretive work) extend beyond the bible to include nonscriptural genres such as popular history.

Bielo also describes how bible study roots believers in local belief communities as well as a larger, imagined identity that is defined by a sense of difference. In two middle chapters, Bielo emphasizes why bible study is important to participants’ lives as well as how it shapes their understanding of other texts. Chapter 3 explains how bible study cultivates evangelical intimacy with God as well as with fellow believers, and chapter 4 traces how groups extend their readings to nonreligious materials. The final two analytical chapters, in contrast, examine the ways that bible study affirms evangelicals’ identity in relation to the “outside” world. In chapter 5, Bielo examines bible study as “backstage witnessing” in which believers discuss and rehearse proselytizing strategies on the basis of criteria such as relevance–irrelevance, love–judgment, relational–superficial, and focused–distracted (pp. 121–127); the discussion in this chapter is particularly interesting given the existing emphasis on witnessing as a proselytizing strategy in works such as Harding’s *The Book of Jerry Falwell* (2000). The final analytical chapter emphasizes the concepts of self–other. According to Bielo, distinctions based in liturgy, doctrine, theology, and biblical hermeneutics provide real markers of identity for evangelicals in dividing themselves from outsiders (p. 152). Although denominations tend to be downplayed in discussions of American evangelicalism, this chapter reinforces Bielo’s point that religious identity should be considered along a spectrum of identities rather than as a binary between believer–nonbeliever.

Bielo establishes study groups as critical spaces for social engagement and religious dialogue. However, from the perspective of another social science discipline—I am a historian with only an undergraduate degree in anthropology—the insights provided by the book come despite a disciplinary divide. The first chapter’s lengthy discussion of “reflexive” ethnography, combined with a briefer introduction, result in a theoretical and methodological throat-clearing that takes up a quarter of the monograph.

This is not to say that there is not interesting information in these opening chapters—indeed, Bielo’s argument that being a believer was useful in studying other believers is particularly compelling. Despite this criticism, Bielo has created a useful analysis of an underrecognized civic activity and has illuminated the complexity of evangelical intellectual processes.

## Reference cited

Harding, Susan  
2000 *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

**Native Men Remade: Gender and Nation in Contemporary Hawai‘i.** Ty P. Kawika Tengan. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008. 277 pp.

**DAVID A. B. MURRAY**

York University, Toronto

In North America, “men’s movements” and their critical intellectual cousin, “masculinity studies,” are now well-established institutions in communities and universities respectively. Theories and practices of hegemonic, marginalized and/or multiple masculinities and their relationships to women–femininities are well documented in general introductory and specialized ethno-cultural-racial volumes (Latino, Caribbean, and black masculinities, etc.). Is there anything left to say? Can a monograph on indigenous masculinities in Hawai‘i provide us with any original insight into well-worn questions pertaining to gender, culture, and social change?

Author Ty P. Kawika Tengan (an indigenous Hawaiian male anthropologist) sets an ambitious and promising agenda in the Introduction to *Native Men Remade* by setting out to study the formation of masculine and indigenous subjectivities as they develop within a historical context in which colonial domination, including global touristic commodification, has shaped and impacted race, class, and gender identities. His primary ethnographic focus is the Hale Mua (the Men’s House), a small group of Hawaiian men whose ritual performances of masculinity and *koa* (warriorhood) become strategies of political, cultural, and psychological self-determination by reclaiming and asserting indigenous Hawaiian identity and community, thus “remaking” Hawaiian masculine identities. Through his participation in the Hale Mua, Tengan analyzes the gendered formation of Hawaiian identity and masculinity locally and in the larger context of the Hawaiian cultural nationalist movement. We are also told that this ethnography

will consider the possibilities and problematics these reformulated identities hold for social and political change; however, as I will outline below, the problematics are less thoroughly considered than the possibilities.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of macrosocial processes and discourses in which Hawaiian men are situated, documenting Hawai'i's occupations by European, then American forces and the massive, violent transformations to indigenous Hawaiian men caused by colonialism, American militaristic nationalism, and capitalism in the form of tourism. This chapter also introduces us to the Hawaiian cultural nationalist movement, which began in the early 1970s and outlines its growth and transformations in the ensuing 30 years. Chapters 2 and 3 outline the origin and development of the Hale Mua beginning at a significant commemoration ceremony at Pu'ukohola in 1991. These chapters explore the men's group leaders' values of "grounded bravery, courage and warriorhood" (p. 67) enacted through rituals, talk, and sham battles (in which a Hawaiian form of martial arts is enacted). Tengan also documents some of the tensions that arose as these rituals were developed, such as the men's embarrassment over public nakedness when wearing a *malo* (a loincloth) during rituals. At the same time, he notes the powerful feelings of *comunitas* that arose in these first ritual reenactments in the early 1990s and the ways in which the ritual movements and discipline resignified bodily pedagogy. Tengan develops the useful concept of "ritual slippage" to explain how the Hale Mua members are conscious of their ability to slip out of their "modern" identities and into their *maoli* ("authentic" indigenous), but that neither identity is secure through this double consciousness.

Chapter 4 focuses on the various activities of the Hale Mua such as carving, ritual, and training to analyze the learning philosophy of the group's leaders. The leaders stress that learning isn't done "out of the books" but, rather, by experience and observation (p. 139), and that the general educational environment reflects "different learning patterns of male and female students" (p. 140), a troubling claim that rests on problematic and much debated assumptions (i.e., essentialized and biologicistic) about gender difference. Interestingly, a few pages later, in a discussion on philosophies of *lua* (martial arts), Tengan notes how instructors stress that all human bodies have both masculine and feminine energies, but this seems to be forgotten in most of the group's pedagogy. Chapter 5 presents the sharing of *mo'olelo*—stories and talk between the men. Through these stories we gain insight into some of the Hale Mua's member's lives, what led them to join the group, and how and why the group is significant to them. As Tengan notes, these men's life stories help to show the "geographic tracking" and cultural crossings between urban-rural, work-nonwork, and Western-Hawaiian spaces that so many of these men inhabit (p. 189). Tengan concludes

with the story of Hale Mua's trip to New Zealand, where they meet with various Maori groups and engage in cultural and knowledge exchange, which helps to show the importance of transnational indigenous networks and how shared experiences also provide a foundation through which political and cultural resistance and empowerment are forged.

While this book shows the important "therapeutic" effects of groups like Hale Mua on men who are multiply marginalized in their everyday lives, less attention is given to the potential problems of a gendered identity premised on *realness* and *authenticity*, terms that members and leaders of the group often refer to in their narratives. How might being real, with its implications of racial purity, authentic, biological masculinity, or heteronormativity, work to exclude other forms or performances of masculinity? Are these reclaimed Hawaiian masculinities workable for and inclusive of bi- or multiracial men, transgendered men, or gay men? What is their relationship to and impact on women-femininity over the long term? While Tengan recognizes these tensions, there is little discussion of the implications and effects of privileging one formation of Hawaiian masculinity, as "real" or "authentic." However, Tengan carefully and thoroughly exposes the multiple prejudices and marginalizations these men face through subordination and erasure in racist, masculine tropes of American nationalist discourses, where the Hawaiian male is often nothing more than an emasculated hula dancer or innocuous surfer dude. In the end, I wondered if the concept of "ritual slippage" might be extended to the wider conceptual plain of masculinity as a way of embodying the tensions inherent in "remaking" a gendered subjectivity.

To return to the question posed at the beginning of this review, I would answer that *Native Men Remade* makes a significant and original contribution to gender and indigenous studies. It provides an "insider" perspective on gender reformation in projects of cultural revitalization and begins to show the complexities involved in overcoming and undoing the powerful and ongoing impacts of colonialism, capitalism, and militaristic nationalism.

**The Mellah of Marrakesh: Jewish and Muslim Space in Morocco's Red City.** *Emily Gottreich*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007. 224 pp.

**OREN KOSANSKY**

Lewis & Clark College

At its core, this book is an urban social history of *fin de siècle* Marrakesh as viewed through the prism of the city's Jewish quarter (the mellah). Drawing on American anthropological traditions to frame the book's central argument, historian Emily Gottreich contends that whatever

social, economic, demographic, and spatial positions distinguished Jews from their Muslim neighbors, the two are most productively viewed as part of a patterned and shared “Moroccan Whole” (p. 1). *The Mellah of Marrakesh* makes the most of this interpretive framework and, in significant ways, moves beyond it.

Gottreich notes that Morocco’s Jewish quarters have too often been compared with European patterns of residential segregation. The book successfully avoids the tendency to view the mellah as the mirror image of the ghetto, wherein the former lingered as a blemish into the Muslim present long after European Jews had been “emancipated” from the latter. Gottreich emphasizes the historical specificities of the Moroccan mellahs, which reflected their own ideological and political contexts and that were never characterized by the hermetic residential boundaries associated with the urban Jewish ghetto.

The author also demonstrates that the legal status of Jews as *dhimmi*, referring to protected and subordinated communities within the classic Muslim polity, never fully captured the complex repertoires of interaction, manipulation, and representation available to local social actors. Neither denying the salience of differentiated religious identities nor exaggerating them, Gottreich provides a rich portrait of how Jews and Muslims both established the ideological, legal, and residential boundaries between their communities while at the same time transgressing those boundaries in significant ways: chapter 3 focuses on the economic, ritual, and recreational points of attraction that brought Muslims into the mellah; chapter 4 traces movement in the opposite direction, detailing the economic, ritual, and narrative mechanisms by which categorically vulnerable Jews negotiated Muslim spaces; chapter 5 deals with the relationship between the mellah community and the rural hinterlands in which Jews conducted commerce, made saint pilgrimage, encountered Berber tribes, and interacted with smaller satellite communities.

Gottreich places the “red city” in its broader national and global contexts. The book is about the mellah in Marrakesh but also about the city of Marrakesh in the context of dynastic politics and about Morocco in the context of European empire. In chapter 1, Gottreich argues that the founding of the mellah in the 16th century was as much a strategy for establishing the legitimacy of the Sa’di sultanate as an expression of the Muslim domination over the Jews. By rebuilding Marrakesh into a major city, the Sa’di’s stronghold in the south largely reproduced the urban organization of the previous dynasty’s capital (Fez) in the north, in which a mellah had been built to demonstrate the power of the Sultan to protect even his weakest subjects. Furthermore, Gottreich argues, the monumental scale of this reconstruction was associated with the rapid influx of Muslim, Jewish, and Christian residents who arrived variously as workers, political opportunists, Andalusian refugees, skilled artisans,

and European merchants. In this context, the establishment of the mellah was part of a broader strategy that demonstrated the Sultan’s power to manage interethnic hostilities between Christians and Jews as much as an enactment of Islamic socioreligious order.

Chapter 2 shifts to the 19th century, when European penetration in North Africa was being faced as a threat by Moroccan state. Gottreich explores how new forms of governmentality and urban development represented the ultimately failed strategies of staving off European domination. Employing census methods taken directly from European models, the Moroccan state was able to document the demographic “need” to expand the mellah, against the interests of Jewish landlords who would thereby have to contend with a diluted housing market. As the owner of the new properties being built and rented within the enlarged mellah, the sultanate was able to increase its revenue sources at a time when the state was investing heavily in restructuring itself in an effort to strengthen its position vis-à-vis European encroachment. As Gottreich notes, it was in this period that the mellah emerged as a reproducible model, with exemplars sprouting up in numerous cities, for ordering urban space on a national level. This development served the dual functions of demonstrating the bureaucratic capabilities of the modern Moroccan state and of sequestering the Jewish population, which was increasingly emerging as a conduit for European economic and cultural influence.

In summation, Gottreich insists that the sociological patterns and historical transformations experienced by the Jews of Marrakesh were determined primarily by influences and reactions shared with their Muslim neighbors. This claim provides an important counterbalance to converging nationalist historiographies, both within Morocco and beyond, that have continued to emphasize the marginality of Jews within Islamic societies and the divisive effects of colonialism on Jewish–Muslim relations. While Jews were no doubt positioned distinctively in the colonial encounter, not least because they had established cosmopolitan networks and identities that preceded the era of modern European expansion, the Jewish residents of the mellah were part and parcel of Moroccan society as well.

*The Mellah of Marrakesh* represents much that has been best in the rapprochement between anthropology and history, as it has solidified over the past several decades. Gottreich moves impressively across sources in multiple languages and located in archives throughout Europe and North Africa. The author mines published and unpublished works to tease out the cultural ideologies and the social relationships among Moroccan Jews and Muslims, and between them and their European colonizers. Gottreich does an admirable job of conjoining anthropological perspectives with archival rigor of the first order; her claim that the mellah was a liminal space, in which Muslims engaged in

liberating transgressions such as alcohol consumption, is astute and convincing.

While the book's holistic framework is justified by the high quality of the individual chapters, the finely wrought sociocultural portrait stands in tension with the expansive historical narrative. Along these lines, the book's greatest strength also points to one of its compositional weaknesses. The book succeeds most as a targeted social history of 19th-century Morocco in the decades leading up to French colonization; as such the overly general title suggests a comprehensiveness to which the chapters do not aspire. After the first chapter sets the stage by providing a compelling account of the mellah's founding, the second jumps abruptly to the 19th century without any significant attention given to the intervening periods.

Nevertheless, *The Mellah of Marrakesh* should become required reading for historians and anthropologists of Moroccan society, students of the modern transformation of North Africa, scholars of Jewish-Muslim relations, and anyone looking for a worthy example of how to read the archives ethnographically. The book should find a home in university curricula, both undergraduate and graduate, and it can serve independently as an entrée into Moroccan Jewish history and as an introduction to the historiography of Jewish Morocco.

**Indispensable Eyesores: An Anthropology of Undesired Buildings.** *Mélanie van der Hoorn.* New York: Berghahn, 2009. xii + 266 pp.

**MARCEL VELLINGA**

Oxford Brookes University

The study of architecture has for a long time been the almost exclusive terrain of architectural historians, architects, and architectural critics. Only during the last 40 years or so did an alternative and more multidisciplinary discourse on architecture manage to establish itself. This discourse, dealing with so-called vernacular architecture and comprising the work of, among others, architectural historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, and folklorists, has repeatedly shown how the exclusivity of the dominant discourse on so-called capital A architecture has resulted in a blinkered approach that privileges the architecture of a few over that of the many. It can be argued to have been successful to the extent that the existence of architecture other than that with a capital A is now generally recognized in the field of architecture, even though this recognition does not necessarily result in an equal status. Most people working in or with architecture today will still place buildings on a sliding scale of value, with the latest architect-designed skyscraper, mu-

seum, or airport commonly at the top and the latest self-built shelter made of recycled corrugated iron and concrete block somewhere at the bottom. In between are a whole lot of domestic, commercial, and public buildings that may be more or less appreciated, depending on cultural, professional, and individual backgrounds. Although meanings and values are undoubtedly divergent and dynamic, certain forms of architecture are still more cherished and valued than others.

Interestingly, the imagery of a sliding scale of architectural value is also employed in *Indispensable Eyesores*, but in a slightly different and, in a way, more intriguing manner. Certain buildings, van der Hoorn notes, are considered "desirable"; they are the ones that are described in architecture books, that are carefully renovated and that are included on postcards and maps. Others are seen as "undesirable" nuisances and are consequently commonly ignored, deliberately altered, or demolished. These are the two extremes of a scale, in between which we can find numerous buildings that are not particularly conspicuous. These buildings, van der Hoorn notes, are buildings of zero or little value, buildings that do not really "matter." They are different from both extremes because the latter do have value, either positively as desired monuments or works of art or negatively as undesired, disturbing, or harmful eyesores. Of course, because of the contextual nature of meaning and value, buildings can find themselves at different places on the scales of different people at different times during their life history. The fields of architecture and architectural history, one might say, have always limited their focus to the desired buildings at the top of van der Hoorn's scale and have indeed tended to define and authorize which buildings are allowed to reside there. The alternative discourse on "vernacular" architecture has aimed to draw attention to the many buildings in the middle, arguing that these buildings do in fact have value, even if the architectural canon has not always felt inclined to recognize it. Neither field, however, has specifically engaged with the buildings at the other end of van der Hoorn's scale; the undesired "architectural eyesores" in the shape of vacant, fenced off, overgrown, or collapsing concrete colossuses whose existence is openly questioned and sometimes physically affected. This is what *Indispensable Eyesores* does, and it does so in a very thorough, readable, imaginative, and thought-provoking way.

Firmly grounding her work in the current anthropological discourses on materiality, architecture and agency, and relating it to a variety of theoretical writings on the notions of rubbish, disposal, and recycling, van der Hoorn sets out to document and analyze the various ways in which such undesired buildings are dealt with, or are imagined to be dealt with, by those affected by them: those living in their neighborhood, those with political responsibility for their future, or those involved in realizing whatever physical fate awaits them. Using a number of case

studies, selected mainly from Central Europe and, more specifically, Germany, she shows how undesired buildings may alternatively be demolished (as in the case of an unfinished 1970s hotel in Troisdorf), given a new function and meaning (a would-be nuclear power plant in Kalkar, transformed into an amusement park), regenerated or rejuvenated (the GDR's prefabricated apartment blocks in former East Berlin, turned into popular homes for artists after 1989), virtual alterations (various projects proposed to transform the Nazi-built Flaktürme towers in Vienna), or be left to their own devices, without any intervention (GDR Cultural Centre in northeast Germany). She also traces what may happen to a building after it has been demolished, when various attempts may be made to rehabilitate it (for instance, by integrating fragments of the building or references to it into a new one) or fragments may continue to remain important as embodiments of social memory.

The examples analyzed by van der Hoorn constitute valuable case studies that, like the many works that have focused on the agency of material culture and materiality in the last 25 years or so, remind us once more how the meanings embodied within architecture may be divergent, dynamic, and contested. More specifically they are a valuable contribution to the vibrant discourse on materiality and agency by showing the merits of directing the dominant focus on shifting meanings of permanent material items (in this case buildings), toward matters of material ephemerality, disposal, and recycling. In other words, *Indispensable Eyesores* shows us that, in addition to studying the active social life history of works of architecture (their "birth," "growth," and "career"), there is in fact also great value in studying their "aging," "retirement," and "afterlife." This would seem a valuable reminder in a time when environmental and economic crises put pressure on architecture as a field and a profession and increasingly demand the dynamic and creative reuse of existing buildings rather than new design. It is therefore to be hoped that the book will also find an audience beyond anthropology, among those architects, urban designers, and planners more actively involved in (and generally singularly occupied by) the creation of our built environments.

**Violent Gods: Hindu Nationalism in India's Present; Narratives from Orissa.** *Angana P. Chatterjee*. Gurgaon: Three Essays Collective, 2009. 470 pp.

#### SUMANT BADAMI

Macquarie University, Australia

Set in Orissa, on India's east coast, *Violent Gods* documents the last ten years of Hindu majoritarian and nationalist

mobilizations against Christians, Muslims, Adivasis (indigenous groups), Dalits (former "untouchables"), and Women. Focusing primarily on events in Kandhamal District, Angana Chatterjee reports on episodes of communal violence that erupted in December of 2007, and then again between August and September 2008. Locating the abuse in Kandhamal within the wider context of the growth of the Hindu supremacy in India, Chatterjee shows how the Sangh Parivar (a right-wing Hindu nationalist movement) has propagated multiple layers of fear and imposed specific notions of Hindu identity to achieve the brutal management of subjects within the postcolonial nation-state. Based on exhaustive fieldwork and data collection, including personal testimony, legal documents, media sources, ethnographic description, and contemporary theory, Chatterjee delivers an impressive and detailed chronicle of the techniques through which the aggressive Brahmanism of the Sangh Parivar has enabled the ascendance of Hindu cultural dominance and legitimized performative acts of violence against non-Hindus and minority groups.

At the heart of *Violent Gods* is a detailed analysis of the way in which Hindu nationalism is constituted and maintained through acts of exclusion, which are achieved, most notably, through acts of violence. Frequently touching on the issue of accountability, Chatterjee's argument is that the popular memory of communal violence in Orissa reveals a large-scale complicity that has been structured through "denial and obfuscation on the part of state institutions, the media, and the paucity of countervailing response" (p. 13). In Orissa, technologies of dominance are made mundane through patriarchal territoriality. Everyday violence is rationalized, making the body subject, silencing marginality and divergence, "creating an illusory, singular voice that legitimizes the nation and its instrumental authority" (p. 9).

Chatterjee's detailed genealogy of the Sangh Parivar, and right-wing Hindu nationalism in general, documents the way in which revisionist versions of Hinduism were fused with nationalism around the period of partition and independence. Emanating from Aryan discourse, and the elitism of imagined history, essentialist visions of Hindu identity slowly evolved into a universal paradigm that was inseparable from the modern nation-state. The myth of the demise of Hinduism in India, and the fabrication of the threatening Muslim and Christian "other," propagated ideological, cultural, political, and geographical boundaries that were used to instigate communal violence and define the Hindu normative.

Locating the village as the central site for procuring the state, we are shown how gendered violence became a political act, both directly and indirectly, infiltrating the homes of minorities. Femininity, obedience, chastity, the ideal of the goddess mother-sister, was intertwined with imaginings of the Hindu nation. In this way, the dominant feminine was constructed specifically for its

repression through hypermasculinization, or Hindu male ascendancy and authoritarian culture, whilst the femininity of other groups was deemed as a loose, disobedient, wayward whore. This, states Chatterjee, had the multiple effect of keeping Hindu women in line whilst also demeaning women from other groups and adhering insubordination to anti-Hinduism and, therefore, antinationalism.

*Violent Gods* contributes to current scholarship that documents the specific apparatuses through which Hindu nationalism is transmitted to subaltern Adivasis and Dalits in India. Specifically, Chatterjee shows us the calculated way that Hindu supremacy exploits the architecture of inequality, equates Hinduism to modernism and secularism, connects the local, national, and global, and projects itself across space and time as a “world religion” of eternal importance. By capitalizing on the disenfranchisement of marginal subjects and intervening after natural disasters, the Sangh uses aid and sectarian social work to endear itself to communities and gain local legitimacy. This also allows the Sangh to highlight the failure of the modern secular Indian state and garner support, financial and otherwise, from the Indian middle-class and its diasporic communities. In addition, claiming that Adivasis and Dalits are “actually” already Hindu, and ignoring the socioeconomic reasons behind their conversion to Christianity, the Sangh engages in “reconversion” practices, through a myriad of organizations devoted to its fundamental ideology, to absorb distinct and manifold subaltern groups into the broader imagination of Hindu majoritarianism.

Declaring quite honestly that she is responding to “an impenetrable reticence from the majority community” (p. 13), Chatterjee’s aim is to reauthorize the subaltern voice and offer up a counter-memory of the public discourse on state violence that occurred in Orissa. Clearly stating that this is very much a work in progress, Chatterjee admits that *Violent Gods* experiments with styles and approaches to achieve her goal of activism and advocacy. In doing so, however, she employs a conspicuously diverse range of narrative voices that often distracts the reader from many of the lucid and persuasive segments of her work. Heavily influenced by both Foucault and Derrida, she pays an implicit debt of gratitude to them in her writing style and use of theory. However, whilst the obscurity of Derrida’s language, for example, reflects the density and complexity of his thought, Chatterjee often labored over relatively straightforward concepts, attempting to disclose concealed meanings, thus rendering her prose unnecessarily demanding at times. As a result, *Violent Gods* lacked clarity and cohesion in parts and highlighted the extent to which the subaltern voice was mediated by her own rendering of the situation.

Once the opacity of her writing was unpacked, however, Chatterjee’s work was both stimulating and thoughtful, offering a comprehensive engagement with issues in-

cluding, but not limited to, identity politics, biopolitical governance, subaltern disenfranchisement, and gendered and structural violence. Situating contemporary theory into her “archive,” she provides a penetrative analysis of the processes of othering, marginalization, communalist violence, and essentialist thought. As such, *Violent Gods* has relevance and application far beyond the Orissan or Indian context. Her work provides a complete and intricate documentation of the reality of violence in the name of Hindu majoritarianism, and the sheer scale of her evidence alone deserves substantial recognition. Giving a voice, as she does, to the aggression that is inscribed on bodies and in cultural memory, Chatterjee writes with passion and attunement, in parts, answering the call to engage an explicitly ethnographic analysis of Hindu majoritarianism and the growth of the Sangh Parivar throughout India.

**The Practice of Human Rights: Tracking Law between the Global and the Local.** Mark Goodale and Sally Engle Merry, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. 384 pp.

**LORI A. ALLEN**

University of Cambridge

Even before the human rights system was established with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, one of the vexing questions that troubled the project was that of the relative or universal nature of human rights. Ongoing debates over their cross-cultural applicability and the possibly exclusively Western origins of the human rights system plagued the formulation of the UDHR and related human rights instruments, attempts at their implementation, and, for a long time, anthropology’s study of human rights. Anthropology kept as a central concern the “universal versus relative” problem, sometimes presented as an ideological conflict between local traditions, on the one hand, and Western demands dressed up as universal values, on the other hand.

Luckily, this collection of chapters brought together by Marc Goodale and Sally Engle Merry, which calls into question the categories of “global and local” that underpinned those debates, firmly moves the scholarship of human rights beyond that topic and into novel conceptual ground. Including contributions by scholars who are among the most influential in developing an increasingly sophisticated anthropology of human rights, this volume of eight chapters and four critical commentaries treats a diverse set of theoretical questions and empirical cases. From Bolivia and indigenous Colombia, to the sex trade and “transnational legal spaces” created by groups in Burma, they interrogate the sociopolitical work of neoliberalism, the



mobilization of human rights by and against state powers, and the ways in which international law makes some kinds of violence legible and “justiciable” (Wilson, p. 351) while occluding others.

Marc Goodale’s introduction and Richard Wilson’s conclusion nicely survey trends in human rights scholarship. Goodale locates the interdisciplinary chapters in this volume within the spectrum of approaches that treat human rights as processes that render “human rights into social knowledge that shapes social action” (p. 8). Organized around four themes (violence, power, vulnerability, and ambivalence), these studies of transnational human rights networks carefully attend to the systemic constraints that limit the emancipatory “potential of human rights discourse” (p. 20). Together they show how human rights (understood as a complex of institutions, actors, idioms, laws, and moral frameworks) defines groups of people and categories of knowledge while also highlighting the challenges that actors with their own political projects present to such definitions.

The ethnographies offer an eclectic sample of the complex motivations and strategies behind different groups’ deployments of human rights. Lauren Leve’s chapter, for example, examines the apparent inconsistencies within the secularism drive of Buddhists who have deployed the language of human rights to contest the cultural politics of the Hindu state of Nepal. Leve sees as a contradiction their “political action that relies on [the] possessive individualist ontology” of human rights, despite their adherence to a notion of “not-self” that is a core principle of Buddhism (p. 105). Her questions about how such disparate understandings can be reconciled reveal the need for a more precise theorization of the ways in which human rights mediates different notions of personhood, the forms of subjectification that human rights imposes—or not. The significance of “the individual” in a given social movement or political struggle must first be understood before we can ask under what conditions people’s experience of selfhood and group identity comes to accord with the liberal possessive individualist subjectivity supposedly at the base of the human rights system. The disciplinary effects that some scholars attribute to human rights (understood as an element of neoliberal governmentality) are often sidestepped or transformed—attention to how this happens is needed to make sense of the kinds of apparent paradoxes that Leve addresses.

One useful approach is Shannon Speed’s chapter on the Zapatistas, which describes how these rebels’ assertions about their rights to local autonomy as indigenous people challenge the state by refusing to acknowledge it as the bestower of rights. As Speed explains, the Zapatistas’ alternative logics of power and governance resignify human and indigenous rights by redeploying them for a political project in which “rights exist in their exercise” (p. 187), not in the abstract or on the conferral of the Mexican government.

Sari Wastell’s contribution also explores the mechanisms by which human rights practices, institutions, ideals, and values do or don’t create new outlooks and subjectivities. Her chapter on the political ontology of Swazi divine kingship alerts us to the ways in which human rights standards can be incorporated within a *mélange* of principles, giving them distinct force, definition, and effects.

Another important yet understudied dynamic highlighted in Daniel Goldstein’s chapter is the growing distrust of the human rights system and the history out of which that emerges. In his discussion of Bolivia’s urban security crisis, Goldstein explains the suspicious reactions against NGOs displayed by people who feel that human rights discourse and its defenders have become a force that is antagonistic to them, believing them to prioritize the rights of criminals above those of the average citizen (p. 64). This story points to the historical dimension of the human rights system that might have been underscored more throughout the book. Although Goodale repeatedly refers to the significant changes in human rights that have occurred in the last 15 years, he does not historicize human rights explicitly, leaving the reader to wonder what was so special about the 1990s.

Cynicism toward human rights and their politicization is a perhaps paradoxical outcome of the human rights regime’s success, and is something that has developed in contexts across the globe over many decades. It is also, I believe, a defining force in human rights dynamics today. As the human rights system has taken hold as a new industry, profession, political tool, and for some, money-making venture, the original values that the human rights system was formulated ostensibly to protect have become overshadowed by people’s anger and aversion to human rights hypocrisies. More exploration of the historical changes in how human rights have become “unsettled” (p. 4), how they have been mobilized or rejected, would have proved illuminating, and will perhaps be taken up more directly in the scholarship that this volume will undoubtedly inspire.

In sum, *The Practice of Human Rights* is a useful contribution that represents the best efforts of social scientists to understand the ever-widening and ever more complex realm of human rights practices. It will benefit teachers and students interested in human rights and related fields, including social movement theory, transnationalism, comparative ethics, international law, political anthropology, and beyond. Ultimately, it focuses our attention on the most important questions of power, how human rights direct, block, and create new methods of seeking justice, independence, or security, and how different groups “channel moral indignation into legally enforceable mechanisms,” as Richard Wilson writes in his critical concluding chapter (p. 351). To Wilson’s call for more examination of knowledge construction practices at the UN and the International Criminal Courts where international human rights

laws and norms are produced, I would add a plea for more anthropological attention to the powers of “moral indignation,” including that which is provoked by the human rights system itself.

**Ethnicity, Inc.** John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. 234 pp.

**ELIZABETH HULL**

School of Oriental and African Studies

Any visitor to South Africa today cannot fail to notice the mass of advertisements and images that evoke ethnic identity. Township tours, “cultural villages,” and markets selling local handicrafts are the mainstay of tourist experience in a country saturated with ethnic branding. *Ethnicity, Inc.* is a thought-provoking and novel commentary on this widely recognizable phenomenon and offers an important contribution to the classic anthropological themes of ethnicity, culture, and globalization. Drawing on an impressive range of mainly secondary sources, the authors’ approach is not limited by the usual conventions of anthropology but, rather, takes the reader from one global example to another. These illustrations are woven into a comparative, far-reaching discussion that describes succinctly an emerging global phenomenon.

The aim of the book, set out in its opening chapters, is to analyze the characteristics and implications of a global shift from the selling of labor to the selling of culture. It describes the pervasive entry of ethnicity into the marketplace, in an economic context of labor surplus that has left many people with no better choice than to market their identity. The authors are quick to dispel the notion that the commodification of culture necessarily involves its reduction to the superficial, challenging earlier anthropological assumptions about the incommensurability of culture and modernity, a perspective that continues to inform some current anthropological commentary. On the contrary, the authors suggest, the entry of culture into the marketplace may even *enrich* identity. Indeed its commodification may be, from the perspective of those who sell their culture, its critical means of survival. They quote one Tswana man: “If we have nothing of ourselves to sell, does it mean that we *have* no culture? . . . If this is so, then what are we?” (p. 10). The “ethnocommodity” thus disturbs familiar rational-economic definitions of the commodity, for rather than diminishing its worth through replication, it retains—even enhances—its value (p. 20). Similarly, far from alienating its producers, the ethno-commodity may deepen a sense of individual and group identity: “just as culture is being commodified, so the commodity is being rendered explicitly cultural—and, consequently, is in-

creasingly apprehended as the generic source of sociality” (p. 28).

In chapters 4 and 5 the authors define the key characteristics of this phenomenon, what they call “Ethnicity, Inc.,” using a fascinating range of examples from the United States (ch. 4) and South Africa (ch. 5). These include the centrality of biological essence for determining one’s membership within an ethnic group as well as the importance of claims to land and sovereignty for consolidating an exclusive group identity. The most intriguing point to emerge from these chapters is the notion of a dialectic between the incorporation of identity and the commodification of culture. When a plant known for its hunger-suppressing qualities was patented in 1996 it was, with the help of a South African human rights lawyer, soon claimed as the cultural property of the San of South Africa. The hoodia plant became not only a product but the very basis of identity—both legal and cultural—around which San ethnicity was formed (pp. 86–98). In this and other examples of culture commodification, it is the market that prompts claims to identity and generates ethnicity. The political and legal justifications come later. The incorporation of identity, in contrast to the commodification of culture, starts with the merging of an ethnic group into a corporation, only later, as in the case of the Bafokeng, beginning to market cultural symbols and products (pp. 98–114). With these examples, the argument is developed that “Ethnicity, Inc.” begins with one of these but inevitably resolves itself in the other.

A central question posed by the book, and one that demonstrates continuity with the authors’ previous work, asks to what extent “Ethnicity, Inc.” can be seen as an outcome of global neoliberalism. Unsurprisingly, they argue in favor of this claim, concluding that it is the imperatives of capital that have produced both the absorption of identity by the intellectual property regime, as well as a pervasive worldview that defines *personhood*, first and foremost, as “entrepreneurialism of the self and for the self” (p. 130). Herein lies the most provocative argument of the book, developed in chapter 6. The authors use examples from the United Kingdom, Russia, China, and elsewhere, to show that “Ethnicity, Inc.” is part of a wider process in which a range of social institutions and entities, from the state itself down to the individual, are being increasingly defined in terms of business enterprise. Hence an important role of government, having itself become an explicitly corporate entity, is to “creat[e] the conditions for its entrepreneurial and ethno-preneurial subjects to realize their aspirations, by treating those subjects as, above all else, stakeholders in the corporate nation” (p. 128). Demonstrating their proverbial ability to produce new meaning through inverting and reinventing familiar ideas, the authors suggest that where corporations initially gained the legal status and rights of an individual, it is individuals that now assume corporate roles (p. 130). The commodifying of

ethnicity—ethnopreneurialism—is an absolute expression of this: the congealing into tangible, marketable, owned products those signs, symbols, and practices that signify individual and group *essence*.

The reader is reminded now and again of the open-ended and contingent nature of these processes. This problem is finally addressed in the conclusion, where several instances of historical particularity are offered. In this way, the argument escapes the criticism that its presuppositions are deterministic. A question that reoccurs throughout the book is whether “Ethnicity, Inc.” offers something positive or whether it makes use of existing lines of privilege or dis-

advantage, even atrocity. A final vivid example of the tourist industry that has formed around the killing fields of Rwanda reveals the ugly potential for ethnicity to “make capital even out of its own capacity for destruction” (p. 145).

This concise and richly demonstrated book makes an important contribution to anthropological understandings of ethnicity and identity, and the role of these within the marketplace. *Ethnicity, Inc.* will appeal not only to anthropologists but also to anyone with an interest in cultural and national symbols and their commodification, the increasing reach of the intellectual property regime, and the changing global role of the state.