

Beaumont, Justin and Christopher Baker (eds.) 2011. *Postsecular cities: space, theory and practice*. London and New York: Continuum. 296 pp. Pb.: £65.00. ISBN 9781441129635.

'Postsecular cities' is a well-written reminder of the need for dialogue across disciplines and an important and focused addition to our understanding of the postsecular. The book is a wonderful starting point for future discussions on the material, political and symbolic meanings of the religious, secular and postsecular. Gathering rich empirical examples, it benefits from an engagement with epistemological perspectives of several disciplines, such as humanities, social sciences and theology.

Understanding cities at the theological and epistemological nexus of the political economy of neoliberalism and religion, the volume pays attention to flows of interaction between different groups of people, be they religious or secular. In part 1, Mapping the Theoretical Terrain, McLennan engages with Ash Amin's theory of the good city, discussing the right to justice in the urban space as opposed to divine ideas of justice. Looking through the theoretical lenses of the right to the city, he sees religion as holding the possibility of activism and rebellion in hands. Part II Competing Experiences of Postsecular Cities brings a wealth of empirical cases, from Goh's chapter (3) on mega churches in relation to the market, to Fenster (chapter 4) discussing the right to the city through religious-secular representations in Jerusalem, and Greve (chapter 7) on sanctuaries constructing social trust in Tokyo. Eade's chapter (8) opens Part III Postsecular Policies and Praxis with a historical perspective on these issues, arguing that in London, 19th-century disputes on Jews and Catholics resemble contemporary discourse on Muslims and mosques. Ashworth (chapter 9)

discusses heritage as an instrument for implementation of public policy models, while De Witte (chapter 11) explores the negotiation of public and private in Amsterdam.

Myriads of relationships, structures, emotions and normative positions concerning possibilities for urban religions and secularities are analysed. Baker and Beaumont (chapter 2) see religion as part of diaspora identities, as it influences and informs both private and public behaviour. They contend that religion, spirituality and identity have both spatial and political dimensions, and believe that safe spaces of engagement are needed for dialogue between migrants with strong religious identities and a society that is simultaneously secular and plural. In chapter 6, Greed talks about spheres of inclusion and exclusion within the urban space, showing that religion and gender have no influence on the design of the built environment. Graham and Davey (chapter 7) see churches and religious actors as playing an important role in urban policy and regeneration in the UK, but they also argue that this selective focus on specific groups shuns attention away from deeply rooted social problems that have little if anything to do with religion. Chapman and Hamalainen (chapter 11) contend that faith groups are gaining influence in British public sphere, especially through Community Cohesion, a policy that sees religious communities as key players in society.

As a social scientist I especially welcome the theological contributions in Part IV of the volume. Theology reminds us of the limits of our scientific knowledge, of the transcendental dimension, which goes beyond the immanent and the humane. Paddison (chapter 13) reminds us that the church does not figure out models for public participation, but recognises its own existence as the embodiment of justice: bearing witness is its primary contribution. In chapter 14 Cloke stresses the importance

of praxis: while we can identify a political and philosophical move beyond secularism, we are reminded of a spiritual shift from dogma towards praxis. Emerging spaces might be found in a theo-poetics rather than in structural political alignments. In the same vein, Sandercock and Senbel (chapter 5) remind us of the need for religiously and spiritually engaging spaces as an antidote to the modern loss of meaning.

Theoretically, the book offers an interesting collection of engagements with the Habermasian idea of postsecularity in relation to the material and physical urban space and structures. Although the introduction and conclusion of the volume manage to connect only loosely the individual chapters, they develop an interesting inquiry around the concept of urban postsecular. However, a deeper engagement with the growing literature on the postsecular would have benefited the volume, enriching its field of inquiry. The foremost message of the volume, which comes across clearly, is that the dividing line between religion and the secular becomes blurred in the contemporary urban space, thus faith and reason, tradition and innovation are no longer strictly divided and new possibilities emerge through creative relationships between people, institutions and different kinds of spaces. In such a post-secular turn, plurality may become an asset used to deepen both the horizontal and the vertical dimensions of social life.

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Camic, Charles, Neil Gross and Michéle Lamont. 2011. *Social knowledge in the making*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press. 464 pp. Pb.: \$30.00. ISBN 987 0 226 09209 6.

In the 1980s a new perspective on the study of cognitive systems emerged that soon established itself as science and technology studies, STS. It differed from the approach prevalent until then in the sociology of knowledge and

history of science, which linked the received ideas of a practitioner or school to macro-level external social sources. (A good example from the history of anthropology would be the colonial or imperial condition that could explain functionalism.) Instead STS emphasised actions and processes. Although it shared this focus with the ethnographic aspects of anthropology and parts of sociology that were even a source of inspiration for its development, these disciplines have been slow to extend this 'turn to practice' from the study of 'natural knowledge' to the description and analysis of 'social knowledge', which has been conventionally the subject of the humanities and social sciences. However, as the knowledge we have of nature is also 'social' there is no reason to limit the STS approach to 'natural knowledge'. Although there have been attempts to do so (perhaps more so in anthropology than in sociology) these often concentrated on a variety of substantive topics that made it difficult to perceive what they had in common. As social knowledge itself is also carved up among different academic disciplines, to do so would have required special efforts to cross and question their boundaries.

The present collection of articles is an interesting attempt to overcome such obstacles and show the advantages of doing so. The book is divided into three sections: knowledge production in different (academic) disciplines, knowledge evaluation sites, and the application of social knowledge beyond the academy. Most of the contributions in the first section share a historical perspective on processes of knowledge making. The section on evaluation concerns external restraints imposed by managers on professionals, who compete for money, need official permissions and have to promise specific results to be able to undertake their research. The final section deals with the acceptance of public opinion polls, different national legitimisations of public regulations, the use of forecasts for understanding US national security policy choices, the role of abstract economic models in the creation of quasi-markets, and the specific characteristics of professional financial analysis in the USA.

There are many new findings and insights to be found in this collection, but when I made a list of the contributions that I found most interesting I started to wonder what they had in common, apart from reflecting my own idiosyncratic preoccupations. My favourite topics turned out to be the development of library research infrastructure for the humanities and the social sciences in the USA (Abbott), the emergence of Bourdieu's theoretical ideas in relation to his research practices (Heilbron), the growing emphasis on commitments to guarantee future results in research proposals (Strathern), and the value of international comparisons for discovering taken-for-granted nationally specific values and practices (Jasanoff). However, my perplexity was entirely in tune with the conclusion of the editors that it is exactly the dense multiplicity of knowledge-making practices that determines the polymorphous character of social knowledge. This may be a valid observation, but one also gets the feeling that the various contributors did not care whether they shared a common purpose or not. Apparently a preliminary seminar with 'a superb group of scholars' to prepare the project in 2005, as well as a symposium in which all the authors participated in 2007, did not generate the kind of social interaction that could have resulted in a recognisable cognitive coherence. Although the editors constructed a common frame of reference, the authors themselves do not refer to each other, even implicitly.

The editors also claim that the analysis of social practices advocated here encourages *critical reflexivity* (their emphasis) on the part of researchers – and, by extension, on the part of agents engaging in those practices. However, it is difficult to find concrete examples of such reflexivity in the essays in this volume, unless any alternative way of looking at social knowledge is considered to be sufficient evidence. It is only in Jasanoff's contribution that one finds a definitely critical stance towards official notions of 'objectivity' in risk assessment, but she also shows how difficult it is to convince the people who propagate these to make room for a different view, let alone that they could be persuaded to adopt it. Perhaps a greater

insistence on the part of the editors to consider such issues could have provided the sense of coherence that I found lacking.

JAN DE WOLF

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Carr, E. Summerson. 2011. *Scripting addiction: the politics of therapeutic talk and American sobriety*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 323 pp. Pb. \$19.95. ISBN 978-0-691-14450-4.

This ethnography takes readers into the world of 'Fresh Beginnings', an outpatient drug treatment programme for homeless drug-using women in a Midwestern town in the USA. In this world, counsellors and therapists monitor and evaluate how female drug users talk about themselves and their problems. Carr shows how clients' way of talking is treated as the primary sign of therapeutic progress or lack thereof and how this devotion to 'healthy' talk resonates with wider cultural narratives about poverty and homelessness. Moreover, *Scripting addiction* underlines the far-reaching impact of ideological assumptions about language in American addiction treatment by showing that clients' talk does not only affect treatment decisions but also has far-reaching material consequences for clients; counsellors use clinical evaluations as the basis for exonerating or damning reports to child protective service workers and welfare workers who have the power to provide or withhold shelter, custody over children etc. Aware of these stakes, clients learn to effectively perform prescribed ways of speaking and become proficient in flipping the script: 'that is, formally replicating prescribed ways of speaking about themselves and their problems without investing in the *content* of those scripts' (p. 3).

Chapter 1 explores how ideas about economic dependency and contemporary discourses of addiction or 'chemical dependency' are entwined and highlights the possibilities and dangers of representing economic and political issues as basically therapeutic concerns. Chapter 2 provides a detailed account

of how counsellors and therapists assess incoming clients, how professional texts and talk about clients travel, and how clients try to control the travel of text and talk about them. Chapter 3 examines mainstream clinical theory about addiction and how therapists say to employ well-established ideas about denial, shame and anger in relation to addiction in their everyday interactions with clients. Also, this chapter sheds light on the question why and how therapists stimulate clients to talk about themselves by exclusively referring to their already existing inner states. Chapter 4 explores the consequences of restricting clients' talk to inner states. Carr argues that addiction treatment is a normative and normalising site where general ideological assumptions about language are enacted and where clients learn to represent themselves in ways that support institutional and cultural orders (p. 15). In Chapter 5 Carr compares the boardroom career of two client representatives as well as the discursive clashes between counsellors and therapists with regard to client participation at the administrative level. With this she seeks to demonstrate that scripts adhere to roles regardless of the institutional stages on which they are performed in order to theorise the relationship between ways of speaking, speakers and contexts. Finally, chapter 6 focuses on how experienced clients 'flip the script' of inner reference to secure housing, custody of children, etc.

The added value of this ethnography lies in its uncovering of the profound impact of ideological assumptions *about* language and of ideology *in* language on everyday institutional practices and, ultimately, the everyday lives of clients by providing a detailed account of institutional practices in mainstream American addiction treatment. Carr does not only report on what is done in interactions but also shows how these institutional practices relative to policy are embedded in social services networks and reflect wider societal discourses on addiction and poverty.

Carr's central argument is convincing, however, arguably, the empirical presentation of her argument could have been stronger. Looking at the empirical data presented in

the book, one cannot help but notice that Carr almost exclusively relies on transcripts of individual interviews with clients and professionals and on fragments of meeting minutes. Essentially, this means that Carr backs her argument empirically mainly by analysing what informants say or write about what happens in mainstream addiction treatment. Put differently, Carr hardly provides an analysis of the actions language performs in actual everyday institutional interactions between professionals and clients. This means that readers have little opportunity to determine themselves how professionals propagate 'healthy' talk in client-therapist interactions and how healthy talk-in-interaction affects professionals and clients. This seems to be a missed opportunity given that Carr participated in many meetings and observed many group therapy sessions. Moreover, in earlier writings Carr has shown herself to be aware of the benefits of performative analyses of talk-in-interaction (see Carr 2010).

Reference

Carr, E. Summerson 2010. 'Enactments of expertise', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 39: 17–32.

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Creed, Gerald. 2011. *Masquerade and post-socialism: ritual and cultural dispossession in Bulgaria*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press (New Anthropologies of Europe Series). 254 pp. Pb.: \$24.95 ISBN 978 0 253 22261 9.

The European integration process poses a challenge to all member states, but especially to newcomers: they are expected and urged to become socially, economically, politically and also culturally 'modern', and to display 'high culture' and values of diversity in all walks of life. So what is to be done if villagers, such as the rural Bulgarians discussed by

Gerald W. Creed in *Masquerade and postsocialism*, enthusiastically celebrate 'premodern' and pagan superstitions for securing agricultural and human fertility through mumming (wearing masks during rituals) and enact ethnically and 'politically incorrect' stereotypes of Roma and Muslims throughout these rituals? To what degree can one conclude that such rituals with exotic costumes and satirical figures do not stand for yet another example of commercialised European folklore and carnival, but have their own meaning and context?

Gerald Creed is an experienced observer and analyst of Bulgarian transformation. In his latest book he takes up exactly this theme of unravelling the 'survival' and cultural dynamics of rural rituals of mumming, of *kukeri* or *survakari* as they are called in Bulgaria. These rituals are commonly performed around Christmas and New Year, but also at the beginning of Lent. They involve elaborate costumes and masques prepared and worn mostly by men, who go from house to house and engage in 'ritual plays' with household members. During these visits, they receive food, alcohol and money and in return are expected to give blessings to ward off evil and infertility.

One of the central questions raised by the book is the meaning attached to these rituals; it also explores the motivation of participants for carrying out these elaborate and costly rituals, sometimes to audiences – out-migrant relatives – who may be thousands of miles away and present only over the telephone, yet who follow the ritual at its various stages through telephone reporting. Why people do these things is the crucial issue examined by Creed. Obviously, the question is embedded in the meaning and place of ritual in general and of such rituals in modern societies in particular. He asks whether such rituals have a function for the community and communal identity as opposed to identification with urban Bulgaria and the Bulgarian nation itself. His answer is complicated: the rituals constitute and contest community, because they allow conflicts and tensions within time and society to become visible without necessarily being disruptive or destructive. This argument is woven through-

out the chapters, with fault lines of contestation and constitution running through gender and sexuality (chapter 2), civil society (chapter 3), autonomy and community (chapter 4) and ethnicity and nationalism (chapter 5).

The particular attention given to cultural dispossession deserves some further consideration here. Creed's introductory chapter explains why mumming should be considered an example of cultural dispossession: first, mumming rituals have hitherto been neglected in anthropological discussions, even though they have been known to exist for a long time. The second factor is their career throughout the colonial and socialist periods: their cultural logic and alternative meaning for social significance 'are being eroded and reformed before they can be recognized' (p. 4). Creed sees in mumming rituals 'extant cultural resources' and criticises socialist as well as postsocialist observers for ignoring them. The concept of cultural reserves has been around at least since Braudel's model for the Mediterranean *longue durée* and it is exciting to see the idea being evoked by Creed, even if he hardly develops the notion of cultural reserves – other than pointing out how these can be identified in a negative way, i.e. through silence and non-recognition.

The question of the degree to which Bulgaria is a modern society and how this can be analysed through mumming rituals is picked up in the concluding chapter; this discussion is dense, nuanced but difficult reading. Creed mentions the models of multiple modernities or of alternative modernity as possible frameworks for understanding mumming and concludes that: 'Alternatives appear, multiply, and disappear over time, and so understanding the dynamics of modernity requires a temporal sensitivity' (p. 204). Despite this occasional opacity, *Masquerade and postsocialism* is a valuable book for the general eloquence of its arguments, its solid engagement with ritual as well as its discussion of broader ideological frameworks of postsocialism, nationalism and modernity. It is a theoretically rich work, ethnographically thorough and thought provoking. Finally, it is a welcome critique of many postsocialist analyses from within,

opening up postsocialism to themes of world anthropology and strengthening the contribution that can be made by the anthropology of postsocialist countries to anthropological theory in general.

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Decena, Carlos Ulises. 2011. *Tacit subjects: belonging and same-sex desire among Dominican immigrant men*. Durham and London: Duke University Press. 328 pp. Pb.: \$23.95. ISBN 978-0-8223-4945-7.

This is an absorbing and challenging examination of homoracial transnational erotics. It is a very careful and layered autoethnography-cum-participant observation and life history interview study of 25 Dominican immigrant men in New York City. Those involved in the study self-identify as gay and are portrayed to have identities partial and polyvalent, changing with age, economics and country of residence. As such, this volume presents a nuanced disarticulation of *dominicanidad* (Dominican identity) with telling comments as to the nature of transnational desires and relations, and pointed conclusions as to the complex construction and performance of identity in general.

The book is divided into three broad sections: 'Living in the Mental Island'; 'Body Languages'; and 'Colonial Zones'. The members of this micro-sample illustrate a 'tacit' dimension to the place of the human subject in society: they have tacit knowledge and expertise living and presenting their sexual identity in private and in public ('in or out of the closet' with friends, family and in public and 'community' spaces). The constraints, decisions and consequences of gay subject presentation, representation and comprehension result in the continual correcting presentation of self, and careful decoding presentation of other. The gay matter ('el asunto gay') can split families, lead to all manner of violence, encourage escape-migration to the US, but can

also lead to extra scrutiny and testing with US border policing. There are risks as well as benefits to disclosing one's gay identity, particularly in the 'macho' Dominican Republic; there are strategies of communicating it implicitly, such as kissing a boyfriend in front of family; and there are tacit subjectivities built upon conspiracies of silence – unspoken areas of conversation and inquiry.

'As I grew up, I began...to conceal myself' (pp. 116–17), notes one Dominican growing up on the island before migrating to New York. But, is the gay immigrant liberated by migration? Is it easier 'to come out overseas'? The self-fashioned subject in New York, the new *Dominican-york*, can hold onto the homeland, but can also develop a superiority complex from their relocations, or project a savagery upon indigenous 'natives' on the old land that can even extend into the new migrant communities. A Dominican migrant in New York might refuse to live next to these 'filthy people'. They might assimilate new urban competencies of living, but also have to contend with the issue of American blackness, their own projections, and the stereotype of the gay Dominican migrant as macho given to them by gay non-Dominicans. There are imagined femininities as well as masculinities – at play, or in performance, rather: a 'gynographic performative' of the body (p. 115). In short, there are multiple body stylisations possible from 'pisar fino' (to step lightly when walking [p. 168]) to 'defiant eyes' (p. 175), to the sensitivities surrounding homosexuality and anal receptivity in sexual intercourse as the male body performs sexuality and *acts out* sexual acts, experimenting and changing position from island to continent and back again. Ultimately, a shared 'code swishing' (p. 142) knowledge – code switching with gender acknowledged – is needed to recognise, communicate and perform comfortably.

Modernity might be haunted by the closed and impenetrable Dominican macho (the 'walking plantains' [p. 192]), but it is not necessarily exorcised by attempts to reformulate same-sex eroticism as open and responsive new democratic *dominicanidad*. Decena warns of the circulation and

reproduction of 'imaginaries' that objectify the other, including the othering of former migrant spaces. Migration, then, is but one manner of transiting through Dominican ethnoscapes and erotospheres whether on-island, off-island or visiting-island. This book not only adds a tacit and homosexual dimension to migrant studies, but it is also an invaluable corrective to the often static portrayal of migrant identity.

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Emerson, Robert, Rachel Fretz and Linda Shaw. 2011. *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press. 320 pp. Hb: \$19. ISBN 0-226-20683-1.

Entering the field and writing ethnographic fieldnotes in a particular place requires basic skills that each researcher needs for carrying out fieldwork. Without proper preparation, inexperienced ethnographers may obtain unsatisfactory results. In their publication, Emerson, Fretz and Shaw provide several tools that can assist novice researchers in writing their fieldnotes in structured and comprehensive ways. The presentation of these techniques is structured in eight chapters and a convenient index, which explain the different dimensions inherent to fieldwork. The authors start off by defining ethnographic field research and explaining the aim of the ethnographic approach as 'a way to understand and describe the social worlds, drawing upon the theoretical traditions of symbolic interactions and ethnomethodology' (p. 2). The chapters build up towards having the final ethnographic manuscript at the end.

The authors explain that the concept of ethnographic participation presupposes that the ethnographers are not set apart from the society under study. Participation helps the researcher understand how people deal with new situations, how they behave and why, as well as how the understanding of different circumstances can alter over time. What makes their approach productive is the way

they explain their ideas and illustrate different situations with examples that are accessible to any reader.

Entering the field and participating in the daily life of people is just the beginning; it is essential in order to obtain the knowledge the ethnographer seeks, but simultaneously experiences and observations should be written down. In the same chapter, the authors focus on the complexities of description and describing experienced/observed realities and on the implications of writing fieldnotes. They mention four main points that ethnographers have to consider during fieldwork: (1) connecting methods and findings; (2) the pursuit of indigenous meanings that focus on getting 'closer to those studied in order to understand and write about what their experiences and activities meant to them' (p.16); (3) writing fieldnotes requires the permanent consideration that deeper understanding is a continuous process building on new and prior insights; (4) the importance of interactional details.

The second chapter provides valuable instructions about writing one's own observations in the field. Concentrating on jotting down key concepts is important. Thereafter, the authors dig deeper by exploring in the third and fourth chapters how the researcher starts writing down what s/he observed in the field. Three main themes can be noticed here: (1) the ethnographers' attention in the field is a process of recalling moments s/he observed and the writing options for presenting and analysing, (2) explaining writing strategies and (3) providing several analytical options for reflecting on fieldnotes.

The fifth chapter explains how one comes to represent specific scenes or interactions, when a researcher has to decide which event s/he wishes to write about. It is not easy at all to write about 'something that happened', because of all the variables and voices within the same field in a specific time and space. The authors try to provide writing styles and conventions that may facilitate the ethnographer's writing fieldnotes and capturing events. In the next two chapters, the authors evoke important points that researchers should take into consideration during fieldwork, like

capturing cultural meanings in a society and how to analyse fieldnotes. The importance of revealing and incorporating people's meanings into the final analysis is vital for getting a better understanding of the society in focus. The final chapter discusses how one can produce a complete ethnographic manuscript, through an approach that concentrates on balancing the analytic proposition with local meanings.

On the whole, these instructions on how to write ethnographic fieldnotes and how ethnographers can avoid certain mistakes make clear that ultimately it is a matter of experience and training. Nevertheless what distinguishes this book from others on the same topic is the way it presents ideas by way of illustrations in a coherent manner. In addition, the authors provide a distinctive guide for creating a work plan and time schedule for those writing fieldnotes for the first time, and for those striving to enhance their own way of writing. This publication is thus highly recommendable for students and teachers of anthropology as well as for researchers in related fields interested in employing ethnographic methods in their work.

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Fassin, Didier. 2012. *Humanitarian reason. A moral history of the present*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. xvi + 336 pp. Pb.: €22.99. ISBN 978-0-520-27117-3.

For some time now, social scientists have noted a resurgence of ethics in contemporary social, economic and political discourse, with humanitarianism constituting perhaps the most striking manifestation of this ethico-political entanglement. Among the existing literature on the topic (e.g. Humanitarian Studies Unit 2001; Feldman and Ticktin 2010; Fassin and Pandolfi 2010), *Humanitarian reason* stands out for its rigorous and lucid analysis of the logics and contradictions underlying Western humanitarianism. Didier Fassin's double background

– as a social anthropologist having studied humanitarianism in various contexts over the past decade and as former vice-president of Médecins Sans Frontières – is visible not only in the unique ethnographic access this book draws from, but also in its skilfully balanced critique of compassion, treading a fine line between moral judgement and cynicism.

Humanitarian reason traces the recent emergence of humanitarianism as a particular form of government, and critically explores its inner workings and consequences in nine detailed case studies. The book's first part focuses on France's domestic politics concerning the poor (chapters 1 and 2), undocumented immigrants (chapter 3), and asylum seekers (chapters 4 and 5). Although this part may seem of limited interest to non-French readers, it offers an insightful analysis of the politicisation of medicine and the human body in the contemporary moral economic context. The second part focuses on international humanitarianism through the examples of child AIDS victims in post-apartheid South Africa (chapter 6), the 'Tragedia' disaster in Chavez's Venezuela (chapter 7), Palestinian teenagers during the second Intifada (chapter 8), and the work of humanitarian organisations such as MSF (chapter 9). It is in this part, besides the introduction and the conclusion, that Fassin offers the most pertinent analytical reflections on humanitarianism per se. Even though all nine chapters have been independently published before, they have been substantially rewritten and converge well in offering a larger picture and critique of contemporary humanitarian reason.

Humanitarianism, for Fassin, is based on the notion of humanity as a global moral community in which all lives are considered equal, and needs to be understood as a mode of governing. Humanitarian government, then, refers to the deployment of moral sentiments in contemporary politics (p. 1), replacing a politics of rights and justice with an ethics of suffering and compassion. Both despite and because of this ethics, however, humanitarianism unavoidably ends up instituting inequality or even perpetrating violence by rendering some lives more valuable than others.

Humanitarianism's victims (in both senses) are often reduced to their bare, biological lives while their subjectivities, histories, and thus their humanity are ignored in the quest to ensure their survival. Ultimately, humanitarian reason tends to oversimplify or even conceal complex realities of suffering and injustice, which, Fassin argues, are better understood and addressed through the register of political economy.

As a political analysis of humanitarianism as the predominant moral economy underlying modern Western societies, identity and politics, *Humanitarian reason* achieves its objective brilliantly. Its analytic style is clear and compelling, its ethnographical material well researched and organised, and its argument timely and well balanced. Nevertheless, it is worth noting some of this book's limitations, apart from the incorrect German translations on page 247 (mankind should be 'Menschheit' and humaneness 'Menschlichkeit'). Firstly, it should be stressed that its analysis only applies to contemporary Western societies, not to contemporary societies in general, as Fassin argues in a somewhat too generalising manner. As anthropologists are well aware, there are many ways in which the human is conceived, and different ways in which moral sentiments do or do not inform politics globally. Implicitly taking Western notions of the human as universal (despite providing an insightful genealogy of their Christian roots), Fassin ends up ignoring cultural and moral diversity where they would appear to be most pertinent, namely in international humanitarian governance.

A second important limitation lies in *Humanitarian reason's* rather one-sided analysis of Western moral economy, neglecting its economic dimension in favour of politics and morality. This is unfortunate, given the clear economic agenda behind most humanitarian interventions of international agencies and nation states, and the neoliberal conflation of economic and moral values more generally. The most common moral act in the contemporary world is the donation of money, and a large part of humanitarianism consists of generating and channelling this material flow of compassion. No moral history of the present can afford

to ignore the extent to which contemporary ethics are tied to the form of money, and thus to capitalist economy.

Within the territory demarcated by these limitations, however, *Humanitarian reason* constitutes an outstanding study of contemporary Western moral and political economy, and an excellent example of the critical contribution public anthropology can make by engaging ongoing public debates on larger social, moral and political issues. This book is highly recommended for graduate students and scholars of political and moral (and to some extent medical) anthropology, sociology, political science and related subjects, as well as for political analysts and moral theorists outside academia.

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Fedele, Anna and Ruy Llera Blanes (eds.) 2011. *Encounters of body and soul in contemporary religious practices*. New York: Berghahn Books. 252 pp. Hb.: \$85.00/£50.00. ISBN 978-0-85745-207-8

The chapters gathered together in this valuable collection of ethnographic reflections on the concepts of body and soul in contemporary religious cultures were originally presented in a workshop at the 2008 EASA conference in Ljubljana. The book is divided into three parts, including a section on Roman Catholic

religious contexts, three chapters on religion, migration and mobility, and a final division on body and spirit in 'New Spiritualities'. The contributors stay true to the original panel call for 'ethnographically rooted texts'. They also are admirably attentive to two primary theoretical sources: Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* is adapted at several junctures to link individual bodily dispositions, institutional power and global imaginaries, while Thomas J. Csordas's phenomenology of embodiment reappears in a number of instances to situate the fundamental religious encounter with otherness in the body.

The collection begins with Keith Egan's account of embodied practices on the Camino de Santiago in Spain. For Egan, the wounded bodies on the Camino are the tangible transformations of pilgrims' wounded souls, read for signs of the ills of lives gone astray. Giovanna Bacchiddu's chapter on embodied relationships with Saint Anthony of Padua in Apiao, Chile emphasises the forms of negotiation and reciprocity, mirroring local practices of hospitality, which govern domestic interactions with the saint during *novenas* held in his honour. Katia Ballacchino's contribution describes the body as the expression of belonging and a way of recognising cultural identity in the annual Lily Feast (*la Festi dei Gigli*) in Nola, Italy.

In Part II, two contributions turn assumptions about religious bodies in the West on their head by doing fieldwork in these supposedly familiar places: João Rickli writes about Protestant worship services in the Netherlands organised in support of missionary work. These services use concepts like encounter, proximity and commitment to evoke an experience of the world as 'mapped' through interactions between the missionary's body and distant landscapes. Kim Knibbe argues that the '*habitus* of the saved soul' is the issue at stake in the Nigerian-initiated Pentecostal Redeemed Christian Church of God's European missionary work. Knibbe moves adroitly back and forth between scenes in the Netherlands, London and Nigeria to make her point that the aversion of potential Dutch converts of European ancestry to the Pentecostal *habitus* is taken to mean that they are 'too bound into

their local society' to see the 'global' nature of this approach to religious embodiment (p. 104). The concluding chapter by Alexandra Cimpric reviews witchcraft in the Central African Republic as an example of globalisation processes and a local critique of capitalism and amoral acquisitiveness.

Eugenia Roussou begins Part III by arguing for a tripartite concept of body, soul and spirit in intersecting Greek 'New Age' and Orthodox Christian discourses concerning the evil eye. Roussou's description of her informants' notion that the evil eye involves flows of energy passing between people overlaps with Ann Ostefeld-Rosenthal's discussion in the following chapter of the importance of the concept of energy for patients with medically unexplained symptoms (MUS) in Danish healing rituals. Rosenthal cites her informants' concepts of a pervasive energy that continues to work on them, even after they have been healed, as a variation on Csordas's argument that a patient's self-process is, over time, interwoven with her life-world to constitute a life-long healing process.

Ehler Voss's contribution is the most theoretically nuanced of the chapters in this collection. He argues, through his fieldwork with mediumistic healers in Germany, that Csordas problematically assimilates the Other to the Self in his writings on healing. Instead, the work of phenomenological philosopher Bernhard Waldenfels sustains a more unresolved position vis-à-vis the encounter with 'foreignness' that is at the heart of religious experience. Jointly written by a practitioner and anthropologist (Andrew Spiegel and Silke Sponheuer), the final chapter of the volume argues for an understanding of Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophical eurythmic dance practice as an example of a conscious technique of transcending the conventional body and soul dichotomy in favour of a tripartite unity of body, soul and spirit.

The introduction offers a substantial account of recent theory that corrects the 'dichotomised heritage' of thinking about body and soul in anthropology. Although the editors frame the volume by setting the contributors' various ethnographic contexts against this

theoretical background, they also, on occasion, describe the contributions using overly broad abstractions. The volume as a whole offers a worthwhile contribution to the growing literature on corporealised religion in the contemporary world. It will be of interest to anthropologists writing on Christianity and the body and on religion and migration, as well as to readers with an interest in the study of religion outside anthropology.

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Harvard Divinity School (United States)

Fox, Robin. 2011. *The tribal imagination: civilization and the savage mind*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. 432 pp. Hb.: \$29.95. ISBN 978-0-674-05901-6.

I have not read an academic book that made me periodically both think and chuckle for a long time. In a wonderfully written volume, Robin Fox, an eminent anthropologist from Rutgers University in the United States, has collected a number of challenging essays for contemporary anthropology. The book's title well captures Fox's main thesis: the continuing presence of biological and evolutionary inclinations and desires in our current world (accumulated over history and evolution) attest to the importance of some basic human needs that must be answered. Devoting his volume to Claude Levi-Strauss, Fox calls this situation the tempering of civilisation by the savage mind (p. 2). The tribal, he says, refers to what used to be called the primitive and now is referred to as pre-literate or in the non-judgmental sense of pre-civilised society that has characterised humans for 99% of their existence. Extending across an amazing variety of themes, Fox takes us on a fascinating and at times witty tour of kinship structures, myths, food, poetry, taboos, human rights, genetic variability, language, and epics to underscore how tribalism still undergirds many of our contemporary behaviours.

As Fox convincingly argues, the challenge of the tribal imagination centres on the problems it poses for humans living in open

societies. As he sees it, the main test for members of these societies is not the eradication but the handling of marks left by history and evolution. Fox's is not a linear or deterministic evolutionism but a more complex one centred on processes that emerge out of the persisting basic needs of humans that constantly meet new environmental conditions. In the first chapters, Fox shows how the domestication of our species took a very long time but how the clan mentality continues to be important in various contemporary societies. The various chapters then go on to show how the unique features of the human population figure in the more general process by which organisms constantly adapt to changing environments. In the case of humans it is the marriage of biology and the social where tribal impulses most clearly come through. More specifically, Fox's argument centres on the importance of genetic variation for the survivability of the human (as any) species. From this starting point, and here he rehearses contentions found in his previous work, very specific kinship and clan or tribal structures have developed that both force marriage outside the group and limit it. What emerges is a concept that is based not on a simple linear development of humans but of cumulation: humans are characterised by constantly adding additional elements to previous ones. We must thus face, he claims, such impulses as pride, violence or suspicion between kin groups as they continue to be expressed in our political arenas.

The volume offers two sets of interrelated critiques of contemporary anthropology (often formulated in humorous terms). The first one is that anthropologists have become specialised in increasingly precise and delimited fields (think of the proliferation of study associations and journals). Because of this trend, we have lost the quest for the larger questions as base of our discipline. Invoking Lewis Henry Morgan, whom he sees as getting some ethnographic facts wrong, Fox goes on to say that we must continue to look at the basic issues involved in what it means to be human. He arrives at this critique via multiple routes, a primary one being the cognitive turn that has overwhelmed (especially) American

anthropology with its emphasis on discourse, representations and ideas at the expense of humans' tribal heritage. To make this point by way of example, the return to the study of kinship should go beyond the recent and fashionable study of concepts and discourse at the base of such practices as IVF. Classic issues like kin ties, marriage or the incest taboo have not faded but persist in all of our contemporary societies and should be faced and analysed. The second focus of Fox's critique is that of the political agenda that has come to dominate contemporary American (and parts of European) anthropology. In this view, it is the victims, the underdogs, the exploited and the dispossessed that are to be not only acknowledged but privileged and celebrated. Because of this view, much of the critique of the closed societies to which they belong is eviscerated. How can one disagree with the world views and values of someone if she or he is the victim of imperialism and neo-liberalism?

Since the volume comprises a set of loosely connected essays, there is an unevenness of some chapters while others seem to ramble in unrelated directions. Yet many chapters can be read separately and offer incisive analyses in and of themselves. All in all this is an entertaining, thought-provoking and delightful volume to read.

EYAL BEN-ARI

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Israel)

Geissler, P. Wenzel and Catherine Molyneux (eds.) 2011. *Evidence, ethos and experiment: anthropology and history of medical research in Africa*. New York: Berghahn Books. 498 pp. Hb.: \$95.00. ISBN 978-085745-092-0.

The question of ethics in medical research has never been timelier than in the year marking 80 years since the beginning of the Tuskegee Syphilis Studies. In *Evidence, ethos and experiment*, Geissler and Molyneux invite readers to explore questions of ethos and ethics in medical research in Africa. Drawing from the 'Studying Trial Communities' conference held at the

Kenyan Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) in Kilifi, Kenya, in 2005, the book presents a collection of anthropological and historical explorations into this complex topic. The motivating question, 'how scientific investigations – as well as the public good that medical science makes possible – could be realized in a more democratic and equitable manner' (p. 2), provokes a series of compelling and well-written chapters discussing how ethos, ethics and standards are shaped through interactions between national and global institutions and governments, as well as people, including study subjects, local and international scientists, and local staff.

Following an Introduction focused on various aspects of ethos in science, time and politics, the volume is divided into three sections that explore different aspects of medical research in Africa. The first section focuses on the relationships that are at the heart of medical research. These include, for example, Reynolds Whyte's account of the relationships of 'knowing about' and 'knowing/acknowledging' between researchers and subjects as they are mediated by the production of written documents. Leach and Fairhead explore the relationships between subjects and the medical study, considering the need for medical services as the motivation behind joining a trial community, or 'being with' the British Medical Research Council study in Gambia. Ulrich's chapter addresses the relationship between the private and the public in medical research and calls for 'public ethics' and reinforced public accountability.

The second section follows the ways in which evidence is shaped and produced. Feierman addresses the complexities of 'good enough medicine' through an exploration of the different conceptions of evidence held by Zimbabwean, Ghanaian and American physicians, reminding the readers that African physicians face more issues than just the priorities defined by the international community. Kachur argues for medical research that goes beyond randomised controlled trials, acknowledging 'real world' constraints in the process of producing evidence. Geissler addresses the relationship between scientific work and modern

lives as experienced by veterans of the Kenyan Division of Vector Borne Diseases.

The concluding section explores the politics of medical research with chapters dedicated to the shifting relationships between biomedicine and the state during the colonial, postcolonial and post-postcolonial periods. Ombongi's account of the public health system in Kenya, Lachenal's discussion of the Pasteur Institute of Cameroon and Schumaker's analysis of malaria control in Zambia's Copperbelt are enlightening examples of the reciprocal relationships between politics and health. A different kind of politics is addressed in Nguyen's analysis, which draws a parallel between global anti-retroviral policies that override national sovereignty and the colonial history of medical intervention, both of which use therapeutic power to shape the world order.

An impressive feature of the book lies in the ties created between chapters that offer different perspectives on the same research sites or questions. Such interconnectedness can be found in Geissler's and Ombongi's chapters, exploring the experiences of public health workers in Kenya within a changing system and the changes that system has undergone, and chapters by Leach and Fairhead and Kelly, which explain not only why people join a trial community, but also how the relationships within this community shape the evidence produced. Moreover, most contributors do not shy away from challenging conventional wisdom and common academic claims about the faults of colonial systems and contemporary biomedicine, acknowledging their complex role in both African history and the lived experiences of Africans. Finally, the editors must be congratulated for the bold choice of concluding the volume with a chapter by White that questions the validity of ethics discourse in medical research in Africa from an epistemological standpoint.

A minor weakness of this volume lies in its relative cohesiveness as a book. While some chapters are indeed beautifully woven together, it is sometimes difficult to follow the narrative of the volume as a whole. Given the lack of introductions to each section and the various uses of the term ethics

throughout the volume, one has to return to the Introduction for further clarifications, which may be disruptive on the whole.

Considering the explosion of medical research in Africa in the age of global health, *Evidence, ethos and experiment* is a valuable and much-needed contribution to the development of multiple contextual frameworks for historical and contemporary medical research in Africa and elsewhere.

ANAT ROSENTHAL

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Głowczewski, Barbara and Rosita Henry (eds.) 2011. *The challenge of indigenous peoples. Spectacle or politics?* Oxford: The Bardwell Press. 300 pp. Hb.: £90.00. ISBN 978-1-905622-26-9.

Only a few decades ago, when all signs pointed towards the growing marginalisation of ethnic minorities, few people could have imagined that at the start of the 21st century the so-called or self-declared 'indigenous peoples' would play an active – and in some cases, definitive – role in political, legal and contemporary media spheres. Also, few would have imagined that the indigenous question would remain at the heart of the anthropological debate. The resurgence of indigeneity, its internationalisation and politicisation compelled anthropologists to reassess several key concepts, like tradition, identity, history and culture. The debate about the definition, and the political, legal and identity-related effects of indigeneity in our globalised world remains wide open.

The book under review, an adaptation of *Le défi indigène: entre spectacle et politique* published in French in 2007, constitutes a fresh and noteworthy contribution to this debate. It is a collection of 14 ethnographically well-documented articles, written in large part by young researchers from various countries. The book is divided into two parts, with the first fully dedicated to the analysis of indigenous Australians. The first two chapters offer an accurate reflection on the notion of 'nomadism' in contemporary Australian

context (Lacam-Gitareu), and the strategies used by Aboriginal communities to reclaim their past via new technologies (De Laryg Healy). The second part of the book, which is more eclectic, includes articles on the Pacific (Kempf) and Melanesia (Kupiainen), as well as India (Soucaille) and Siberia (de Chambourg). Contributions by Barbara Glowczewski and Rosita Henry, which appear at the beginning and end of the volume respectively, offer a solid theoretical and conceptual frame that goes beyond individual contributions, to propose an interpretive model for approaching contemporary indigenous reality, but also more broadly, for the study of cultural diversity and identity-related movements in the contemporary world. Drawing inspiration from the 'reticular worldview' (Glowczewski), which defines the symbolic, political and social system of Aboriginal Australians, and from the 'relationship' category of Durkheimian theory, the authors approach current processes of self-determination and indigenous claim making as a form of 'creative networks'. The contemporary indigenous movement would thus define itself as essentially strategic and relational, a process of creative self-determination aimed at creating ties with other ethnic identities within a global framework.

The originality of the book lies, however, in the way it places the notion of 'performance' at the centre of its reflection on contemporary indigenous phenomena. As such, the book describes and analyses diverse, and yet quite similar, rituals, spectacles and ceremonies such as Australian art exhibitions in Europe (chapter 6), the Bear Games of the Khanty of Siberia (chapter 13), director Andrish Saint-Claire's theatrical performances with the Yolngu and the Kija of Australia (chapter 5), 'untraditional' urban Aboriginal art (chapter 7), the 'recognition' ceremonies of the indigenous identities of India (chapter 12), and the aeroplane dance performed by a group of Aboriginal woman from Borroloola (chapter 4). These themes enable the authors to address key issues in contemporary anthropology, such as the notions of primitivism, hybridity and authenticity, as well as the essentially historical

and subversive dimension of 'traditional' dance and myths. The book does, however, place special emphasis on the artistic festivals of Australia and the Pacific, dedicating some five articles to this theme. These events, spaces for ethnic re-vindication and differentiation, as well as for creating inter-community ties, are described as 'modern potlatch[s]' (p. 161) and presented as paradigmatic cases of the political and spectacular nature of contemporary indigenous movement. These performances are described as a strategy for creating meaning and, thus, identity; that is, as an essentially political mechanism for reclaiming history and creating discourses against the powers-that-be.

Finally, while avoiding an essentialist vision of indigeneity, the book still defends the strong political and legal nature of this concept today, giving full legitimacy to processes of empowerment and reinvention of tradition undertaken by indigenous communities. Some authors thus omit the determination of symbolic or cultural characteristics that would define an assumed 'indigenous mindset' from the anthropological agenda, whereas other contributors try to combine both perspectives.

In conclusion, *The challenge of indigenous peoples* is a rigorous, well-written and politically-committed contribution that champions an 'anthropology of decolonisation', and explores the politics of spectacle and the spectacle of politics that define the contemporary indigenous movement.

ROGER CANALS

University of Barcelona (Spain)

Hastrup, Frida. 2011. *Weathering the world: recovery in the wake of the tsunami in a Tamil fishing village*. *Environmental Anthropology and Ethnobiology* Vol. 16. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books. 150 pp. Hb: \$35.00/£21.00. ISBN 978-0-85745-200-9.

Disasters and crises are part of human history, yet it seems that contemporary life is featured more than ever by such punctuations.

Current global and instant mediation of events contribute to such an understanding, as do statistics. The number of so-called 'natural' disasters has more than doubled in the world since the 1980s because of more frequent extreme hazards (geophysical, meteorological, hydrological) in combination with increased levels of vulnerability. In many countries' budgets for international cooperation, the position of humanitarian aid now outweighs that of investments in long-term development. Taken together, these conditions have also helped the relatively small field of disaster anthropology grow fast in the last decade. Frida Hastrup's recent book can be seen as part of this expansion, even if Hastrup herself suggests doing away with such categorisations in anthropology (pp. 17, 130–3). In fact, her choice of ethnographic field, located in Tharangambadi, a Tamil fishing village on the southeast coast of India, was more of a coincidence (p. 19), and presumably as was her object of study, the social recovery from the tsunami that struck the village on Boxing Day in 2004. Despite the author's reluctance to place her work within this field, her book does make a timely contribution to the field of disaster anthropology (and environmental anthropology, for that matter).

The volume is organised in eight chapters in which the complex and multifaceted social process of recovery is analysed through a phenomenological approach. Hastrup describes in ethnographic detail particular dimensions of this process in chapters 3 to 7. The first of these deals with housing and relocation of the inhabitants of the fishing village after the disaster, connecting these issues, so central in disaster aid and reconstruction, to the subjective making of home and homeness. The subsequent chapter delves into how the fishermen, after the tsunami, have come to encompass their practices of forecasting the weather and interpreting the sea according to seasonal changes within a larger frame of climate change. Chapter 5 explores how the influx of international and national humanitarian aid following the disaster was interpreted and used by villagers. Here Hastrup shows not only how

'the local' and 'the global' entangle in complex and mutual ways, but also how the arrival of such power and resources are processed locally along the lines of existing relations. Chapter 6 explores how the individual experiences of the disaster conflate with other significant events in the lives of the inhabitants, making this extraordinary event temporally and spatially entangled with ordinary uncertainties and losses. Finally, chapter 7 describes how loss and memory become materialised in the wake of the disaster, not as a fixed legacy but rather as a process of the present, and towards the future.

The point Hastrup wants to make is that the ways in which people cope with disasters are deeply embedded in local reality and everyday life. The idea that the 'everyday' is key to social, political and economic phenomena seems rather redundant in the realm of 21st-century social anthropology, yet Hastrup claims that this concept is more often than not used as a contextual backdrop to study social phenomena and needs instead to be unpacked in the analysis (pp. 16–17). One can only agree with Hastrup when arguing that this is even more central in the case of disasters, when the social order has been severely disrupted for those experiencing such events. Her focus on the subjectivities involved in making sense of the unthinkable is certainly an important contribution to the understanding of how disasters affect communities. Yet one could question why such perspectives should be privileged over others, as Hastrup seems to argue when claiming to take the field of disaster anthropology 'one step further' (p. 6). The field of disaster anthropology is both larger and more heterogeneous than the one Hastrup accounts for, and the interdisciplinary field of disaster studies even more so, especially during the last decade. Despite Hastrup's somewhat narrow focus, *Weathering the world* is nonetheless a well-written ethnography and a welcome contribution to a growing field of study.

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Stockholm University (Sweden)

Jacobsen, Christine M. 2011. *Islamic traditions and Muslim youth in Norway*. Leiden and Boston: Brill. 419 pp. Hb.: €149.00. ISBN 9-78-900-417-8908.

With this book, Christine M. Jacobsen presents a well-researched and theoretically ambitious study of Norway's religious Muslim minority. As the author notes at the outset, the study predominantly proceeds as an analysis of conversations with members of Norway's two large Muslim youth organisations, the Muslim Youth of Norway (NMU) and Muslim Student Society (MSS).

The main strength of Jacobsen's study is her commitment to keep theoretical reflection going throughout her analysis. In dialogue with a broad range of recent studies on the situation of Muslim minorities across Europe, her study is not only a thoughtful analysis of contemporary Norwegian Muslim discourse and its social context. It is, in many ways, also a snapshot of the intellectual concerns and methodological moves employed by a generation of European researchers, whose engagement with Islamic traditions and European secularity have been shaped by the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.

The book's first chapter, 'Situating Islam in Norway', offers both an analytical framework for studying Islam in contemporary Norway and places her own analytical perspectives within the field of recent studies of Islam in Europe, and beyond. Three analytical perspectives are especially important for her. Like many scholars of her generation – including the author of this review – Jacobsen finds Talal Asad's notion of Islam as 'discursive tradition' useful in order to define the object of her study. What she is interested in are the ways in which her Norwegian Muslim interlocutors talk about Islam and discuss their aspirations and frustrations, as well as the social conditions within which these discourses and aspirations are shaped. The second perspective that shapes Jacobsen's study draws on recent discussions of secularism and secularity, particularly recent works by Asad and Saba Mahmood. Again, Jacobsen's study shares this perspective with a growing number of studies

of Muslims and Islamic traditions in Europe. The third perspective that defines the study is Jacobsen's engagement with the question if, and if so how, it is adequate to speak of an 'individualisation' of Muslim understandings of Islam as suggested by Olivier Roy.

The second chapter sketches the major social coordinates that define the two Muslim youth organisations Jacobsen has studied. The author suggests that both organisations have been quite successful in meeting the challenge of a membership that is diverse both in terms of ethnic origin and religious (sub-)tradition, and their religious aspirations. The third and fourth chapters discuss the social imaginaries available to and constructed by young Norwegian Muslims, and the reconstruction of individual and collective identities through their struggles for recognition with Norwegian majority society. Chapter 5 shows how the ways in which young Norwegian Muslims seek to educate themselves about proper ways of Islamic practice and reasoning changes the forms of authority within the Islamic tradition. While this trend towards 'individualisation' does not simply do away with (all) established forms of authority, it introduces what Jacobsen calls a reflexive element into the adherence of Muslim practitioners to religious authority. Chapter 6 discusses some of the ways through which Jacobsen's interlocutors seek to make themselves into proper Muslims. With strong inspiration especially from Asad and Mahmood, Jacobsen argues that her interlocutors mobilise a repertoire of Islamic social forms as 'techniques of the self', effectively turning mundane everyday practices into *ibadat*, worship. In the concluding chapter Jacobsen discusses whether the 'return to Islam' offers young Norwegian Muslims avenues for achieving both authenticity and autonomy. She notes that the efforts of Muslim practitioners in Europe to regain a more authentic understanding of Islam are often dismissed as a phony 'invention of tradition' in the sense in which Hobsbawm and Ranger have coined the term. Instead, Jacobsen argues following a now well-rehearsed critique of the concept, all traditions contain elements of re-invention, which makes distinguishing between authentic

and inauthentic traditions meaningless. The book ends with Jacobsen adding the weight of her study of young Norwegian Muslims to a growing corpus of literature suggesting that '[t]radition-rooted categories of social and religious identity and authority are [...] not by default impairing of social agency but are often its necessary condition' (p. 387).

While laudable and successful, the close attention to theoretical reflection in Jacobsen's study also exacerbates what may be seen as the study's limitation. What we learn about Norway's variety of secularity remains fairly general, and it is often difficult to see exactly how the Norwegian context shapes Jacobsen's interlocutors. More specific examples, and a more clearly situated analysis, could have added to the analytical value of the study. A closer engagement with the specific possibilities and limitations that define Norwegian secularity would have been particularly welcome. This is connected to a more general methodological issue. Jacobsen's analysis of her interlocutor's statements is always subtle and mostly convincing. At times, however, a more ethnographic approach may have pushed the analysis further by exploring more systematically the performative dynamics and forms of affect within which the discourses she observes emerge and reverberate. This not so much a critique of Jacobsen's very readable and important study, but points to the clear need for theoretically informed ethnographic engagements with the often troubled relationships of European majority societies and their Muslim minorities, not least in the Nordic countries.

HEIKO HENKEL

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Jebens, Holger and Karl-Henz Kohl (eds.). 2011. *The end of anthropology? Wantage* (UK): Sean Kingston Publishing. 254 pp. Hb.: £55.00, \$110.00. ISBN 978-1-907774-05-8.

Anthropology has been feeling a bit apocalyptic recently, engaging in more introspection than usual. This book is part of that. It is a

collection of papers deriving from the 2008 Jensen Memorial Lectures at the Frobenius Institute, in Frankfurt. It begins with an introduction by one of the editors, Kohl, and a description of the general crisis in the discipline and the world by the other, Jebens. The remaining nine chapters are reflections on the nature of the discipline and its future. The authors of those chapters are from Europe and the United States, and their eminence is attested by the named chairs, memberships in national academies and honours that are sprinkled generously among them.

What the volume offers, then, is sustained reflections on the discipline by its senior members. While they do not all agree with each other, their views of the nature of the crisis that leads to talk of the end of anthropology converge. Money is getting scarce, funding agencies increasingly want cross-disciplinary projects, the reverberations of postmodernism continue to unsettle the discipline. No wonder anthropologists are uncertain about their work and their discipline. As well, there is the concern that the sorts of people we study are disappearing. This concern, expressed earlier by Malinowski and Lévi-Strauss, is laid out in surprising ways in Mark Münzel's chapter, on the recurring image of 'the end' in anthropological writing.

For several authors, the core of the discipline is its research technique of sustained participant observation. Patricia Speyer argues that this entails close exposure to the unfamiliar, which makes anthropology especially prone to serendipitous discovery. John Comaroff broadly agrees, as does Signe Howell, though she says that changes in disciplinary fashion and the expectations of funding bodies mean that the sort of openness that it requires is becoming more rare. This close exposure to the unfamiliar is not simply a route to the unexpected. As well, it takes on an existential air, with anthropology as a 'straddling' discipline, as Vincent Crapanzano describes it in his chapter, placed always between Field and Home, with both the tensions and the insights that result.

To celebrate the distinctive nature of fieldwork does not address the question of the

uses to which it is put, the questions that anthropologists ask and the knowledge that they develop. As one might expect of a discipline that values its close, sustained engagement with unfamiliar people, the uses that contributors stress revolve around the differences between the Us of the anthropologist and the Them the anthropologist studies.

The contributors see different ways of approaching that difference, and different benefits in doing so. Adam Kuper urges that we look at Us as well as Them, to challenge Our unthinking stereotypes of unfamiliar societies or cultures (such as, he notes, of Pakistani immigrants in Britain) and instead encourage understandings of how people live their lives and why. Spyer agrees: one valuable result of fieldwork is the ability to reflect on Us in critical ways, the basis of critique that Crapanzano values. Other contributors stress other aspects of anthropological study. For André Gingrich, that study makes anthropology distinctively transnational and transcultural, and he says that the discipline needs to strengthen this transnationality, especially among its practitioners, a sentiment that Crapanzano echoes. For Ulf Hannerz, that transcultural orientation makes us valuable specialists in cultural diversity. Maurice Godelier's position is more purely disciplinary, for he sees anthropology's strength mainly in terms of making sense of unfamiliar lives and forms of social organisation in terms of fairly general models and concepts: if this volume contains a vision of anthropology as a social science, it is Godelier's.

The contributions to this volume are stimulating and, at times, provocative. Reflecting what they were asked to address in the lectures, however, their approach is fairly general and disciplinary. This is useful, but the chapters operate at a level very different from that of the anthropologist developing a plan for field research. Indeed, Hannerz notes this in his chapter, saying that anthropology is and should be concerned with cultural diversity, but that anthropologists do not go out and study it. Instead, they study particular questions and topics in the field. The question

that is unanswered, perhaps inevitably in a volume such as this, is the relationship between general ideals and values and visions of the discipline on the one hand, and on the other how anthropologists decide what to study, how to study it and what knowledge to produce.

JAMES G. CARRIER
Oxford Brookes University (UK)

Jones, Graham M. 2011. *Trade of the tricks: inside the magician's craft*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 308 pp. Pb.: \$26.95, £18.95. ISBN 9780520270466.

This is not a book about sleight-of-hand magic. Having learned magic during his fieldwork, Jones has techniques like palming or misdirection at his fingertips. Yet while other scholarly books focus on the inner workings of those tricks, and the way they exploit the audience's psychology, this one is about the way French prestidigitation artists manage the transmission of their craft. Based on a rather exhaustive dissertation, the book also has chapters on such mandatory topics as gender and power stereotypes (chapter 3) or the story of French 'museums of magic' (chapter 5). The shadow of Robert Houdin looms heavily on both chapters. The father of French magic is said to have put magicians out of the street and on the stage, when he put on the appearance of an elegant, mysterious, slightly superior gentleman of leisure, a cross between the scientist and the con artist. Most attempts at making magic a part of French legitimate culture revolve around his figure. Jones brilliantly explains the success of the Houdin formula as a business model and as a presentation style, but he does not neglect the alternatives or the criticisms. The mould that Houdin cast is both a very successful trademark and a straightjacket for magicians, who either have to be Houdin-like or define themselves against him (through exoticism, humour, or fantasy). This script may or may not be responsible for the quasi-absence of

women and minorities in the profession; at any rate, Jones shows that it puts strict constraints on most performers – among other things, they have to deal with the suspicion of arrogance that clones of Houdin often elicit in today's audiences.

The circulation of magical tricks, the focus of chapters 1, 2 and 4, is the most interesting aspect of the book. On the face of it, magical tricks are 'secret': magicians are not expected to transmit them freely to other professionals, and they should never be disclosed to the public. This was the justification for the fight against *débineurs*, those magicians who spoiled the profession's secret with their performances. Yet what really protects the magicians' craft, according to the author, is not the secrecy: 'In many ways the delicate equilibrium between magician's knowledge and spectator's ignorance is sustained simply by the curiosity of the former and the lethargy of the latter. While many participants profess intense curiosity about magicians' secrets at the moment of performance, few subsequently avail themselves of the Internet, a bookstore, or a library (...). Those who do, may well be on the road to becoming magicians themselves' (p. 79). Thus a crucial norm is routinely violated on the web and elsewhere, to no great harm for the profession. As for the curious minority who wish to know more, Jones shows that they form an important source of income for professionals who animate workshops, sell videos or work in magic stores.

The author, himself one of those skilled amateurs and semi-professionals trained in schools, workshops, bars and boutiques, uses his position to show how the 'trade of the tricks' has come to characterise non-professionals (and earn some professionals a living). Amateurs, as one informer puts it, are those who 'concentrate on the accumulation of tricks. They've always got to be learning new tricks' (p. 168). They relish intricate sleights of hand that only fellow-cognoscenti can truly appreciate – what professionals dub '*magie pour magiciens*' (p. 170). Professionals, on the contrary, must focus on simple but efficient tricks: for many audiences, the difficulty of a

sleight of hand is not what mostly determines the show's potential to elicit wonder. Thus, a double standard of appreciation divides professional magic from *magie pour magiciens*. In the small world of professionals, costumes, music and showmanship matter as much as the rest. There, the norm of 'secrecy' for tricks works as an informal copyright law: an original invention should not be used without at least crediting its author. Interestingly, those informal intellectual property norms also apply to presentation techniques (p. 123): among professionals, the things that the public can see are just as 'secret' as those that must be hidden from view.

One suspects that Graham Jones' work could shed light on many other cases of 'secret' knowledge. This excellent book will be relevant to anyone with an interest in cultural transmission or intellectual property.

OLIVIER MORIN

Central European University (Hungary)

Lebedinsky, Viviana. 2010. *Argentina en sus mitos: del granero del mundo a la nación fabril*. Malvinas Argentinas: Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento. 192 pp. Pb.: \$50. ISBN 978950-793-099-7.

Lebedinsky's book seeks to contribute to the specialised scholarly field of anthropology of knowledge through research on developments in Argentine and Italian industry since the mid-1990s. Rather than a single ethnography, the book comprises diverse material and theoretical approaches connected by a double question: what can anthropology contribute to the study of industrial culture and innovation, and to the understanding of knowledge, technologies and learning processes? These questions are, perhaps, the only guideline for a quite heteroclitic and often too schematic book, whereas Maurice Bloch's 'connectionism' functions as its main conceptual framework. While the author is clearly knowledgeable on the above-mentioned subjects, the book's title is misleading – the tensions between agrarian versus

industrial Argentinian nation-building ‘myths’ are scarcely analysed. Furthermore, there is no comparative approach to encompass the cases under study, and no critical contextual consideration of her fieldwork – e.g. the dramatic Argentine experience of neoliberalism in the 1990s in relation to the industrial sector.

Part I presents a rich overview of the anthropological alternatives to behaviourism. Departing from Tim Ingold’s conceptualisation of ‘skill’ and ‘knowledge’, chapter 1 presents a set of core conceptual themes, such as technique, technology, and scientific, technical and technological knowledge. These concepts are also addressed in chapter 2, mainly through Victor Turner’s symbolic approach to tacit knowledge. Both chapters condense the theoretical aspects of the relation between skill and creativity. This relation is also present in Part II, where the author focuses on her own research. In accordance with her interest in ‘innovation’, chapters 3 and 4 are based on what Lebedinsky claims to be pioneering fieldwork about industrial institutions: a symbolic analysis of UIA (Argentine Industrial Union), and an exploration of innovative *milieux* – industrial families and young entrepreneurs – within CONFINDUSTRIA (Italian General Industry Federation). Departing from the distinction between codified and tacit knowledge, she examines UIA’s myths and rituals – albeit without a critical treatment of these concepts – through the serial symbolic processing model. In turn, COFINDUSTRIA’s case is observed through the parallel distributed processing model. Chapter 5 retrieves both cases, deepening the examination of Bloch’s connectionism as an alternative mode of thinking.

Part III revolves around the author’s most recent research in Tenaris-Siderca’s Centre for Industrial Research. Using highly specialised terminology, she examines the so-called interactive dimensions of knowledge within the ‘culture’ of this global company that belongs to Techint Group. While chapter 6 presents the case through a series of ‘core competences’, chapter 7 enriches the empirical material by analysing a certain qualitative change in knowl-

edge: from ‘trouble shooting’ to ‘know-how’ and ‘know-why’. Finally, Roy D’Andrade’s conceptualisations of ‘problem solving’ and ‘abstraction’ are used to draw conclusions and summarise the author’s considerations about the relationship between knowledge and innovation.

The book is far from being an easy read; arguments are sometimes too elliptical and/or detached from political considerations in respect to the examined cases. One cannot avoid noticing some intriguing gaps within several core conceptual areas. For instance, when arguing about alternate versions of UIA’s myths, there is no mention of Edmund Leach’s classical work on Burma, where he proposed seeing acts in a continuum with different proportions of ritualistic and technical aspects. On the other hand, despite the author’s choice of highlighting Turner’s affiliation within Mancunian anthropology, she ignores the fact that one of Gluckman’s major influences was Isaac Schapera, who worked extensively on creation and innovation. Nevertheless, the book can be viewed as a series of questions or invitations to think about current anthropology. First, innovation and creation are not just obsessions of global industrial corporations but represent challenging research topics, as does the intersection between cognitive and symbolic anthropology. Secondly, we are facing a sort of mirror-reminder of Ingold’s (2008) thesis that anthropology and ethnography are endeavours of different kinds. Not only because this work seems to be nomothetically rather than ideographically oriented, but for indirectly compelling us to bear in mind – according to Ingold – that anthropology is an ‘inquisitive mode of inhabiting the world characterised by a comparative attitude’ (2008: 87). And thirdly, the main themes of the book are important to our reflection on the contemporary world. Industry, knowledge and innovation are entangled within the ‘schism(s) and continuities’ of contemporary capitalism and its crises, their various localised impacts and the ways in which people manage to develop creative solutions. Faced with these challenges, anthropological imagination is crucially placed to

contribute to these exciting topics, providing its own trademark of critical engagement.

References

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JULIETA GAZTAÑAGA

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Oxford, Ellen. 2010. *Drink water, but remember the source: moral discourse in a Chinese village*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 312 pp. Pb.: \$24.95, £16.95. ISBN 978-0-52026-095-5.

In October 2011, the tragic story of Yueyue, a 2-year-old girl who was run over twice by a van only to be ignored by no less than 18 passersby, made headline news around the world, as did the so-called 'milk powder scandal' a few years earlier, which culminated in the execution of two businessmen for their part in selling and distributing melamine-tainted milk powder that resulted in the deaths of at least six children and the harming of thousands more. These and similar episodes have led many to question whether the rise of global capitalism and consumerism has led to a 'moral crisis' or indeed 'moral vacuum' in China.

In *Drink water, but remember the source*, Ellen Oxford productively uses this diagnosis of China's collective conscience as a backdrop against which to probe and analyse the 'vibrant moral discourse' (p. 6) she found in a rural Chinese village. Indeed, *Drink water* is Oxford's insightful call to arms as she protests that 'the study of moral systems is undeveloped in anthropology as opposed to the examination of other domains of culture' (p. 225). How then does Oxford find moral discourse in an apparent 'moral vacuum'? By changing both scale and optics: it is one thing to diagnose an entire nation's moral state, and another to explore moral discourse in a rural Chinese village. Moreover, if we embrace Caroline Humphrey's definition of morality, as Oxford does, as 'the evaluation of conduct

in relation to esteemed or despised human qualities' (p. 26), then public outcries and diagnoses of national moral crises can be seen as confirmations rather than negations of moral codes.

Oxford chooses a number of areas of social life as a way to organise the different 'schemas' of conduct evaluation that she has identified in her ethnographic data derived from numerous visits to and extended stays in the village of Moonshadow Pond in Meixian, Guangdong province over a period of more than a decade. Schemas are 'tools of thought', and Oxford suggests that it is through multiple and often contending schemas that moral judgements are made during the course of village life. The book's main chapters of analysis concern moral judgements – evaluations of conduct – in Moonshadow Pond in the context of ritual (weddings and funerals), return visits by emigrants, property disputes, money and family relations.

For Oxford, it is the notion of *liangxin* rather than *guanxi*, *mianzi* or *bao* that is most helpful for understanding moral discourse in Moonshadow Pond. *Liangxin* is often translated as 'conscience', yet it is more than this since it 'contains within it *both* that inner voice *and* the actions it should prompt' (p. 53, my emphasis). To be described as being 'without *liangxin*' will most often refer to a particular situation of conduct as it relates to past situations of conduct (hence the title of the book). And weddings, funerals or return visits by emigrants are occasions where such 'remembering' becomes ethnographically discernible when scorn or praise is directed at certain individuals for how their actions relate to already existing circuits of obligation, reciprocity and indebtedness. Evaluating conduct in terms of *liangxin* is essentially 'maritime' in the sense that it positions both laterally and longitudinally, and Oxford provides us with numerous ethnographic examples, from the story of Skinny Hong who was freed from a labour camp only to forget those who had helped him, to the cases of Slippery Cheng who was accused of selling collective land without compensating other team members, and Sneaky Tao, who wanted a share of profits

from revenue generated from a rice husking machine stored in his shed.

In developing the notion of 'schemas' for understanding the ways in which fellow villagers' as well as returnees' conduct is evaluated in Moonshadow Pond, Oxfeld's monograph is a productive contribution to the theorising of social navigation. Oxfeld is careful to underline that in mapping out schemas of conduct evaluation she is not taking sides, rather she is attempting to identify logics and codes. And so, in a sense, Oxfeld's analysis is about 'taking gossip seriously', not for the sake of hearsay or drama, but rather because dissecting personal disputes and controversies in Moonshadow Pond (or any other setting) can help us understand the ways in which relations and actions are co-dependent. We are, nevertheless, left wondering how an analysis of moral 'schemas' might be carried out in one of China's many exploding mega-cities.

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Pellegrino, Giuseppina (ed.) 2011. *The politics of proximity: mobility and immobility in practice*. Farnham, Surrey/Burlington, VT: Ashgate. i–xvii + 178 pp. Hb.: £50.00. ISBN 9780754677666.

This edited volume offers an interesting and diverse collection of papers that share an interest in the processes and practices of spatial mobility and immobility, studied through a politics of proximity. The collection builds on the work of John Urry and others, following the 'spatial turn' in the social sciences, and in recognition of the inappropriateness of the epistemological primacy hitherto attributed to sedentariness, physical proximity and stability in a world that is rapidly changing, connecting in a multitude of ways, and on the move. The book contains a foreword by Urry, and an introductory section and conceptual framework by Giuseppina Pellegrino. It is then structured according to three conceptual axes: part I frames the categories of proximity/mobility within larger debates, part II discusses issues of discourse and identity in

proximity and mobility, and part III highlights two differing contexts from which to analyse proximity and mobility.

In the introduction, Pellegrino states that mobility is a powerful and encompassing concept able to frame the intersections, overlaps and relations between globality and locality, and fostering both a powerful discourse in multiple settings and a renewed perspective for examining socio-political transformations in the present-day. Pellegrino proposes the following hypotheses for understanding contemporary mobility: politics establishes patterns of proximity in real and virtual co-presence; mobility has an irreducibly relational character, which can always and only be understood in function of its oppositional constituency, i.e. immobility; and the concept of practice, mediated by sociotechnical processes, is central in the shaping and situating of relationships between proximity, mobility and immobility. The book's remit is to analyse patterns of mobility in relation with new possibilities to organise space, time and proximity to others.

Part I Categories of Proximity/Mobility begins with a chapter by Maria Cristina Marchetti, who frames the categories of space, time and place in the wider sociological debate. Marchetti begins by stating that classical sociology unified the two prevailing notions of space (physical and social) but that two opposing viewpoints – that shared physical spaces do not entail a social space, and that an unshared physical space does not entail the lack of social space – have challenged this conflation. Drawing on Manuel Castells' 'space of flows' and Urry's 'new mobilities paradigm', Marchetti shows how space has become 'dematerialised' in contemporary societies, and argues that as a result the space of culture is now re-emerging. In chapter 2, Kjell Engelbrekt connects Urry's *Mobilities* with the terminology of the 'lifelworld' phenomenology of Alfred Schutz and Thomas Luckmann, allowing him to critique several weaknesses in Urry's thesis. Chapter 3 by Carmelo Buscema interprets and defines the concepts of mobility and proximity with reference to Karl Marx's 'socialisation of work', Carl Schmitt's 'land and sea', and Michel Foucault's 'bio-power' theorisation.

This is perhaps the densest chapter in the book; however, the message of emancipation it puts forth with reference to migrants and indigenes is worthy and necessary.

The second part of the book, *Discourse/identity on proximity and mobility* contains two very different chapters; the first by Chaim Noy presents two related illustrations of textual mobilities within the automobility system of Israel. This fascinating account of what one would at first consider mundane topics – of roadside death monuments to the victims of car accidents, and automobile bumper stickers – highlights the linkages of discourse and mobility. Chapter 5 by Eva Gerharz discusses the mobility and immobility of Sri Lankan Tamils affected by the civil war. Gerharz critically explores the usefulness of the notion of ‘belonging’ in understanding the ambivalence and complexity of diaspora–local relationships.

The third and final part to the book, *Global Firms/Urban Landscapes as Scenery for Proximity and Mobility*, contains three chapters. Chapter 6 investigates the mobility of social groups possessing large amounts of economic and cultural resources; the study of which its author Laura Gherardi claims is rare, because the majority of analyses focus on people/migrants transferring out of necessity. Her analysis reveals the ambiguous nature and dark side of the mobility required by top managers. Matteo Colleoni presents in chapter 7 some of the findings of a comparative study of urban mobility, accessibility and social equity in four European metropolitan areas, with the predictable result that lower income families have fewer, older cars, and less means to reach city centres. The macro-level approach seems unable to grasp and reveal personal experiences; restricting the case study to one city may have been ampler, and more illuminating for the reader. The final chapter by Paola Jirón reveals the consequences of restricted urban accessibility through a study of mobility practices in Santiago de Chile. The detailed literature review and ethnographic case studies make stark the need for the development of transport systems integrated within broader social policies.

The politics of proximity is impressive as editorial work, and will interest those working with the concept of mobility more broadly. The only shortcomings are a few cited references missing in several of the chapters, and the book’s abrupt ending; as an edited volume it would have benefited more from having a concluding chapter that brings the contributors’ arguments together.

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Smith, Alexander. 2011. *Devolution and the Scottish Conservatives. Banal activism, electioneering and the politics of irrelevance*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 158 pp. Hb: \$95. ISBN 978-0-7190-7969-6.

Smith’s book is an anthropological study of the Scottish Conservatives in Dumfries and Galloway in South West Scotland – an area in which the Conservatives had been electorally popular before the party’s great electoral wipe-out of 1997. This defeat was compounded by the onset of Scottish devolution from 1997 to 1999 and the creation of a Scottish Parliament that Conservatives had actively opposed. The book follows the Conservatives through the 2003 Scottish and local elections to examine the manner in which local activists employ a set of ‘knowledge practices’ and immerse themselves in banal organisational activities in preparation for the elections.

The geographical area chosen is politically interesting because it is an area of traditional Conservative political dominance that was breached by the Scottish National Party from 1974 to 1979 and 1997 to 2003, and by Labour from 1997 until the present day. Such political challenges were accompanied by major boundary changes to the constituencies in the area, which altered the political framework of the area – changing the rules of the game – as well as leading to disputes over community and identity (these are the subject of chapter 3). The area of study can be taken as emblematic of Conservative decline in Scotland more generally since the 1980s and part of a broader

story of political and social change that has undermined the party's political relevance in Scotland.

The book involves an in-depth study of local Conservatives in both individual and organisational form as the party sought to recover from serious electoral defeats through stressing its local connections and authenticity, using a series of traditional communications and campaign devices to assert its political relevance and connect to voters in the area. And, what is striking about this activity is its banal nature – meaning a focus on traditional organisational functions within the party rather than with broader political messages and ideas. There seems to be a set Conservative way of 'doing' elections and it is laid bare in Smith's book in considerable detail.

Two points are worth making about the depiction of banal activism in the book. First, there is the perception that local Conservatives can only respond to their political crisis through banal organisational activities because they cannot control or reform their political brand in terms of its policy content and ideology. Party members are left to look inwards in the hope that campaigning efforts can overcome electoral unpopularity. As the author acknowledges in the afterword, this situation has not changed markedly at the time of the 2010 UK general election and it has seldom improved since then at the Scottish election of 2011 and Scottish local elections of 2012, despite party reforms and a new Scottish leader. Political crisis and irrelevance remain important problems for the party north of the border.

Second, there is much that will be recognisable here to anyone who has ever been active in election campaigns – meaning lots of organisational and canvassing techniques to mobilise supporters and deliver the vote on election day. And, in close contests on low electoral turnouts, local campaigning matters: something that the political science literature has observed for some time. For non-activists this is a bit of a 'hidden world' of practices and processes found across political organisations and this study brings much of it to light in great detail – not least in relation to the beliefs and

assumptions of local activists at different levels of a political party that shape political activity and success.

In opening up these various campaign activities to outsiders, Smith's work demonstrates the continued importance of social class in Scottish politics, and we should assume more widely in British politics generally. The discussion of a training session on canvassing (pp. 92–3) illustrated the political and class assumptions of local party activists – who assumed that their voters lived solely in large houses and owned Mercedes. Some party activists seemed comfortable in seeking to attract the electoral support of the 'County set' rather than reaching out to a wider range of potential supporters – in direct contradiction of the levels of social change that had occurred across Scotland since the 1970s. Some of this helps explain the problems the Conservatives face in Scotland, some of which are self-inflicted.

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Trevisani, Tommaso. 2011. *Land and power in Khorezm: farmers, communities and the state in Uzbekistan's decollectivisation process*. Berlin: LIT Verlag. 280 pp. €29.90. ISBN 978-3-643-90098-2.

Tommaso Trevisani, author of the monograph *Land and power in Khorezm*, comes from a new generation of scholars of post-Soviet societies departing from the legacy of traditional Sovietology with its study of state socialism and its successor states through the prism of a bi-polar world and of these states' imminent and linear transition into Western models of market economy and democracy. Unlike Sovietologists, who were primarily Russian speakers, these newcomers come better equipped in vernacular languages, and, following the end of the 'iron curtain', have conducted more extensive fieldwork in the periphery of the former Soviet empire. This new generation seems also more open to embracing the complexities of both the Soviet past and the present situation in a critical manner.

In this book, Trevisani describes Uzbekistan's system of governance and state policies in the agro-sector, focusing on the far western Khorezm region. He examines the history of Khorezm's rural community and its complex relationships with the state from the late Soviet era to the present, as well as a broad range of related issues, including historical patterns of rural settlement, family life, gender relations, elites and land tenure. Based on extensive fieldwork in Khorezm, which is quite rare considering increasingly self-isolating Uzbekistan, his research makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the transformation of agrarian society in post-Soviet Uzbekistan.

Trevisani's project developed within the broader ZEF/UNESCO Khorezm project funded by the German Ministry for Education and Research and led by Bonn University, which provided him with a licence to pursue his own academic agenda, addressing both the formal and informal aspects of Uzbekistan's agricultural policies. However, Trevisani's observations and findings are at odds with those of the project's core staff collective monograph *Continuity and change: land and water use reforms in rural Uzbekistan* (Wehrheim et al. 2008), which relied heavily on quantitative analysis of uncritically accepted official state statistics. In his book, Trevisani dedicated a whole chapter to the unreliability of official statistics on agricultural production in Uzbekistan, as an outcome of the greater command economy that persists in Uzbekistan's agricultural sector since the Soviet period. His central thesis is that decollectivisation 'did not disrupt the command hierarchy of [agricultural] production but merely reshaped it' (p. 123). Decollectivisation was accomplished in Uzbekistan, he writes, 'not by true privatisation of land but by *de-shirkatisation* (disbanding of the *shirkats*, or collective farms) and "*fermerisation*" (reorganisation of the old production units into newly established individual enterprises)' (p. 123). As a consequence, the new class of private farmers remained bounded by compulsory production quotas and constrained by the top-down state procurement prices for outputs, particularly in the cotton

industry, which has subsumed most of the arable land. The power of the former *kolleboz* bosses was not transferred to private farmers but assumed by district *bokims* (governors) and MTS, the machine-tractor stations that retained a monopoly over the use of tractors, one of most expensive inputs for agricultural production. By using a range of administrative and economic levers, the government and local elites continued to exert total control over private farmers, their land tenure, production and welfare.

The essential feature of Uzbekistan's command economy is its predisposition to bureaucratic tyranny that is, in turn, fertile breeding ground for corruption. In his fieldwork, Trevisani recorded accounts of mismanagement and abuses of power by the local administration in the distribution of land, the best of which was acquired by former *kolleboz* bosses, members of the local administration and their relatives. This process of redistribution of land and other profitable resources has revived the client-patronage system that has existed since Soviet times. This system, in turn, is being transformed into a new class society with deepened social stratification but without even those safeguards of the Soviet era that protected the rights of ordinary agricultural workers.

Trevisani's rare and insightful combination of anthropological as well as political and economic analysis will certainly challenge those who fail to see through the so-called reforms in contemporary Uzbekistan that are subjecting rural communities to patriarchal revivalism and class division.

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Jenkins, Richard. 2011. *Being Danish: Paradoxes of Identity in Everyday Life*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, University of Copenhagen. 355 pp. Pb.: £36.10. ISBN: 9788763526036.

Dans son dernier ouvrage, Richard Jenkins, professeur de sociologie à l'Université de Sheffield, nous offre le compte rendu particulièrement réussi d'une enquête de terrain ethnographique réalisée entre 1996 et 1998 dans la petite ville danoise de Skive et actualisée lors de séjours dans la région entre 2008 et 2009. Jenkins réalise ici un texte particulièrement abouti en ce qu'il offre un exemple concret de mise en application de son approche anthropologique de deux de ses thèmes de prédilection: l'ethnicité et l'identité. Les objectifs de Jenkins sont clairement et rapidement explicités: il s'agit de penser la manière dont les « identifications ethniques » sont vécues au quotidien par des individus, mais aussi produites et reproduites par différentes pratiques et institutions et soumises aux changements sociaux. « Que signifie 'être danois-e' (*being Danish*) aujourd'hui? » serait ainsi une question résumant l'objet de l'ouvrage.

Si Jenkins commence par présenter son cadre théorique (chapitre 1) – qui s'inscrit dans une perspective similaire à celle présentée dans son ouvrage *Rethinking Ethnicity* (2008) – ainsi que sa méthodologie et le lieu de sa recherche (chapitre 2), il propose, dans les chapitres suivants (3, 4, 5), une réflexion approfondie sur le caractère spatial du processus d'identification en s'intéressant aux différentes échelles de ce dernier: le local et le régional, le national et l'international. Jenkins appuie cette discussion des rapports entre identification et spatialité par l'étude de deux aspects plus ou moins importants du quotidien des Danois-es: les usages et les représentations du drapeau national ainsi que la place de la monarchie dans le Danemark démocratique contemporain (chapitre 6). Ce qu'il en dit mérite d'être souligné: s'il montre que ces deux aspects peuvent être considérés comme des symboles nationalistes non négligeables pour plusieurs raisons, il insiste sur le fait que leur force réside moins dans un symbolisme rigide et

atemporel que dans la pluralité des usages et des interprétations qui peuvent en être faits; soit de leur inscription aussi bien dans les domaines du « profane » et de l'ordinaire que dans ceux du « sacré » et de l'extraordinaire.

Jenkins porte aussi une attention toute particulière au système éducatif danois pour approcher un des modes de production et de reproduction de l'identification ethnique (chapitres 8, 9, 10), ainsi qu'à la question de l'immigration et de la manière dont elle est perçue par différents acteurs (chapitre 11).

En guise de conclusion et en se référant explicitement aux diverses stratégies d'accueil et d'intégration des populations étrangères (notamment dans le système scolaire), Jenkins propose enfin une réflexion sur ce que peut signifier « être danois-e » au 21^{ème} siècle et comment cet « être danois-e » est constamment inscrit dans un processus de réadaptation contextuelle et de transformation (chapitre 12). Une longue observation de plus de quinze années apporte ici une profondeur toute particulière à ses réflexions sur la question du changement social que Jenkins considère, avec la thématique des relations qui lient les individus à leur(s) collectivité(s), comme l'un des apports théoriques principaux de son ouvrage (p. 2).

Jenkins insiste en effet sur l'importance de considérer l'« identité » comme n'étant jamais fixée une fois pour toutes et comme intrinsèquement dépendante de son contexte géographique et historique d'inscription (le fait qu'il préfère ainsi l'usage de la notion d'« identification » à celle d'« identité » en est, me semble-t-il, une marque tout à fait parlante de par le caractère processuel qu'elle induit). C'est aussi ce à quoi il fait référence lorsqu'il parle des « paradoxes de l'identité »: « It is not an unchanging and homogeneous historical legacy that has been passed down from the forefathers of the nation. » (p. 295) « *Being Danish* » n'est ainsi pas une réalité homogène, mais multiple, hétérogène et complexe.

Je ne peux finalement que recommander la lecture de cet ouvrage à toute personne intéressée par les questions d'ethnicité, d'identité et de nationalisme. Jenkins prend en effet remarquablement acte des différentes

évolutions dans les approches de l'un des objets d'étude anthropologiques les plus anciens et les plus discutés. D'ailleurs, son écriture ne le dessert pas dans cette tâche: sans toutefois faire manque de rigueur, Jenkins écrit simplement et fait preuve de beaucoup d'humour facilitant la lecture d'un ouvrage riche en propositions théoriques: il réussit ainsi parfois à nous donner l'impression d'être installé à ses côtés, à la table d'un *pub* de Skive, en pleine discussion sur ce que signifie « être danois-e ».

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Jindra, Michael and Joël Noret, eds. 2011. *Funerals in Africa. Explorations of a Social Phenomenon*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books. 232 pp. Hb.: \$78.69, ISBN 978-0-857-452-054.

L'ouvrage édité par Michael Jindra et Joël Noret présente un certain nombre d'études qui prennent les funérailles comme objet pour montrer les changements que connaissent les rites familiaux dans des contextes économiques et religieux globalisés et complexifiés. Les funérailles concernent la mort tout en étant une manifestation de la réalité ultime et de l'ultime sens de la vie, même s'ils ont à faire avec les détails les plus concrets et les plus évanescents de l'ici maintenant. Les funérailles transcendent les modes tout en y adhérant. Tous les articles sont écrits par de jeunes anthropologues et historiens mais leur travail est en continuité avec les études faites depuis un siècle et l'hypothèse qui définit les funérailles comme rite de passage. L'approche ethnographique herméneutique rappelle celle de C. Geertz. Contre une position qui identifie des institutions pérennes ou des cultures réifiées, elle montre le rôle de la contingence, des changements constants qui interviennent à chaque moment du rituel des funérailles.

Aujourd'hui, les funérailles restent un événement culturel parmi les plus importants et les plus onéreux. Mais si les acteurs en dénoncent les dépenses à la charge des familles, la pratique ne diminue pas tout en subissant des changements de forme et de signification. Le premier changement est lié au développement de nouvelles hiérarchies coloniales et postcoloniales. Aussi les enterrements ne sont-ils plus, selon les analyses classiques durkheimiennes, des moments où se reconstitue la cohésion sociale face à la mort, mais des temps de réorganisation des positions familiales dans les configurations sociales. Le second changement concerne la croyance religieuse transformée par la christianisation ou l'islamisation des populations, l'urbanisation, l'évolution technologique et la pandémie du sida.

Les auteurs critiquent aussi le point de vue qui soumet l'analyse des rites mortuaires à la théorie de la domination: à travers la régénération des pouvoirs, ils auraient pour fonction essentielle de réaffirmer l'ordre social.

Au contraire, dans les sociétés étudiées dans ce volume, les différents processus de ritualisation de la « régénération de la vie » apparaissent comme fragmentaires, contestés, négociés entre différents groupes sociaux et religieux. Si en Afrique, les événements qui entourent la mort concernent l'ensemble du champ social, ils ne doivent pas être considérés comme reflétant l'image de la tradition.

Il ne faut pas avoir une image traditionnelle et unilatérale de l'Afrique et de son rapport à la mort. Il ne faut pas non plus focaliser sur l'enterrement des élites. C'est ainsi que l'intérêt pour le changement social, la conception des sociétés dans leur dynamisme menée par l'école de Manchester, par Balandier et l'école marxiste, essentiellement française, a donné naissance à une nouvelle littérature liant les funérailles au changement social.

Le premier texte, *A Decent Death*, écrit par Terence Ranger rompt avec l'opposition d'une Afrique rurale traditionnelle et d'une Afrique urbaine caractérisée par l'anomie et incapable d'inventer de nouvelles formes culturelles. Les différentes gestions politiques de la mort pratiquées, sous la période coloniale, par les habitants de la ville noire de Bulawayo

au Zimbabwe – qui ont varié en fonction des différentes modalités de christianisation et de réinvention des traditions – témoignent autant de la résistance contre le contrôle de la municipalité blanche que des conflits internes, sociaux, religieux et politiques s'exprimant à travers des choix culturels. La pratique du *umbuyiso*, cérémonie qui se déroule un an après la mort et réunit l'ensemble de la famille et du voisinage, permet de comprendre les différentes versions chrétiennes des funérailles traditionnelles, leurs variantes ethniques et le développement des associations d'entraide qui permettent de prendre en charge les dépenses.

Le chapitre « *Decomposing Pollution?* » écrit par Mak Lamont continue sur le thème du changement, concernant cette fois la conception de la mort comme pollution chez les Meru, une population au Kenya. Ils durent se soumettre, dans les années 1930, à l'obligation dictée par l'administration coloniale d'enterrer leur mort qu'ils abandonnaient aux charognards. Leur rapport à la pollution fut alors retravaillé par leur adoption de la pratique de l'enterrement, par la christianisation et la réforme foncière qui fit des pierres tombales des marque de propriété. L'auteur insiste, cependant, sur le fait que le problème de la pollution continue à concerner les Meru à travers la conception des mauvaises morts.

Le déclin de la pollution liée à la mort et la généralisation des enterrements font également l'objet du questionnement de Michael Jindra. Son texte montre la dynamique culturelle qui a conduit à démultiplier les façons de célébrer la mort au Cameroun. Les changements sociaux et religieux – notamment la conception de l'au-delà – sont intervenus dans le déclin de la peur qui entoure la mort. Ils ont permis un accès plus grand à des cérémonies funéraires, réservées au début du XX^e siècle à une élite. Aujourd'hui, elles combinent plusieurs pratiques, celles des traditions chrétiennes et du culte des ancêtres, les pratiques rituelles et festives, religieuses et séculières. Ces nouvelles formes de cérémonies peuvent être mises en relation avec un certain nombre de changements, comme la sécularisation et la pluralisation des sources de l'autorité, le déclin des hiérarchies

traditionnelles et l'émergence de nouvelles classes riches, mais sans que l'on puisse les réduire à des conceptions instrumentales.

La question du syncrétisme qui traverse l'ensemble des chapitres, est centrale dans l'étude de terrain conduit au Bénin sur le mouvement prophétique de l'Eglise céleste du Christ par Joël Noret.

Partant du constat que la société du Sud Bénin présente une grande différenciation sociale, l'auteur montre comment cette dernière ne remet pas en cause les liens entre les mondes sociaux et religieux mais rend l'engagement social qui se manifeste, en particulier dans les funérailles plus ambigu et contradictoire. La multiplication des différents réseaux dans lesquels les acteurs sociaux sont investis se fait dans un contexte où s'affirme la priorité des identités et des affiliations religieuses. Les différents groupes impliqués dans le « scénario » de l'enterrement, tout en manifestant une forme d'entente, pour préserver les valeurs de la famille, peuvent entrer en conflit au sujet de l'exclusion des rites lignagers par l'Eglise céleste. Cependant le pragmatisme de chaque parti aboutit généralement à un compromis.

En effet l'Eglise céleste, tout en tentant de rompre radicalement avec les rituels traditionnels auxquels la population est attachée, incorpore consciemment ou non dans son système de célébration du rite mortuaire certains principes de la tradition, comme celui de l'appel de l'esprit du défunt dans le catafalque afin de lui assurer une solide position dans l'autre vie. De leur côté, les pratiquants n'ont pas tous été socialisés dans la doctrine céleste et leur rapport aux personnes défuntées ressort davantage d'un bricolage de matériaux symboliques: ils sont parfois considérés comme des intercesseurs, selon le modèle du recours aux ancêtres, le modèle de la rédemption et du salut étant également présents comme emprunt aux églises missionnaires. Les cérémonies mortuaires orchestrées par l'église céleste illustrent, mieux, peut-être que d'autres services liturgiques, le syncrétisme qui participe d'un travail de recomposition des catégories et de la transformation des modes de pensée.

L'ouvrage montre, à travers des études singulières dont ce compte-rendu ne donne qu'un aperçu, la transformation complexe des rites funéraires en Afrique. Ils acquièrent des significations multiples, bien que la tendance principale soit le passage d'un rituel de communication avec la personne défunte à un rituel de commémoration. Ce passage s'opère à travers des changements religieux, sociaux, économiques et technologiques, les dynamiques locales et familiales continuant, néanmoins, à jouer un rôle important.

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Nyíri, Pál. 2010. *Mobility and Cultural Authority in Contemporary China*. Washington: The University of Washington Press. 224 pp. Pb:\$25.00 ISBN: 9780295990163.

Dans le prolongement de ses travaux consacrés aux migrants chinois en Europe et, plus récemment, au tourisme en Chine, Pál Nyíri examine les corrélations entre la « mobilité » dans ses diverses formes et ce qu'il appelle l'« autorité culturelle ». Il entend par là les efforts déployés par l'Etat chinois pour maintenir le contrôle sur sa population dans le contexte des réformes menées depuis 1978. La formation d'un « sujet moderne » est partie prenante des politiques visant à développer l'économie de marché et à former une classe moyenne de consommateurs. La mobilité est un des attributs de la figure de l'individu entrepreneurial et civilisé que promeut le discours officiel à travers les média, les arts, l'éducation et les espaces publics.

Ce livre explore la manière dont l'autorité culturelle s'applique aux Chinois mobiles et les défis auxquels elle se heurte. L'auteur émet deux propositions. La première est que la mobilité, dans ses diverses formes, joue un rôle important dans le discours dominant sur la modernisation chinoise, et cela pour trois raisons: parce qu'elle est perçue comme favorisant la croissance économique; parce qu'elle est vue comme une caractéristique des sociétés modernes; et parce qu'elle est associée à l'objectif de modernisation des zones rurales

et de « civilisation » de sa population. La figure du migrant apparaît centrale en ce que le migrant contribue directement à la modernisation mais se modernise également lui-même. La seconde proposition a trait aux efforts déployés par l'Etat pour contenir le potentiel subversif de la mobilité accrue de ses citoyens. S'il s'est montré particulièrement efficace jusqu'à présent, c'est en raison de l'usage qu'il fait d'instruments tangibles tels que le système d'enregistrement de la résidence et l'intervention directe dans les projets touristiques. Mais c'est aussi grâce au recours à des outils de diffusion, de contrôle et de maintien de représentations hégémoniques.

Les trois premiers chapitres retracent de manière détaillée l'essor des migrations des campagnes vers les villes et la réforme partielle du système d'enregistrement de la résidence, l'accroissement des migrations vers l'étranger d'étudiants, d'entrepreneurs et de travailleurs sous contrat, et le développement du tourisme, par l'instauration de trois semaines de congés et la multiplication des « sites scéniques ». Les chapitres suivants examinent le changement de discours intervenu dans les années 2000 à propos des migrants de l'intérieur, les instruments mis en place pour maintenir le contrôle sur les migrants outre-mer, et l'encadrement étatique de ce qui est mis en scène dans les sites touristiques mais aussi de l'expérience touristique elle-même.

La qualité principale de ce livre tient à sa richesse empirique. L'auteur s'appuie sur un corpus documentaire impressionnant couvrant la Chine dans sa diversité régionale et les pays d'accueil des migrants outre-mer: articles de presse, feuillets, films, publications officielles, écrits de chercheurs chinois, rapports d'ONG telle Human Rights Watch, comptes rendus ethnographiques, extraits d'entretiens. La répartition de ces matériaux entre les chapitres donne par endroits lieu à des redondances, et leur succession rapide à l'intérieur des chapitres produit un effet cumulatif qui peut faire regretter au lecteur l'absence « d'arrêt sur image » sous forme d'analyse plus approfondie de quelques situations locales.

Pál Nyíri ne commente pas les limites auxquelles peut se heurter son parti-pris d'un

traitement conjoint de toutes les formes de « mobilité » – migrations internes, externes, et tourisme. Les analogies qu'il met en lumière emportent toutefois la conviction. Il montre ainsi comment la valorisation de la figure du « nouveau migrant » (*xin yimin*), patriote et loyal, est transversale aux migrations externes et aux populations déplacées au nom de projets de développement. L'édiction de règles de comportement censées « augmenter la qualité civilisationnelle » des migrants issus des campagnes (*nongmingong*) ou des touristes relèvent du même discours sur la « civilisation spirituelle ».

Pál Nyíri offre une discussion détaillée et nuancée des ambiguïtés du discours étatique chinois, pointant les hiatus entre la valorisation de la mobilité au nom des qualités civilisatrices dont elle serait porteuse et sa perception comme une menace potentielle à l'ordre social. Il souligne ainsi que le régime chinois, sans renoncer au contrôle de sa population, partage avec les démocraties occidentales une politique de « mobilisation sélective ».

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Tilton, Jennifer. 2010. *Dangerous or Endangered? Race and the Politics of Youth in Urban America*. New York and London: New York University Press. 296pp. ISBN: 978-0-8147-8312-2.

Comment l'adolescence est-elle construite alternativement comme dangereuse et comme en danger? Jennifer Tilton aborde cette question à travers une enquête ethnographique dans la ville californienne d'Oakland, réputée pour sa diversité ethnique. Ce travail est structuré autour d'une préoccupation centrale: décrire la politique de la jeunesse pour objectiver l'action de l'Etat dans la société américaine contemporaine. Dans cette société, marquée d'une part par le néolibéralisme et son impact urbain, et d'autre part par la postérité du mouvement des droits civils, le sens de la justice repose sur la conviction d'une égalité des chances (*equal opportunities*) pour tous les enfants. Le statut intrinsèquement ambigu de

l'adolescence (*youth*), entre l'enfance et l'âge adulte, sert ici de révélateur à des questions structurales telles que la reproduction sociale des inégalités de classe et de race, l'articulation de l'espace privé et de l'espace public ou encore la répartition des logiques protectionnelles et disciplinaires dans l'action sociale.

L'organisation de cette enquête auprès des acteurs institutionnels et associatifs de la jeunesse suit une partition socioéconomique qui se superpose de manière quasi-métaphorique à la structure géographique de la ville. Tilton explore successivement un quartier populaire à majorité noire et hispanique (*Flatlands*), un quartier ethniquement mixte de la classe moyenne (*Lower hills*) et une zone résidentielle aisée à majorité blanche (*High hills*). Dans le premier de ces espaces, elle observe les effets du désengagement de l'Etat. Le transfert de la gouvernance des institutions publiques vers les collectivités locales (*community-based governance*) qui en résulte renforce la perception d'une discipline nécessaire pour la jeunesse noire. Soutenue par une rhétorique passéiste et rurale (dans laquelle on parle du quartier comme d'un village), l'Etat, et en tout premier lieu la police, sont investis par les acteurs locaux d'un rôle paternel et disciplinaire pour les jeunes garçons noirs. Ce faisant, les relations entre la police et ses usagers sont reformulées en termes générationnelles (entre l'autorité des adultes et une jeunesse turbulente par nature) qui entretiennent une naturalisation des inégalités de classes et réduisent l'espace d'une action politique citoyenne en renvoyant la jeunesse dans la sphère privée (de la défaillance des familles). Alors qu'elle entend protéger la jeunesse d'une criminalisation excessive, cette demande d'une présence policière renforcée, associée aux évolutions juridiques vers une homogénéisation du traitement pénal des mineurs avec celui des majeurs, accroît considérablement le recours à l'incarcération, en passe de devenir une étape presque incontournable vers l'âge adulte pour les jeunes hommes noirs et pauvres. Dans les Lower hills, Tilton décrit les efforts fournis par les parents d'élèves pour palier ce même désinvestissement de l'Etat dans le système scolaire, tant dans l'allocation des moyens d'enseignement que

dans l'organisation du temps périscolaire. Souvent vain face aux inégalités structurelles du système scolaire, cet engagement de la sphère privée chez les acteurs des classes moyennes contraste avec le retrait de la sphère publique observé dans les quartiers les plus aisés des High hills. Les tensions liées à la mixité sociale des espaces scolaires y sont traitées par le prisme des défaillances individuelles ou par celui des différences de « culture » fortement essentialisées entre quartiers. Ce mode de traitement produit une forme de « racisme sans racistes » dans les classes blanches aisées, dont la déviance juvénile est, par ailleurs, de plus en plus médicalisée, au sein d'établissements sanitaires privés, et de plus en plus extraite du système judiciaire. Dans les observations de Tilton, une telle inflation de l'espace privé pour les jeunes des classes dominantes s'associe à une restriction croissante de l'accès à l'espace public pour ceux des classes dominées. Tilton clôt son enquête sur les efforts militants des

jeunes de milieu populaires eux-mêmes, pour se départir de la position politique paradoxale dans laquelle ils sont placés: à la fois enfants impropres à l'action citoyenne et adultes pleinement responsables de leurs actes.

En trame de fond de ce livre, Tilton déploie deux ambitions: l'une, militante, qui entend participer à la conception d'une politique progressiste de la jeunesse, l'autre, scientifique, qui participe à ce que Didier Fassin nomme « une anthropologie de l'Etat » (Fassin 2011: 330), articulant la scène locale et son cadre étatique. Ces deux ambitions alimentent un idéal démocratique.

Référence

Fassin, Didier. 2011. *Force de l'Ordre : une Anthropologie de la police des quartiers*. Paris: Seuil.

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