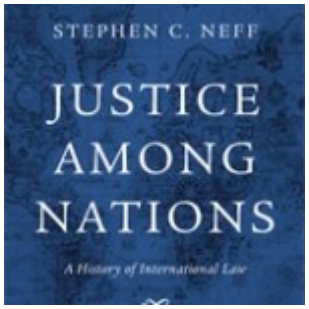
New publications #PublicationJihad

Allegra
March, 2014

This week, our #PublicationJihad continues with Allegra's own currated list of books covering a large spectrum of themes: from the history of international law, to slavery, the European crisis, the transformations of the notion of 'family' and women's labour in the US mining industry. We hope some of you will find inspiration…and if you feel like reviewing any of these books (or any other you find relevant), do not hesitate to contact: review@allegralaboratory.net!

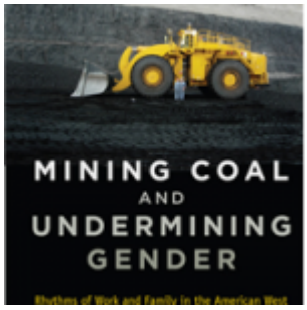


Justice among Nations: A History of International Law. Stephen C. Neff (Harward University Press, 2014).
Justice among Nations tells the story of the rise of international law and how it has been formulated, debated, contested, and put into practice from ancient times to the present. **Stephen Neff** avoids technical jargon as he surveys doctrines from natural law to feminism, and practices from the Warring States of China to the international criminal courts of today.

The Future of Europe: Towards a Two-Speed EU? Jean-Claude Piris (Cambridge: Cambribge University Press, 2011).

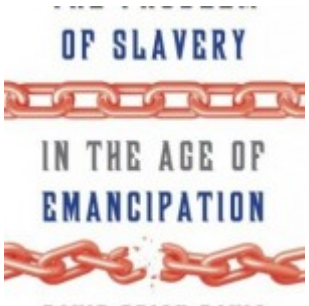
The European Union is in crisis. Public unease with the project, Euro problems and dysfunctional institutions give rise to the real danger that the European Union will become increasing irrelevant just as its member states face more and more challenges of a globalised world. Jean-Claude Piris, a leading figure in the conception and drafting of the EU's legal structures, tackles the issues head on with a sense of urgency and with candour. The book works through the options available in light of the economic and political climate, assessing their effectiveness. By so doing, the author reaches the (for some) radical conclusion that the solution is to permit 'two-speed' development: allowing an inner core to move towards closer economic and political union, which will protect the Union as a whole. Compelling, critical and current, this book is essential reading for all

those interested in the future of Europe.



Mining Coal and Undermining Gender:Rhythms of Work and Family in the American West. Jessica Smith Rolston (Rutgers University Press, 2014).

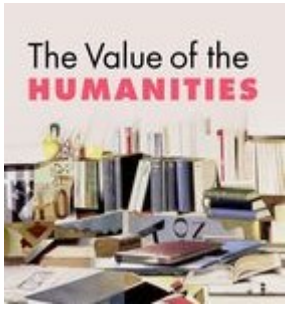
Though mining is an infamously masculine industry, women make up 20 percent of all production crews in Wyoming's Powder River Basin—the largest coal-producing region in the United States. How do these women fit into a working culture supposedly hostile to females? At a time when the Appalachian region continues to dominate discussion of mining culture, this book provides a very different and unexpected view—of how miners live and work together, and of how their lives and work reconfigure ideas of gender and kinship.



The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Emancipation. David Brion Davis (Knopf, 2014).

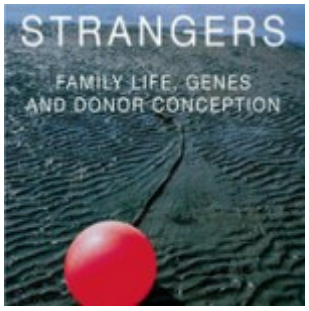
David Brion Davis is one of the foremost historians of the twentieth century, winner of the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, the Bancroft Prize, and nearly every award given by the historical profession. Now, with *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Emancipation,* Davis brings his staggeringly ambitious,

prizewinning trilogy on slavery in Western culture to a close. Once again, Davis offers original and penetrating insights into what slavery and emancipation meant to Americans. He vividly portrays the dehumanizing impact of slavery, as well as the generally unrecognized importance of freed slaves to abolition. Most of all, Davis presents the age of emancipation as a model for reform and as probably the greatest landmark of willed moral progress in human history



The Value of the Humanities. Helen Small (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)

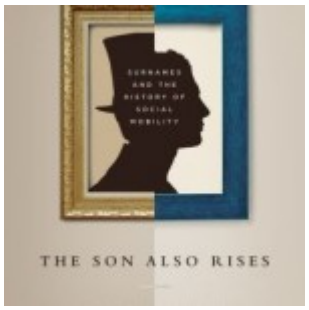
The Value of the Humanities provides a critical account of the principal arguments used to defend the value of the Humanities. Tough-minded, alert to changing historical conditions for argument and changing styles of rhetoric, it promises to sharpen the terms of the public debate.



Relative Strangers: Family Life, Genes and Donor Conception. Petra Nordqvist and Carol Smart (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)

What does it mean to have a child born through donor conception? Does it mean

different things for heterosexual parents and lesbian parents? What is it like for the 'non-genetic' parent? How do grandparents feel about having a grandchild who is conceived with the help of an egg, sperm or embryo donor? Since 1991 more than 35,000 children have been born in the UK as a result of donor conception. This means that more and more families are facing the issue of incorporating 'relative strangers' into their families. In this path breaking book, the authors explore the lived reality of donor conception in families by using in-depth interviews with parents and grandparents of donor conceived children.



The Son also Rises: Surnames and the History of Social Mobility. Gregory Clark with Neil Cummins, Yu Hao and Daniel Diaz Vidal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

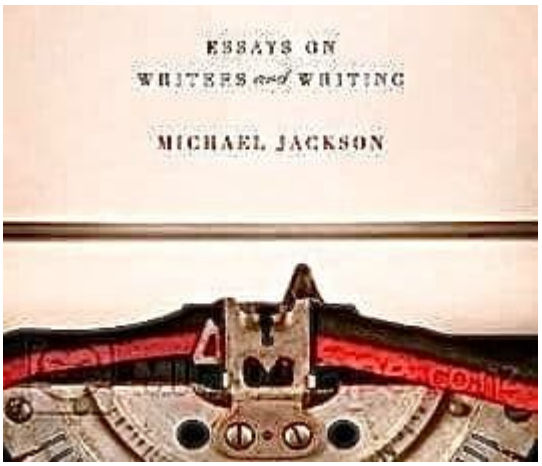
How much of our fate is tied to the status of our parents and grandparents? How much does this influence our children? More than we wish to believe. While it has been argued that rigid class structures have eroded in favor of greater social equality, *The Son Also Rises* proves that movement on the social ladder has changed little over eight centuries. Using a novel technique–tracking family names over generations to measure social mobility across countries and periods–renowned economic historian Gregory Clark reveals that mobility rates are lower than conventionally estimated, do not vary across societies, and are resistant to social policies. Challenging popular assumptions about mobility and revealing the deeply entrenched force of inherited advantage, *The Son Also Rises* is sure to prompt intense debate for years to come.

Pills for the Poorest: An Exploration of TRIPS and Access to Medication in Sub-Saharan Africa. Emilie Cloatre (Palgrave McMillan, 2013).

Pills for the Poorest offers a new perspective on the much-debated issue of the links between intellectual property and access to medication. Using ethnographic case studies in Djibouti and Ghana, and insights from actor-network theory, it explores the ways in which TRIPs and pharmaceutical patents are translated in the daily practices of those who purchase, distribute, and use (or fail to use) medicines in sub-Saharan Africa. It demonstrates how intellectual property affects access to medicines in ways that are often discreet, indirect and forgotten. By exploring these complex mechanisms, it seeks to ask questions about the modes of actions of pharmaceutical patents, but also, more generally, about the complexity of legal objects.

The Other Shore by Michael D. Jackson

Fiona Murphy
March, 2014



The Other Shore: Essays on writers and writing. University of California Press, 2012. 205pp.

By Michael D. Jackson

Anthropologists have long been concerned with their writing lives. Translating the essence of our ethnographic encounters, our daily reflections and intimate understandings is key to the anthropological project. In The Other Shore: Essays on Writers and Writing, anthropologist Michael Jackson, takes us on his deeply personal writing journey, one which drops anchor in a port bearing witness to the multiple intersections of creative lives and writing styles. Through poetry, fiction, philosophy, and anthropology (to name but a few), Jackson teaches us how writing in its multitude of forms can truly do justice to life. He writes:

> *My argument is that writing is like any other technology of self-expression and social communication, and that in exploring the lifeworlds of writing and writers we discover the same existential imperatives that have always preoccupied human beings, regardless of their cultural or historical circumstances-the need to belong to lifeworlds wider than their own, to feel that they can act on the world rather than merely suffer its actions upon them, and to express what seems peculiar and problematic about their own experiences in ways that resonate with the experiences of others (2012: xi)*

The act of writing then is an act of re-enchantment, an action of 'working upon' and a transgression of our quotidian spatial and temporal limitations. It is a form of freedom, a perpetual crafting and re-crafting of what Jackson elsewhere calls 'the intersubjective in-between'. In some ways too writing can be a struggle, constraining, a form of solitude which can potentially unmoor us in deeply unsettling ways. Jackson calls on writers such as Rilke, Rimbaud, Cendrars, and Kafka to engage the reader in the struggles inherent in a writing life. In twenty-seven evocative vignettes, Jackson walks us through his personal struggles with creativity, his literary inspirations and lifetime loves, friendships, life-long ethnographic projects, and sometimes difficult relationship with his birthplace, New Zealand. Through the ripples of Jackson's life, the seismic shifts produced by great personal gains and losses, and a profound inter-textuality, we encounter a compelling writing project that offers ways of 'pushing back against forgetfulness' (Cixous, cited in Jackson, 2012: 11).

In this push towards memory, the role of creativity, however that might be defined, is a constant. How we articulate our writing lives and the tensions enmeshed therein looms large for those anthropologists who see themselves (in some ways) as writing against the scholarly grain. As a poet, fiction writer, and anthropologist, Jackson attempts to think through his personal struggle to reconcile the scholarly writing project with that of the poet or fiction writer's project. In the vignette entitled 'Writing Fellowship,' Jackson comes to understand that 'fiction is as unfaithful to life as academic treatise' (2012: 56), how we write ourselves and our encounters with others into being then matters not in what genre we write but with what kind of creative openness we can bring to bear on our writing. In the reorientation from fiction or poetry to ethnographic writing, we should then, as Jackson writes of Cézanne, 'strike a bearable balance between the disorderly forces of human existence and the ordering powers of art' (2012: 177)

Writing for Jackson is undoubtedly a way of life, a meditation on the everyday, perhaps ultimately a technique to live well. His struggles with creativity and the ethnographic writing project are ones shared by many other anthropologists. *The Other Shore* is an important, honest, and evocative contribution to scholarly and creative thinking on writing. When read alongside anthropologists Kirin Narayan, Paul Stoller and Ruth Behar's recent engagements with the relationship between creativity and anthropology, one begins to see a rich and engaged anthropology of writing gaining further momentum. As anthropologists the question thus remains of how we can bring the wisdom of this anthropology of writing to bear on our own writing lives.

'In the air' – Discussion with Eeva Berglund, EASA Book Series

Allegra
March, 2014

Since 1992, the **EASA** has published its own collection, initially with Routledge and now with BerghahnBooks. Among its most popular titles are **'Audit Cultures'** edited by **Marilyn Strathern** (2000), '**Policy Worlds**' edited by **Cris Shore, Susan Wright** and **Davide Però** (2011), as well as **'Nature and Society**' by **Philippe Descola** and **Gísli Pálsson** (1996).

In Autumn 2013 the book series appointed a new editor **Eeva Berglund**. As a part of our **#PublicationJihad** Allegra sat down with her for a chat on the past, present and future of publishing within anthropology and beyond. Simultaneously this opens our collaboration with the EASA around the Bi-Annual meeting organised in the summer 2014 in Tallinn.

Allegra: Hi Eeva – it's nice to 'bump into' you again (Allegra moderator **MHT** and Eeva worked together on the editorial team of **Suomen Antropologi: Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society** some time back). What persuaded you to take up this post as the EASA book series editor and what kind of expectations do you have for it?

Eeva Berglund: I have been on the edges of academia for some years now. I became a docent (or adjunct professor to anyone outside Finland!) of environmental policy and urban studies at the University of Helsinki in 2011, but then I realized I missed anthropology in particular. The suggestion that I apply for this job arrived at an opportune moment, in the middle of a very stimulating workshop at the **Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies** last May, **"Toward a Comparative Study of the Good"**. The anthropological dimensions of the workshop, convened by **Joel Robbins**, just impressed me with their combination of imagination and scholarship.

A: What do you see as 'being in the air' within anthropological scholarship thematically – what should we expect in the next few years? By which books or authors have you recently been particularly inspired?

EB: Rather than predict, I'd prefer to think about past trajectories of how much things have changed. For instance, my own PhD dissertation on environmental activism in a German town, submitted back in 1994, was viewed by some influential scholars as not really belonging to anthropology, maybe sociology or some new-fangled social study of science-thing. Today, interdisciplinary

conversations between anthropologists and other scholars, notably in science and technology studies but elsewhere as well, have flourished fantastically. Perhaps even more significantly, sophisticated studies of economic relations are blooming. I'd be astonished if this work didn't expand within the discipline.

Of particular texts, I'd say that in anthropology I'm inspired by research that approaches questions around ontology ethnographically, linking them to the pains and pleasures of life as it's really lived. One example is Marisol de la Cadena's 2010 essay, 'Indigenous Cosmopolitics in the Andes: Conceptual Reflections Beyond "Politics"', in Cultural Anthropology. It's great anthropology and the kind of exercise that the world, I think, desperately needs.

A: Currently there is a LOT of talk about the crisis of scholarship, audit cultures, universities being under 'attack' from all sides. What kind of positive messages do you have for us all in these difficult times? How could scholars in general and anthropologists in particular find possibilities to carry out their core business, that is, research?

EB: It's not easy to be so positive about this. My own experience is that the problems are not confined to academia. Like everyone else, academics need to defend the good parts of their heritage much more confidently. Before commercial imperatives were prioritised, for instance, many universities in the UK (the country I know best), operated extremely well as publicly funded institutions. Trying to turn them into pretend-businesses is based more on ideology than on solid argument.

To anthropologists specifically, I'd say look to the discipline's own analyses.

I think anthropological work on what passes for economic reality does actually provide a variety of pretty potent tools with which to argue against the neoliberalisation of everything everywhere.

A: We in Allegra are of course an online experiment, dedicated (among other things) to finding ways to make our statement to contemporary flows and aesthetics of societal discussions. What is your take on the social media; do you find enthusiasm in such online experiments & what kind of expectations would you suggest that we set for ourselves?

EB: Actually I'm quite comfortable with social media and EASA certainly is. Its Facebook pages, Twitter feed and webinars are attracting growing numbers of participants. Also, I look forward to the availability of individual chapters from edited volumes becoming available electronically. True, I do dislike the attention deficit that social media can induce. There is, however, no reason for online communications to be any less careful – slow if you like – than conventional media.

Having said that, in my own everyday life, the printed book and the local bookshop really are quite hard to beat.

Warm thanks for your time, and with warm congratulations again for your new position. Allegra looks forward to much more exciting collaboration!

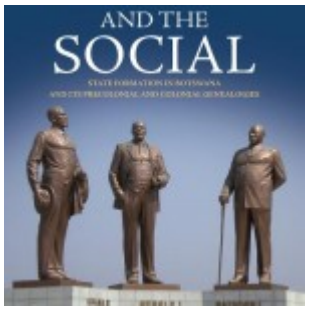
POLAR, Part 2 – #PublicationJihad!

Allegra
March, 2014

Today Allegra's #PublicationJihad continues our collaboration with POLAR: Political and Legal Anthropological Review with Part 2 of their list of publications to be reviewed (Part 1 available here). What this list thus offers is both a sneak preview of excitement still to come in POLAR, but also a summary of themes that have been 'in the air' over recent years.

Our eye was in particular caught by the following: the state and its

transformation; violence & humanitarianism; documents and their affects and life cycles; and related to this last, the issue of borders. Both lists have provided significant inspiration for future Allegra posts, and thus we we look forward to reaping the rewards of this collaboration also in the time to come!

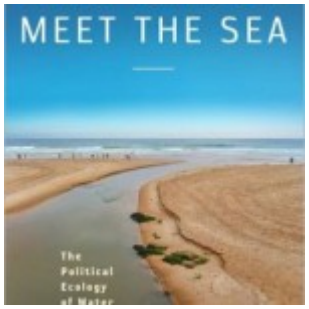


The State and the Social: State Formation in Botswana and its Precolonial and Colonial Genealogies. Ørnulf Gulbrandsen(New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2012).

Botswana has been portrayed as a major case of exception in Africa—as an oasis of peace and harmony with an enduring parliamentary democracy, blessed with remarkable diamond-driven economic growth. Whereas the "failure" of other states on the continent is often attributed to the prevalence of indigenous political ideas and structures, the author argues that Botswana's apparent success is not the result of Western ideas and practices of government having *replaced* indigenous ideas and structures. Rather, the postcolonial state of Botswana is best understood as a unique, complex formation, one that arose dialectically through the meeting of European ideas and practices with the symbolism and hierarchies of authority, rooted in the cosmologies of indigenous polities, and both have become integral to the formation of a strong state with a stable government. Yet there are destabilizing potentialities in progress due to emerging class conflict between all the poor sections of the population and the privileged modern elites born of the expansion of a beef and diamond-driven political economy, in addition to conflicts between dominant Tswana and vast other ethnic groups. These transformations of the modern state are viewed from the long-term perspectives of precolonial and colonial genealogies and the rise of structures of domination, propelled by changing global forces.

Government of Paper: The Materiality of Bureaucracy in Urban Pakistan. Matthew Hull (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

In the electronic age, documents appear to have escaped their paper confinement. But we are still surrounded by flows of paper with enormous consequences. In the planned city of Islamabad, order and disorder are produced through the ceaseless inscription and circulation of millions of paper artifacts among bureaucrats, politicians, property owners, villagers, imams (prayer leaders), businessmen, and builders. What are the implications of such a thorough paper mediation of relationships among people, things, places, and purposes? *Government of Paper* explores this question in the routine yet unpredictable realm of the Pakistani urban bureaucracy, showing how the material forms of postcolonial bureaucratic documentation produce a distinctive political economy of paper that shapes how the city is constructed, regulated, and inhabited.



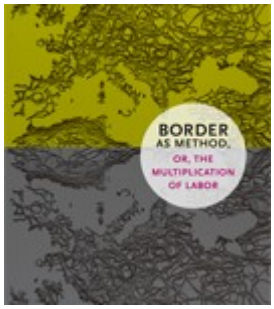
Where Rivers Meet the Sea: The Political Ecology of Water. Stephanie Kane (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2012).

Where fresh water appears to be abundant and generally accessible, chronic pollution may be relatively ignored as a public issue. Yet there are those whose lives, livelihoods, and traditions are touched directly by the destructive albeit

essential relationship between humans and water. In her passionate and persuasively argued *Where Rivers Meet the Sea*, Stephanie Kane compares two cities and nations—Salvador, Brazil and Buenos Aires, Argentina—as she tells the stories of those who organize in the streets, petition the courts, and challenge their governments to implement and enforce existing laws designed to protect springs, lakes, harbors, and rivers.

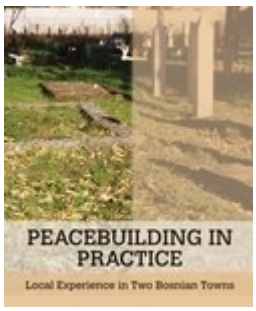
Naturalizing Mexican Immigrants: A Texas History. Martha Menchaca (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011).

Drawing on unprecedented historical analysis of state archives, U.S. Congressional records, and other sources of overlooked data, *Naturalizing Mexican Immigrants* provides a rich understanding of the realities and rhetoric that have led to present-day immigration controversies. Martha Menchaca's groundbreaking research examines such facets as U.S.-Mexico relations following the U.S. Civil War and the schisms created by Mexican abolitionists; the anti-immigration stance that marked many suffragist appeals; the effects of the Spanish American War; distinctions made for mestizo, Afromexicano, and Native American populations; the erosion of means for U.S. citizens to legalize their relatives; and the ways in which U.S. corporations have caused the political conditions that stimulated emigration from Mexico.



Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor. Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).

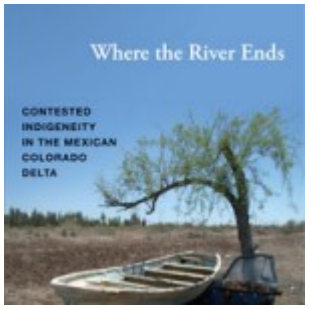
Far from creating a borderless world, contemporary globalization has generated a proliferation of borders. In *Border as Method*, Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson chart this proliferation, investigating its implications for migratory movements, capitalist transformations, and political life. They explore the atmospheric violence that surrounds borderlands and border struggles across various geographical scales, illustrating their theoretical arguments with illuminating case studies drawn from Europe, Asia, the Pacific, the Americas, and elsewhere. Mezzadra and Neilson approach the border not only as a research object but also as an epistemic framework. Their use of the border as method enables new perspectives on the crisis and transformations of the nation-state, as well as powerful reassessments of political concepts such as citizenship and sovereignty.



Peacebuilding in Practice: Local Experience in Two Bosnian Towns. Adam Moore (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013).

In November 2007 Adam Moore was conducting fieldwork in Mostar when the southern Bosnian city was rocked by two days of violent clashes between Croat and Bosniak youth. It was not the city's only experience of ethnic conflict in recent years. Indeed, Mostar's problems are often cited as emblematic of the failure of international efforts to overcome deep divisions that continue to stymie

the postwar peace process in Bosnia. Yet not all of Bosnia has been plagued by such troubles. Mostar remains mired in distrust and division, but the Brcko District in the northeast corner of the country has become a model of what Bosnia could be. Its multiethnic institutions operate well compared to other municipalities, and are broadly supported by those who live there; it also boasts the only fully integrated school system in the country.Through a grounded analysis of localized peacebuilding dynamics in these two cities Moore generates a powerful argument concerning the need to rethink how peacebuilding is done—that is, a shift in the habitus or culture that governs international peacebuilding activities and priorities today.



Where the River Ends: Contested Indigeneity in the Mexican Colorado Delta. Shaylih Muehlmann (Durham, NC: Duke University Press 2013).

Living in the northwest of Mexico, the Cucapá people have relied on fishing as a means of subsistence for generations, but in the last several decades, that practice has been curtailed by water scarcity and government restrictions. *Where the River Ends* is a moving look at how the Cucapá people have experienced and responded to the diversion of the Colorado River and the Mexican state's attempts to regulate the environmental crisis that followed.

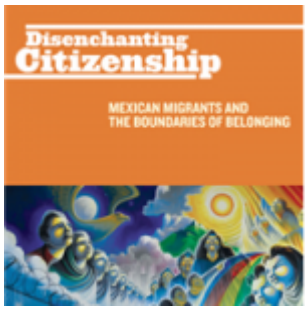
The Make-Believe Space: Affective Geography in a Postwar Polity. Yael Navaro-Yashin (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

The Make-Believe Space is a book of ethnographic and theoretical meditation on the phantasmatic entanglement of materialities in the aftermath of war, displacement, and expropriation. "Northern Cyprus," carved out as a separate space and defined as a distinct (de facto) polity since its invasion by Turkey in 1974, is the subject of this ethnography about postwar politics and social relations. Turkish-Cypriots' sociality in a reforged geography, rid of its former Greek-Cypriot inhabitants after the partition of Cyprus, forms the centerpiece of Yael Navaro-Yashin's conceptual exploration of subjectivity in the context of "ruination" and "abjection." The unrecognized state in Northern Cyprus unfolds through the analytical devices that she develops as she explores this polity's administration and raison d'être via affect theory. Challenging the boundaries between competing theoretical orientations, Navaro-Yashin crafts a methodology for the study of subjectivity and affect, and materiality and the phantasmatic, in tandem. In the process, she creates a subtle and nuanced ethnography of life in the long-term aftermath of war.

Balkan Smoke: Tobacco and the Making of Modern Bulgaria. Mary C. Neuburger (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012).

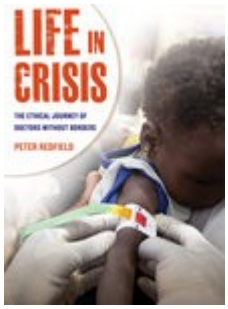
In *Balkan Smoke*, Mary Neuburger leads readers along the Bulgarian-Ottoman

caravan routes and into the coffeehouses of Istanbul and Sofia. She reveals how a remote country was drawn into global economic networks through tobacco production and consumption and in the process became modern. In writing the life of tobacco in Bulgaria from the late Ottoman period through the years of Communist rule, Neuburger gives us much more than the cultural history of a commodity; she provides a fresh perspective on the genesis of modern Bulgaria itself.



Disenchanting Citizenship: Mexican Migrants and the Boundaries of Belonging. Luis F. B. Plascencia (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012).

Central to contemporary debates in the United States on migration and migrant policy is the idea of citizenship, and—as apparent in the continued debate over Arizona's immigration law SB 1070—this issue remains a focal point of contention, with a key concern being whether there should be a path to citizenship for "undocumented" migrants. In *Disenchanting Citizenship*, Luis F. B. Plascencia examines two interrelated issues: U.S. citizenship and the Mexican migrants' position in the United States. Ultimately, he unearths citizenship's root as a Janus-faced construct that encompasses a simultaneous process of inclusion and exclusion. This notion of citizenship is mapped on to the migrant experience, arguing that the acquisition of citizenship can lead to disenchantment with the very status desired. In the end, Plascencia expands our understanding of the dynamics of U.S. citizenship as a form of membership and belonging.



Life in Crisis: The Ethical Journey of Doctors Without Borders. Peter Redfield (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

Life in Crisis tells the story of Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders or MSF) and its effort to "save lives" on a global scale. Begun in 1971 as a French alternative to the Red Cross, the MSF has grown into an international institution with a reputation for outspoken protest as well as technical efficiency. It has also expanded beyond emergency response, providing for a wider range of endeavors, including AIDS care. Yet its seemingly simple ethical goal proves deeply complex in practice. MSF continually faces the problem of defining its own limits. Its minimalist form of care recalls the promise of state welfare, but without political resolution or a sense of well-being beyond health and survival. Lacking utopian certainty, the group struggles when the moral clarity of crisis fades. Nevertheless, it continues to take action and innovate. Its organizational history illustrates both the logic and the tensions of casting humanitarian medicine into a leading role in international affairs.

Barrio Libre: Criminalizing States and Delinquent Refusals. Gilberto Rosas (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

The city of Nogales straddles the border running between Arizona and Sonora, Mexico. On the Mexican side, marginalized youths calling themselves Barrio Libre (Free 'Hood) employ violence, theft, and bribery to survive, often preying on

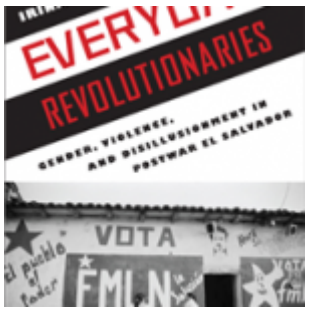
undocumented migrants who navigate the city's sewer system to cross the US-Mexico border. In this book, Gilberto Rosas draws on his in-depth ethnographic research among the members of Barrio Libre to understand why they have embraced criminality and how neoliberalism and security policies on both sides of the border have affected the youths' descent into Barrio Libre.

Killing with Kindness: Haiti, International Aid, and NGOs. Mark Schuller (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2012).

Set in Haiti during the 2004 coup and aftermath and enhanced by research conducted after the 2010 earthquake, *Killing with Kindness* analyzes the impact of official development aid on recipient NGOs and their relationships with local communities. Written like a detective story, the book offers rich enthnographic comparisons of two Haitian women's NGOs working in HIV/AIDS prevention, one with public funding (including USAID), the other with private European NGO partners. Mark Schuller looks at participation and autonomy, analyzing donor policies that inhibit these goals. He focuses on NGOs' roles as intermediaries in "gluing" the contemporary world system together and shows how power works within the aid system as these intermediaries impose interpretations of unclear mandates down the chain—a process Schuller calls "trickle-down imperialism."

[Resources for Reform: Oil and Neoliberalism in Argentina](). Elana Shever (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012).

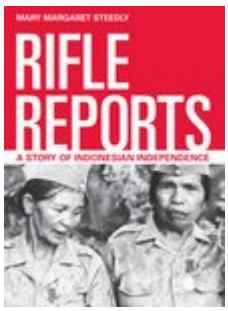
Resources for Reform explores how people's lives intersect with the increasingly globalized and concentrated oil industry through a close look at Argentina's experiment with privatizing its national oil company in the name of neoliberal reform. Examining Argentina's conversion from a state-controlled to a private oil market, Elana Shever reveals interconnections between large-scale transformations in society and small-scale shifts in everyday practice, intimate relationships, and identity. This engaging ethnography offers a window into the experiences of middle-class oil workers and their families, impoverished residents of shanty settlements bordering refineries, and affluent employees of transnational corporations as they struggle with rapid changes in the global economy, their country, and their lives. It reverberates far beyond the Argentine oil fields and offers a fresh approach to the critical study of neoliberalism, kinship, citizenship, and corporations.



Everyday Revolutionaries: Gender, Violence, and Disillusionment in Postwar El Salvador Irina Carlota Silber (New York: Rutgers University Press, 2011).

Everyday Revolutionaries provides a longitudinal and rigorous analysis of the legacies of war in a community racked by political violence. By exploring political processes in one of El Salvador's former war zones – a region known for its

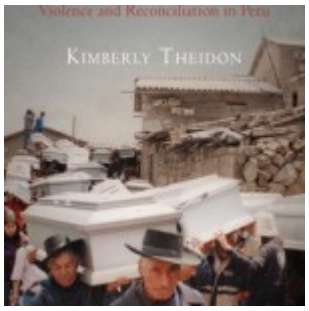
peasant revolutionary participation – Irina Carlota Silber offers a searing portrait of the entangled aftermaths of confrontation and displacement, aftermaths that have produced continued deception and marginalization. Silber provides one of the first rubrics for understanding and contextualizing postwar disillusionment, drawing on her ethnographic fieldwork and research on immigration to the United States by former insurgents. With an eye for gendered experiences, she unmasks how community members are asked, contradictorily and in different contexts, to relinquish their identities as "revolutionaries" and to develop a new sense of themselves as productive yet marginal postwar citizens via the same "participation" that fueled their revolutionary action. Beautifully written and offering rich stories of hope and despair, *Everyday Revolutionaries* contributes to important debates in public anthropology and the ethics of engaged research practices.



Rifle Reports: A Story of Indonesian Independence. Mary Margaret Steedly, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

On August 17, 1945, Indonesia proclaimed its independence from Dutch colonial rule. Five years later, the Republic of Indonesia was recognized as a unified, sovereign state. The period in between was a time of aspiration, mobilization, and violence, in which nationalists fought to expel the Dutch while also trying to come to grips with the meaning of "independence." *Rifle Reports* is an ethnographic history of this extraordinary time as it was experienced on the outskirts of the nation among Karo Batak villagers in the rural highlands of North Sumatra. Based on extensive interviews and conversations with Karo veterans, *Rifle Reports* interweaves personal and family memories, songs and stories, memoirs and local histories, photographs and monuments, to trace the variously tangled

and perhaps incompletely understood ways that Karo women and men contributed to the founding of the Indonesian nation. This innovative historical study of nationalism and decolonization is an anthropological exploration of the gendering of wartime experience, as well as an inquiry into the work of storytelling as memory practice and ethnographic genre.



Intimate Enemies: Violence and Reconciliation in Peru. Kimberly Theidon (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

Drawing on years of research with communities in the highlands of Ayacucho, Kimberly Theidon explores how Peruvians are rebuilding both individual lives and collective existence following twenty years of armed conflict. *Intimate Enemies* recounts the stories and dialogues of Peruvian peasants and Theidon's own experiences to encompass the broad and varied range of conciliatory practices: customary law before and after the war, the practice of *arrepentimiento* (publicly confessing one's actions and requesting pardon from one's peers), a differentiation between forgiveness and reconciliation, and the importance of storytelling to make sense of the past and recreate moral order. The micropolitics of reconciliation in these communities present an example of postwar coexistence that deeply complicates the way we understand transitional justice, moral sensibilities, and social life in the aftermath of war. Any effort to understand postconflict reconstruction must be attuned to devastation as well as to human tenacity for life.

Space of Detention: The Making of a Transnational Gang Crisis. Elana Zilberg. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

Space of Detention is a powerful ethnographic account and spatial analysis of the "transnational gang crisis" between the United States and El Salvador. Elana Zilberg seeks to understand how this phenomenon became an issue of central concern for national and regional security, and how La Mara Salvatrucha, a gang founded by Salvadoran immigrants in Los Angeles, came to symbolize the "gang crime–terrorism continuum." She argues that the contemporary fixation with Latino immigrant and Salvadoran street gangs, while in part a product of media hype, must also be understood in relation to the longer history of U.S. involvement in Central America, the processes of neoliberalism and globalization, and the intersection of immigration, criminal, and antiterrorist law. These forces combine to produce what Zilberg terms "neoliberal securityscapes."

We wish to share – again – Polar's review editor Ilana Gershon's reminder for authors of forthcoming publications: if you think your book should be reviewed by Polar, make sure that your publisher is providing them with a review copy.

We thank Ilana Gershon for her collaboration, and look forward to more creative collaboration between Allegra and Polar! Warm thanks also toP Allegra's editorial assistant Hilja Auvinen for her work on this post!

#PublicationJihad!

Allegra
March, 2014

This week will be Allegra's first ever **#PublicationJihad**! What this means is a full week of *Spectacular Blogging Activity* devoted to one single cause alone: to celebrate the crown jewel of academic work – the monograph, the edited volume – the BOOK!

As we have stated repeatedly, our Publications section is continually our biggest headache as it is accompanied by numerous nagging questions, including: Just how does one navigate the continual avalanche of new publications with even the slightest sense of relevance? So far we have experimented with a list of inspirational reading, as well as a thematic bibliography of recent publications on human rights (law). In addition we have touched upon the ongoing changes within academic publishing, including the increasing emphasis on open access.

In sum our experiences suggest that it is not just us who are struggling as it has become very difficult to overlook a sense of general crises for book writing and publishing in the current situation. This was summarised as follows in one of our

discussions with an editor at a leading university press:

> *"There have been studies that show that people base their book purchases on a glance of a few seconds at online bookshops. A few seconds, that's all the chance we get!"*

How does one induce the kind of an impact on those precious seconds that translates into the decision not only to buy but also *read* the book in question? In the current situation more emphasis than ever rests on word of mouth – a task that blogs such as Allegra are in a rather unique position to deliver given the unparalleled possibilities for speed and rapid turnover of the online world. But is this enough, we ask ourselves, recalling the the most cardinal challenge of all, phrased succinctly by another editor upon commenting a forthcoming publication by her press:

> *"This is a great book – too bad that no one reads books any more!"*

This sense of a crisis is certainly intensified by the ludicrous imposition of quantified measurements on academic productivity. Today, all too frequently full-fledged monographs are downgraded to single peer reviewed articles in their 'impact'. Why even write books if – in addition to no one reading them – they at worst become career hindrances? We are increasingly seeing also younger generations of scholars being socialised into this mindset with the spread of the article based dissertation in the humanities (even if we remain unsure whether any anthropology faculties accept them).

Through our **#PublicationJihad** Allegra joins the voices questioning this multifaceted denigration, wishing to simultaneously highlight the nuanced contributions that only carefully crafted books are capable of making to both ongoing scholarly and societal discussions.

We also continue our search for alternatives: from what kind of avenues could renewed inspiration be found to move past this collective sense of crisis? What can we of concretely to reverse the increasing belittling of the BOOK? In this task cardinal remains exploring new ways to open anthropological and scholarly publications to new readerships – one of the purposes of AVMoFA, for example.

All of these themes and many more will be mirrored on this week's **#PublicationJihad** – a week not consisting of warfare, but rather embodying a challenge to exert ourselves in the face of these self-imposed tasks. And finally, to shift once and for all from 'thinking to doing' also in regards to Allegra's Publications section!

So hold onto your hats – off we go!

(And just in case the nuanced conception of 'JIHAD' is unfamiliar, it literally means "to strive", "to struggle". In its spiritual significance and wide application it refers to the struggle of the self against evil, a struggle in which each Muslim believer engages in order to better himself/herself as a form of everyday discipline.)

Anthropological Job-hunting (and Gathering): Finding Non-Academic

Work (2 of 3)

Isaac Morrison
March, 2014

When looking for work – particularly the non-academic kind – remember that **who** you know is often as important, if not more important than **what** you know or can do. Looking for work is a frustrating and time-consuming process under any circumstances. Oftentimes it feels like you are just throwing resumes into the void with no hope of ever seeing any return on the time it took you to revise (and revise, and revise, and revise) your CV and write YET ANOTHER cover letter. In addition to that, you're competing with dozens (or even hundreds) of people who are probably just as qualified as you are.

This is not to say that you cannot get a job through that route, but it is a difficult and oftentimes depressing journey. Getting only one interview for every 30 submitted job applications is not a path towards self-affirmation, and maintaining that pattern for months, or even years, can grind away at your confidence.

In my last post I described some ways in which anthropologists can widen their base of opportunities by focusing on skills that will make them desirable and

relevant outside of academia. Skills, however, are only one part of the larger equation. As everyone who has studied kinship or social capital is well aware, the world runs on relationships.

Part 2 : People, Reciprocity & Comfort Zones

This may sound obvious, but I know for a fact that there is a huge gap between the knowledge and implementation of this reality within the anthropological community. At the 2013 AAA conference in Chicago a fellow applied anthropologist and I sat on a panel discussing nonacademic jobs for anthropology students with a room full of soon-to-graduate and recently-graduated anthropology PhDs. After the session ended, several people approached us to continue the conversation, and before going our separate ways there was a ritual distribution of business cards among those gathered. A month after the conference, in the course of conversation with that other anthropologist (a PhD who has been working in the private sector for more than 30 years) he expressed his amazement that not one single person he had given a business card to at the conference had followed up with him after the conference.

He did not feel offended or snubbed, he was simply dumbfounded that none of the dozens of people he had given his cards to over the course of the conference had an understanding of basic business etiquette – you exchange cards as part of a larger process of relationship-building. Otherwise, why even bother exchanging cards?

Towards that end, I'd like to share a few words on the importance of people in the job-hunting process.

The old adage, "it's not what you know but **who** you know" is painfully true, but it's not just a matter of who you know, it's also a matter of who knows **you**. I

would estimate that 75-80% of my success has hinged on people well above my knowledge and experience level who were able to confidently vouch for my skills and abilities. A bad hiring decision can drag a team or a company down for months or even years, so recommendations from trusted associates are like gold when it comes to bringing in new people.

> *A qualified candidate with a Master's degree from a state school and a recommendation from a trusted source will beat out an unknown with a PhD from Stanford almost every time.*

This is a two edged sword, however. The recommendations you make are a part of your reputation, and therefore cannot be made lightly. If you know people who do good work, do what you can to help them get more work – it will improve your reputation with them and with the people who hire them. But if you recommend someone for a position and they fail to deliver, it will reflect poorly on you as well.

For this reason, it is vital that people who are in a position to recommend you be aware of your capabilities and the quality of your work. It will help them speak more precisely regarding your qualifications, and it will enable them to feel more confident in their recommendations.

> *Get out of your Comfort Zone!*

In an earlier post I echoed William Beeman's call for increased public engagement through op-eds, but that's just the beginning. Look for ways to create little nuggets of your work that are easy to get to: 500 word snapshots on interesting and relevant topics in accessible places, book reviews, buzzfeed top-20 lists, anything that moves you out of your academic comfort zone. As I've mentioned before, there's a substantial difference between business writing and academic writing – find ways to show that you can do both. This will be invaluable for generating writing samples, but it is also an excellent way to put yourself on the radar of people who may need to vouch for you later.

Networking is more than just finding people with access and getting access to what you want through them…it is about exchange. In a job-hunting situation, the person with access to jobs is the person that has the leverage – they know that they have something you want; do you have something they want? Think about Mauss' "The Gift." Think about the Kula ring. Think about reciprocity.

> *We're anthropologists; we should have a clear understanding of how exchange is used to build relationships, so start building!*

As you seek out ways to show your unique value, keep the words from Neil Gaiman's inspirational speech in mind in mind:

"You get work however you get work, but people keep working:

- · because their work is good
- · because they are easy to get along with
- · and because they deliver the work on time

And you don't even need all three! Two out of three is fine. People will tolerate how unpleasant you are if your work is good and you deliver it on time. People will forgive the lateness of your work if it is good and they like you. And you don't have to be as good as everyone else if you're on time and it's always a pleasure to hear from you."

Painful, stinky & get you HIGH!

Guillaume Dumont
March, 2014

“When conducting ethnographic fieldwork among professional rock climbers, participant observation makes climbing shoes as essential as the digital recorder in the everyday field package. They smell terribly bad, are extremely tight, horribly painful, and progressively shape your toes and feet into visually disgusting warp tools. Yet, since I am used to putting my body at work by pulling on holds during fieldwork, my climbing shoes have become a daily companion in the field.”

“Shoe manufacturers target all tastes by producing a high variety of models through diverse colours, forms, components, specific use, etc. They are expensive, last nothing and climbers have multiple pairs for specific purposes. My fieldwork focuses on the niche of a few dozens athletes travelling around the world for climbing. They sometimes compete indoors but mostly climb on rocks, and along the way produce media, teach clinics, and give lectures to companies while representing their brands. In sum they juggle multiple tasks beyond purely climbing rocks. My research focuses on these “climbing micro-celebrity” through transnational ethnographic fieldwork in Europe and the USA. I am interested in the emergence of a category of professionalism that brings together the media, globalization, the Internet, expertise and creativity in cultural production.”

More of Guillaume's research soon via 'Fieldnotes'.

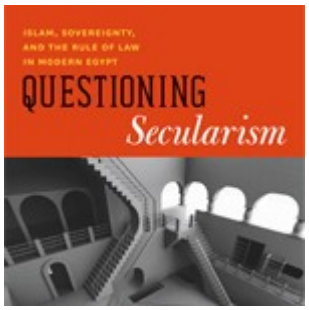
POLAR-style (PART 1)

Allegra
March, 2014

Today Allegra is very pleased to share with you a curated list of recent publications by POLAR: Political and Legal Anthropological Review, the flagship journal of the discipline. What you have here is a sneak preview of excitement to come, namely recent publications that will appear as reviews in POLAR – simultaneously a powerful guide into the most exciting recent works in the subfields of political and legal anthropology, very broadly conceived. This list is also in line with Allegra's determination to experiment with creative ways to fill the 'dead space' in between academic discussions ongoing today and eventual scholarly publications appearing in a few years.
Since the list of quite long, and there is such a thing as too much of a good thing (at once), we've split the list in two. Thus enjoy 'New Publications – POLAR STYLE – Part 1' – with sweet anticipation for Part 2 coming SOON!

Markets of Sorrow, Labors of Faith: New Orleans in the Wake of Katrina. Vincanne Adams (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013)

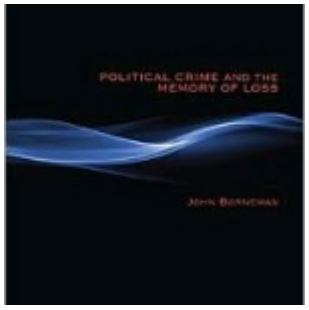
Markets of Sorrow, Labors of Faith is an ethnographic account of long-term recovery in post-Katrina New Orleans. It is also a sobering exploration of the privatization of vital social services under market-driven governance. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, public agencies subcontracted disaster relief to private companies that turned the humanitarian work of recovery into lucrative business. These enterprises profited from the very suffering that they failed to ameliorate, producing a second-order disaster that exacerbated inequalities based on race and class and leaving residents to rebuild almost entirely on their own.



Questioning Secularism: Islam, Sovereignty, and the Rule of Law in Modern Egypt. Hussein Ali Agrama. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2012.

The central question of the Arab Spring—what democracies should look like in the deeply religious countries of the Middle East—has developed into a vigorous debate over these nations' secular identities. But what, exactly, is secularism? What has the West's long familiarity with it inevitably obscured? In *Questioning Secularism*, Hussein Ali Agrama tackles these questions. Focusing on the fatwa councils and family law courts of Egypt just prior to the revolution, he delves deeply into the meaning of secularism itself and the ambiguities that lie at its

heart.



Political Crime and the Memory of Loss. John Borneman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2012).

Loss is a fundamental human condition that often leads both individuals and groups to seek redress in the form of violence. But are there possible modes of redress to reckon with loss that might lead to a departure from the violence of collective and individual revenge? This book focuses on the redress of political crime in Germany and Lebanon, extending its analysis to questions of accountability and democratization in the United States and elsewhere. To understand the proposed modes of redress, John Borneman links the way the actors define their injuries to the cultural forms of redress these injuries assume and to the social contexts in which they are open to refiguring. Borneman theorizes modes of accountability, the meaning of "regime change" and the American occupation of Iraq, and the mechanisms of democratic authority in Europe and North America.

Disquieting Gifts: Humanitarianism in New Delhi. Erica Bornstein (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012).

While most people would not consider sponsoring an orphan's education to be in

the same category as international humanitarian aid, both acts are linked by the desire to give. Many studies focus on the outcomes of humanitarian work, but the impulses that inspire people to engage in the first place receive less attention. *Disquieting Gifts* takes a close look at people working on humanitarian projects in New Delhi to explore why they engage in philanthropic work, what humanitarianism looks like to them, and the ethical and political tangles they encounter. Motivated by debates surrounding Marcel Mauss's *The Gift*, Bornstein investigates specific cases of people engaged in humanitarian work to reveal different perceptions of assistance to strangers versus assistance to kin, how the impulse to give to others in distress is tempered by its regulation, suspicions about recipient suitability, and why the figure of the orphan is so valuable in humanitarian discourse. The book also focuses on vital humanitarian efforts that often go undocumented and ignored and explores the role of empathy in humanitarian work.

- *Can Islam Be French? Pluralism and Pragmatism in a Secularist State*. John R. Bowen (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2010).

Can Islam Be French? is an anthropological examination of how Muslims are responding to the conditions of life in France. Following up on his book *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves*, John Bowen turns his attention away from the perspectives of French non-Muslims to focus on those of the country's Muslims themselves. Bowen asks not the usual question–how well are Muslims integrating in France?–but, rather, how do French Muslims think about Islam? In particular, Bowen examines how French Muslims are fashioning new Islamic institutions and developing new ways of reasoning and teaching. He looks at some of the quite distinct ways in which mosques have connected with broader social and political forces, how Islamic educational entrepreneurs have fashioned niches for new forms of schooling, and how major Islamic public actors have set out a specifically French approach to religious norms. All of these efforts have provoked sharp responses in France and from overseas centers of Islamic scholarship, so Bowen

also looks closely at debates over how–and how far–Muslims should adapt their religious traditions to these new social conditions. He argues that the particular ways in which Muslims have settled in France, and in which France governs religions, have created incentives for Muslims to develop new, pragmatic ways of thinking about religious issues in French society.

Bloomberg's New York: Class and Governance in the Luxury City. Julian Brash (Athens, G.A.: The University of Georgia Press, 2011).

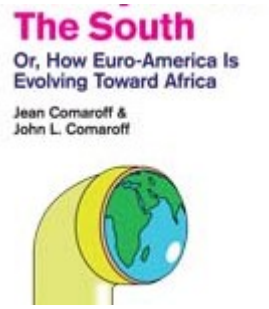
New York mayor Michael Bloomberg claims to run the city like a business. In *Bloomberg's New York*, Julian Brash applies methods from anthropology, geography, and other social science disciplines to examine what that means. He describes the mayor's attitude toward governance as the Bloomberg Way—a philosophy that holds up the mayor as CEO, government as a private corporation, desirable residents and businesses as customers and clients, and the city itself as a product to be branded and marketed as a luxury good. Commonly represented as pragmatic and nonideological, the Bloomberg Way, Brash argues, is in fact an ambitious reformulation of neoliberal governance that advances specific class interests. He considers the implications of this in a blow-by-blow account of the debate over the Hudson Yards plan, which aimed to transform Manhattan's far west side into the city's next great high-end district. Bringing this plan to fruition proved surprisingly difficult as activists and entrenched interests pushed back against the Bloomberg administration, suggesting that despite Bloomberg's success in redrawing the rules of urban governance, older political arrangements—and opportunities for social justice—remain.

Zooland: The Institution of Captivity. Irus Braverman (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012).

This book takes a unique stance on a controversial topic: zoos. Zoos have their ardent supporters and their vocal detractors. And while we all have opinions on *what* zoos do, few people consider *how* they do it. Irus Braverman draws on more than seventy interviews conducted with zoo managers and administrators, as well as animal activists, to offer a glimpse into the otherwise unknown complexities of zooland.

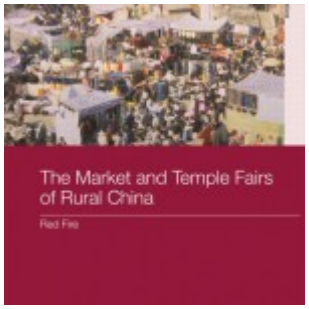
Genocide Lives in Us: Women, Memory, and Silence in Rwanda. Jennie E. Burnet (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012).

In the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, Rwandan women faced the impossible—resurrecting their lives amidst unthinkable devastation. Haunted by memories of lost loved ones and of their own experiences of violence, women slowly rebuilt their lives and traversed dangerous emotional and political terrain to emerge as leaders in Rwanda today. This clear and engaging ethnography of survival tackles three interrelated phenomena—memory, silence, and justice—and probes the contradictory roles women played in postgenocide reconciliation.



Theory from the South or, How Euro-America Is Evolving toward Africa. Comaroff, Jean, and John L. Comaroff. (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2012).

The "Global South" has become shorthand for the world of non-European, postcolonial peoples. Synonymous with uncertain development, unorthodox economies, failed states, and nations fraught with corruption, poverty, incivility, and strife, it is that half of the world about which the "Global North" spins theories. Rarely the "Global South" is seen as a source of theory and explanation for world historical events. Yet, as many nation-states of the Northern Hemisphere experience increasing fiscal meltdown, state privatization, corruption, ethnic conflict, and other crises, it seems as though they are evolving southward, so to speak, in both positive and problematic ways. Is this so? How? In what measure? Anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff take on these questions, reversing the usual order of things. Drawing on their long experience of living in Africa and teaching in Europe and the U.S., they address a range of familiar themes—democracy, law, national borders, labor and capital, religion and the occult, liberalism and multiculturalism—with the imagination and agile prose for which they are well known. They ask how we might understand these things anew with theory developed in the South. Their ethnographic eye stresses the salience of the local without losing sight of the large-scale processes in everyday lives that are everywhere enmeshed. This view from the South renders key problems of our time at once strange and familiar, giving an ironic twist to the evolutionary pathways long assumed by social scientists.



The Market and Temple Fairs of Rural China: Red Fire. Gene Cooper (London: Routledge, 2013).

During the early communist period of the 1950s, temple fairs in China were both suppressed and secularized. Temples were closed down by the secular regime and their activities classified as feudal superstition and this process only intensified during the Cultural Revolution when even the surviving secular fairs, devoted exclusively to trade with no religious content of any kind, were suppressed. However, once China embarked on its path of free market reform and openness, secular commodity exchange fairs were again authorized, and sometimes encouraged in the name of political economy as a means of stimulating rural commodity circulation and commerce. This book reveals how once these secular "temple-less temple fairs" were in place, they came to serve not only as venues for the proliferation of a great variety of popular cultural performance genres, but also as sites where a revival or recycling of popular religious symbols, already underway in many parts of China, found familiar and fertile ground in which to spread

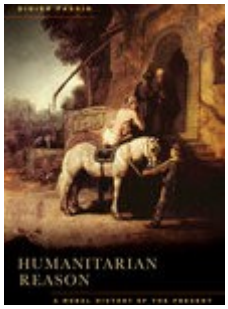
Unsettling Gaza: Secular Liberalism, Radical Religion, and the Israeli Settlement Project. Joyce Dalsheim (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)

This ethnographic study takes a unique approach to one of the most contentious issues in the Middle East—the Israeli settlement project. The book's work

intercedes in the conflict between religiously motivated Jewish settlers and their liberal and secular opponents and asks the reader to suspend judgment just long enough to gain fresh insight. The book shows that the intense antagonism between these groups disguises their fundamental similarities and reveals the social and cultural work achieved through a politics of mutual denunciation. While previous studies have examined settlers and other so-called fundamentalists in Israel, this is the first to place radical, right-wing settlers and their left-wing and secular opposition in a single analytical frame, moving between places and across borders, carrying stories, questions, and insights from one side to the other

Human Rights and African Airwaves: Mediating Equality on the Chichewa Radio. Harri Englund (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, 2011).

Human Rights and African Airwaves focuses on Nkhani Zam'maboma, a popular Chichewa news bulletin broadcast on Malawi's public radio. The program often takes authorities to task and questions much of the human rights rhetoric that comes from international organizations. Highlighting obligation and mutual dependence, the program expresses, in popular idioms and local narrative forms, grievances and injustices that are closest to Malawi's impoverished public. Harri Englund reveals broadcasters' everyday struggles with state-sponsored biases and a listening public with strong views and a critical ear. This fresh look at African-language media shows how Africans effectively confront inequality, exploitation, and poverty.



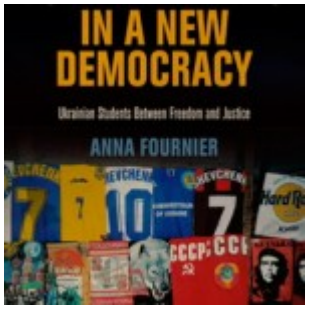
Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present. Didier Fassin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

In the face of the world's disorders, moral concerns have provided a powerful ground for developing international as well as local policies. Didier Fassin draws on case materials from France, South Africa, Venezuela, and Palestine to explore the meaning of humanitarianism in the contexts of immigration and asylum, disease and poverty, disaster and war. He traces and analyzes recent shifts in moral and political discourse and practices — what he terms "humanitarian reason"— and shows in vivid examples how humanitarianism is confronted by inequality and violence. Deftly illuminating the tensions and contradictions in humanitarian government, he reveals the ambiguities confronting states and organizations as they struggle to deal with the intolerable. His critique of humanitarian reason, respectful of the participants involved but lucid about the stakes they disregard, offers theoretical and empirical foundations for a political and moral anthropology.

Building Fortress Europe: The Polish-Ukrainian Frontier. Karolina S. Follis (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

What happens when a region accustomed to violent shifts in borders is subjected to a new, peaceful partitioning? Has the European Union spent the last decade creating a new Iron Curtain at its fringes?*Building Fortress Europe: The Polish-*

Ukrainian Frontier examines these questions from the perspective of the EU's new eastern external boundary. Since the Schengen Agreement in 1985, European states have worked together to create a territory free of internal borders and with heavily policed external boundaries. In 2004 those boundaries shifted east as the EU expanded to include eight postsocialist countries—including Poland but excluding neighboring Ukraine. Through an analysis of their shared frontier, *Building Fortress Europe* provides an ethnographic examination of the human, social, and political consequences of developing a specialized, targeted, and legally advanced border regime in the enlarged EU.

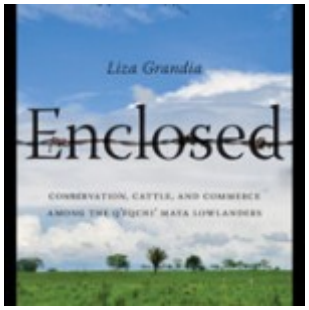


Forging Rights in a New Democracy: Ukrainian Students Between Freedom and Justice. Anna Fournier: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.

The last two decades have been marked by momentous changes in forms of governance throughout the post-Soviet region. Ukraine's political system, like those of other formerly socialist states of Eastern Europe, has often been characterized as being "in transition," moving from a Soviet system to one more closely aligned with Western models. Anna Fournier challenges this view, investigating what is increasingly recognized as a critical aspect of contemporary global rights discourse: the active involvement of young people living in societies undergoing radical change. Fournier delineates a generation simultaneously embracing various ideological stances in an attempt to make sense of social conditions marked by the disjuncture between democratic ideals and the everyday realities of growing economic inequality.

Pogrom in Gujarat: Hindu Nationalism and Anti-Muslim Violence in India. Parvis Ghassem-Fachandi (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

In 2002, after an altercation between Muslim vendors and Hindu travelers at a railway station in the Indian state of Gujarat, fifty-nine Hindu pilgrims were burned to death. The ruling nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party blamed Gujarat's entire Muslim minority for the tragedy and incited fellow Hindus to exact revenge. The resulting violence left more than one thousand people dead–most of them Muslims–and tens of thousands more displaced from their homes. Parvis Ghassem-Fachandi witnessed the bloodshed up close. In *Pogrom in Gujarat*, he provides a riveting ethnographic account of collective violence in which the doctrine of ahimsa–or nonviolence–and the closely associated practices of vegetarianism became implicated by legitimating what they formally disavow. Ghassem-Fachandi looks at how newspapers, movies, and other media helped to fuel the pogrom. He shows how the vegetarian sensibilities of Hindus and the language of sacrifice were manipulated to provoke disgust against Muslims and mobilize the aspiring middle classes across caste and class differences in the name of Hindu nationalism. Drawing on his intimate knowledge of Gujarat's culture and politics and the close ties he shared with some of the pogrom's sympathizers, Ghassem-Fachandi offers a strikingly original interpretation of the different ways in which Hindu proponents of ahimsa became complicit in the very violence they claimed to renounce.



Enclosed: Conservation, Cattle, and Commerce among the Q'eqchi' Maya Lowlanders. Liza Grandia (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012).

This impassioned and rigorous analysis of the territorial plight of the Q'eqchi Maya, Guatemala's second largest indigenous group, highlights an urgent problem for indigenous communities around the world – repeated displacement from their lands. Having lost most of their highland territory to foreign coffee planters at the end of the 19th century, Q'eqchi' people began migrating into the lowland forests of northern Guatemala and southern Belize. Then, pushed deeper into the frontier by cattle ranchers, lowland Q'eqchi' found themselves in conflict with biodiversity conservationists who established protected areas across this region during the 1990s.

We wish to share Polar's review editor Ilana Gershon's reminder for authors of forthcoming publications: if you think your book should be reviewed by Polar, make sure that your publisher is providing them with a review copy.
We thank Ilana Gershon for her collaboration, and look forward to more creative collaboration between Allegra and Polar!

The Laboratory as a Space of Intellectual Freedom

Allegra
March, 2014

Some of our devoted readers may have wondered why we chose to call Allegra a virtual LABORATORY. That (one of) our primary aim(s) is to experiment with scholarly content and form should be evident enough by now. Yet, what exactly transform such a spirit into a 'lab'? In many ways this obscurity reflects 'the Allegra spirit' more generally: we believe that open-endedness is experiment's best friend. Thus we strive to create discussions devoid of clear-cut answers which instead unfold, 'evolve' and become re-incarnated until all foreseen – and unforeseen – avenues have been exhausted.

The metaphor of the laboratory is, of course, not our own invention, but rather a conceptual formulation 'in vogue' for experiments of varying kinds at present – for example the EASA called for 'laboratories' for its 2014 meeting. For us, we borrow this notion from anthropological initiatives responding to the 'critical turn' in anthropology (still remember this – it was 'pre-ontological turn') initiated by Marcus, Fischer and Clifford in the wake of 'Writing culture'. The critical turn echoed a sense of crisis of representation in anthropology, simultaneously calling for a radical questioning of the status of ethnography as a source of knowledge, its methodology and configuration of knowledge as power.

This crisis of representation are intensified by anthropologists' involvement in increasingly complex field sites located within and amid defined assemblages of world and global systems, forcing us to rethink collectively our methods for

researching the contemporary. How do we trace 'the social' amid the networks, assemblages, knowledge economies, and complex institutional arrangements of global orders?

Marcus and Fischer offer the concept of 'para-site' or 'third space' as a technique of knowledge production better apt at capturing the new relationships built in ethnographic encounters in situations where the 'other' (the subject of study) no longer exists and is better understood as a collaborative partner. Annelise Riles goes in the same direction and suggests the concept of 'collateral knowledge' to envision how anthropology can 'fill in the gaps' of other disciplines.

With the idea of the 'laboratory', Paul Rabinow tries to answer similar concerns. In his concept note "Steps toward an anthropological laboratory", he writes:

> *The challenge is to invent new forms of inquiry, writing, and ethics for an anthropology of the contemporary. The problem is: how to rethink and remake the conditions of contemporary knowledge production, dissemination, and critique, in the interpretive sciences? The direction forward does not include yet another attempt to have anthropology imitate a natural science model anymore than it implies a foreclosure of anthropology finding a form as a distinctive knowledge practice [1]*

But Rabinow does not envision the lab as a mere platform for trying out different configurations of inquiry and critique. In his view, the lab is also a concrete alternative to the institutional space of the university that has become structurally inapt for promoting the kinds of collaborations necessary to the study of increasingly complex social phenomena.

> *It is fertile to inquire (using both genealogical and archaeological methods) into spaces (including the arts) of collaborative and critical practice. A necessary, if not sufficient, step in that direction is to invent practices of knowledge production, dissemination, and critique, that resolutely refuse the symbolic capital driven individualism so prevalent in an academic world permeated with*

its own form of consumer capitalism. Further, if such work is to remain distinct from the therapeutic, it must be rigorous, engaged, depersonalized, and integrate innovative forms of co-labor.

In a previous post, we have discussed how the recent transformations of the academia have deeply transformed our work environment, encouraging competition instead of collaboration. We have highlighted how audits are gradually standardizing academic genre. We, at Allegra, feel that if anthropologists need, as the new management culture suggests, to take the issue of societal relevance seriously, the ways to achieve relevance should not be dictated by more or less well-intentioned political agendas.

The virtual lab that we want to create has no other objective than to open a forum for intellectual freedom, where we collectively discuss the future of our discipline and the terms of anthropologists' societal engagement. Hence, we agree with Rabinow's call to "imagine new hybrid organizations, adjacent to and in many parasitic on, the university."

A number of such spaces of collaboration and experimentations have taken shape over the years. The Sensory Ethnography Lab at Harvard encourages creative work at the crossroads of visual and acoustic research and ethnography. The Laboratory for the Ethnography of the UK at UCL promotes empirically driven thinking, comparison, ethnographic reflexivity, and readiness to experiment with unconventional themes and creative interdisciplinary methodologies. The multiplication of such initiatives is a good indicator of the productive need for our discipline to constantly rethink its working methods. Our aim is to continue developing Allegra into a significant contributor to such endeavours, both those in existence and those still in the process of being established!

---

[1] Rabinow, Paul. "Steps toward an anthropological laboratory," ARC Concept

Note, No. 1, February 2, 2006. *anthropos-lab.net/wp/publications/2007/08/conceptnoteno1.pdf*

Also see: Rabinow, Marcus, Faubion, Rees. 2008. *Designs for an Anthropology of the Contemporary*. Duke University Press.

Anthropological Job-hunting (and gathering): Finding Non-Academic Work (1 of 3)

Isaac Morrison
March, 2014

In [my last post] I expressed my concern that an overemphasis on oblique anthropological theory was doing a disservice to young anthropology PhDs by leaving them poorly prepared for a shrinking academic job field. I would be a sad advocate for pragmatic relevance if I only spoke about it in abstract terms, so I'd like to share some of what I've learned over 5+ years of job-hunting with a graduate degree in anthropology. The lessons I've learned may not be applicable to all of you, but they've gotten me into a job that I love, and hopefully some of what I share with will help to do the same for you.

Part 1: Skills

Your abilities and experience are far more important to most potential employers than your knowledge. In preparation for the job-hunting process you should reframe your self-presentation in terms of what you can do, rather than what you

know.

To do this you will need to write to your audience. Your audience is a keyword-searching computer program run by an overworked HR person with an AA degree. Later on, someone with more specialized knowledge may take a look at your resume, but first you need to get past the gatekeeper.

Furthermore, even if someone needs to hire an anthropologist, they may not know they need to hire an anthropologist. They may simply think, "I need someone who can conduct open-ended interviews, identify trends in that data using quantitative analysis, and write up the findings in conjunction with some basic context." Most people who don't have graduate degrees don't understand what a PhD entails, much less an anthropology PhD.

- Are you experienced in research design?
- Can you conduct research in a foreign language?
- Have you prepared documents for publication?
- Do you have experience with systematic internet and database research?

Despite the fact that these are implicit parts of most anthropology PhD work, they are not necessarily obvious to non-anthropologists. With this in mind, it may be helpful to think about what other skills you have or can acquire that will make you a more attractive new hire, while also making you a better anthropologist. Some of the obvious ones are:

- Quantitative Data Analysis Software (SPSS, STATA, SAS, R)
- Qualitative data analysis software (MaxQDA, Atlas TI, NVIVO)
- Geographic Imaging Systems (ArcGIS/ArcView, Autodesk, Mapinfo)
- Online survey platforms (Survey Monkey, SurveyGizmo)
- Social network analysis (NodeXL is a free add-on to MS Excel that's great for this)
- Crowdsourcing software (Ushahidi)

Note that these are all software applications. Proficiency in high-demand software

is a useful way to show your capabilities in terms that non-academics can easily see as relevant. There are, of course, much less obvious ones that are worth exploring:

- **Business writing and technical writing**: Being told, "you write like an academic" is not a compliment outside of academia. Editors and project managers do not relish the idea of having to rewrite material and retrain writers. Experience and/or formal instruction in generating tight, easy-to-read content may help counter the stereotypes that are all too often associated with the worst excesses of scholarly jargon.
- **Grant-writing:** The experience that you've gained writing applications for research grants is, of course, directly applicable to grant writing in the nonprofit sector. However, there is also substantial skill overlap between writing grant proposals and writing contract bids, and if you have successfully done the former, you should be able to explicitly make a case for your ability to do the latter as well..
- **Budgeting**: It's no fun, but being responsible for money just screams "responsibility" to a potential employer. Anything you can do to show your budgeting savvy will be hugely beneficial to how you are perceived by a potential employer, even if the position you're applying to doesn't mention it explicitly.
- **Administrative/Management experience**: One of the areas where I feel that anthropology's class-conscious underpinnings has hampered the employability of many otherwise desirable job candidates is in its general reticence to be associated with anything resembling "the man". Egalitarianism, proletarianism, and anarchic/acephalous organization structures are exciting and fascinating to us to the point where the idea of taking a basic business management course would never even occur to many formally trained anthropologists. As a result, general management processes related to leadership, delegation, accountability, and workplan development end up being learned through trial and error.

I understand that I'm barely covering these issues, and many of my points may be

obvious to many of you, but there's only so much that can be said in a single blog post. I'm acutely aware of how much it sucks to be neck deep in debt without a job. It is my sincerest hope that the debt load associated with higher education in North America (and elsewhere) will be mitigated sometime soon, and the academic shift away from full-time and towards adjunct staffing will start to change someday in the near future, but in the meantime I hope my comments here are at least somewhat helpful to some of you.

Note: You may find it annoying that I use the term Anthropology, when I'm mostly talking about Cultural Anthropology. In my experience, teachers in the fields of biological anthropology and archeology do more to prepare their students for work in the nonacademic world than cultural anthropology teachers do. I don't know enough people coming out of linguistic anthropology programs to know the state of that field, but my comments here are intended to be broadly applicable to anyone with an anthropology degree.

Allegra CALLING!

Allegra
March, 2014

Allegra: A virtual Lab of Legal Anthropology is looking for new contributors eager to share some of their research findings or their views on the future of anthropology and academic sholarship more broadly. We are especially interested in:

– Fieldnotes (see samples here)
– Essays
– Interviews
– Book reviews

And any other proposal that you think meets the website's purpose!

Allegra is also calling for weird 'STUFF' for the ALLEGRA Virtual Museum of Obscure Fieldwork Artefacts (AVMoFA)! Join ALLEGRA in our search for the most extravagant fieldwork artefacts to be displayed at the AVMoFA – the only one of its kind in the WORLD!

Allegra is an online experiment to fill the ‘Dead Space’ that exists between societal discussions ongoing today and the eventual scholarly publications appearing in a few years. Allegra features texts, suggestions, and proposals for collaboration that pushes academics to rethink the borders of conventional academic boxes. It encourages and facilitates exchanges across disciplines and between scholars and artists. It promotes innovative approaches to the dissemination of knowledge by using the full range of existing online technologies (videos, live streams, slide shows, sound clouds) in order to rethink the formats under which scientific knowledge is presented to the world.

Allegra seeks to trigger discussions that push the boundaries of scholarly representations of ‘the law’ in the broadest sense. In addition to viewing the law as a site of normative engagement, Allegra contributors strive to examine its knowledge practices, authority claims, notions of subjectivity and agency. Jointly, we see these features as summarising central elements of the contemporary era as a whole. Indeed, we envision the ‘law’ as a privileged entry point into ‘modernity’ under its various manifestations, such as (among others): the increasing place of technologies in everyday life, the pervasive role of measurements tools such as indicators and assessment exercises, the ubiquitous spread of expertise and audit culture.

Send your proposals before 30th, March 2014 to: stuff@allegralaboratory.net

---

‘War’ by Antonio De Lauri

Luca Nevola
March, 2014

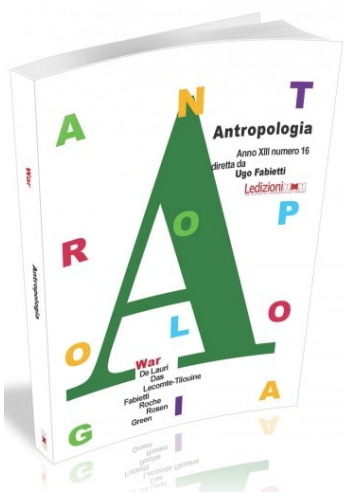
De Lauri, Antonio, ed., 2013, “War”, *Antropologia*, Vol. 16, Milan.

135 pp., ISBN 978-88-6705-129-8

Although war and, more broadly, the ‘problem of violence’ have long been debated, war itself cyclically undergoes processes of *euphemisation* through which violence is rendered opaque, oxymorons are created (e.g. ‘just war’, ‘humanitarian war’) and democratic ‘audiences’ are made accomplices of ‘morally justified’ acts of violence.

This meaty little book challenges these simplifying rhetorics by providing a complex and multifaceted account of war and war-related phenomena and by questioning the contradictions of modern liberal discourses. As the editor states,

in this volume no attempt is made at defining the ‘cause’ or ‘nature’ of war. Rather, all the contributors concur in destabilising «the certainty of positions that aim to define what war is», thus enlarging the «arbitrary delimitation of reality» provided by definitions (p. 18). The main aim of the volume is thus the study of war in terms of its discursive construction, implications, and cultural and social prerequisites (p. 9), in an attempt to fill the space between economico-political explanations and sociobiological assumptions (p. 19).



De Lauri’s introduction weaves together the different voices of the book, going far beyond a mere summary of the contributions. Firstly, he criticises the ‘positive-sounding’ discourses of the ‘media environment’ that deliberately ignore the ‘radical contradictions’ of war. An anthropology of war conceived as a contemporary form of cultural and political critique − he states − needs instead to recognise these radical contradictions and to interpret structural mutations in the ordinary and everyday life. Secondly, he proceeds to describe the multiple dynamics involved in the construction of the ‘enemy’. Given that «identifying an enemy is a crucial element of every ‘call for conflict’» (p. 11), anthropology has plenty to teach us about the complex dynamics of ‘selfing / othering’, ‘identity / alterity’, ‘inclusion / exclusion’, cultural distancing mechanisms, production of social boundaries, etc.

Finally, the cultural-critical approach of anthropology entails the support of a counter-rhetoric of war «that critiques the dominant rhetoric produced at both the mass media and specialised levels, which depicts war as a necessary evil» (p. 9). De Lauri argues that ‘indiscipline’, a critical category embodied in the political trope of the ‘undisciplined’ or ‘reluctant’ soldier, «may be seen as a useful instrument for the production of a counter-rhetoric of war» (p. 18).

Following this lead, the first chapter of the volume addresses the issue of non-cruelty. Analysing the great Sanskrit epic of Mahabharata, Veena Das highlights

the contradictions of warfare, as displayed in the mythological imagination. At the overt level − she argues − the epic proposes a connection between sovereignty and the monopoly over violence, and presents war as a matter of justice, vengeance and display of heroic virtues. But within the story we can find an alternative perspective.

Das selects some scenes of the epic in order to emphasise the counter-rhetoric that runs under the main voice. A first insight leads us to consider 'the loss of self' as an essential corollary of warfare (p. 27). In the 'dice game' scene, gods do not offer any way out of war and are questioned by a woman. This unusual trope discloses a central feature of Das' argument and the main interrogative of her contribution: «how those who are excluded from the political community come to have a place in the mythological imagining of warfare?» (p. 26). We need to seek the answer in the concept of non-cruelty − *anrishamsya*. Non-cruelty points to the experiences of intimacy, relationality, and togetherness, as the only way out of cycles of violence. Significantly, in the epic, this perspective is not suggested by gods, or by men, rather by «those who are excluded from the political community − women and animals, as well as earth itself» (p. 26).

Chapters 2 and 3 address the issue of sacrifice. Fabietti poses a clear-cut theoretical question: «Can suicide attacks carried out by Muslim men and women against military and civilian targets be considered acts of war and/or 'religiously motivated' sacrifices?» (p. 57). His complex and nuanced argument rests on a multilayered analysis of suicidal violence, both considered as a politico-military act and a form of social communication (p. 65).

Fabietti deliberately avoids any attempt to unravel the problem of the religious dimension of human bombing, proposing a shift in the focus of the debate. Human bombing − he argues − needs to be interpreted as having an underlying 'sacrificial configuration': a combination of violence with transcendency, which does not necessarily entail a religious dimension. 'Transcendency' is the 'world of the invisible' upon which the life of the community depends (p. 63). Yet, it emerges in the political relationship with an external enemy.

When the martyr undergoes a process of consecration, the contact with the transcendent dimension confers him a greater 'strength'. This strength comes from the martyr's community, which recognising his sacrifice and his authority obtains a heightened sense of collectivity and is exerted, in the suicidal act, against an external enemy. Thus, the sacrifice of the individual asserts the eternity of the group and fortifies it «in relation to the suffering endured at the hands of an enemy» (p. 64).

This 'sacrificial configuration' is given form and meaning within a peculiar historico-social context. This context is shaped by the 'visual discourse' of the media environment, which constitutes a public for the witnessing of faith of the human bomber and defines the importance of the politico-ideological framework of the *jihad*.

Lecomte-Tilouine moves on a different level. She investigates the frequency of the analogy between sacrifice and war in the Maoist ideology of the People's War in Nepal. Her assumption is that collective forms of violence are to be conceived as a possible form taken by sacrifice. To demonstrate her point, she analyses the forms and meanings of sacrifice at two levels: the mythological one and that of ritual practices. At both levels, sacrifice acts as the organiser of caste society and it is also indicative of tensions internal to it: it puts on the stage the conflict between pure and impure castes, and thus reproduces the hierarchical organisation of the society.

For this reason, the sacrifice has an inherent political meaning, since it «exposes […] the violence of the group inflicted on itself», interpreted as «the ultimate test of group belonging» (p. 53). At this level, sacrificial violence produces unity, bringing together the whole society for a joint project which is prefigured in the act itself: sacrificial war. Once the group is unified, it leads «an equally violent and sacrificial campaign, but directed at an outside entity» (p. 53).

Given these premises, the Maoist revolutionary movement needs to be conceived in the combinatorial nature of two models of sacrifice: «the People's War took its

vocabulary from the war-like royal sacrifice, but combined it with the Brahmanic model of self-sacrifice» (p. 53) transposing violence from a sacrificial to a war-like context.

Both Fabietti and Lecomte-Tilouine question the theoretical status of sacrifice, engaging in an interesting dialogue with classical theories. On the one hand Lecomte-Tilouine criticises, among others, Girard's theory of the 'scapegoat', stating that in the Nepalese case *a*) rivalry between men is not based on identity (thus is not mimetic) and *b*) blood sacrifice is not 'containing' (since it initiates violence). On the other, Bloch's theory of the 'rebounding violence' stimulates a fertile dialogue with both contributions, proving that − as Fabietti argues − the comparative task of anthropology is not doomed to an epistemological nihilism (p. 57).

In chapter 4, Roche brings a command of history and ethnography to an examination of the Tajik post-civil war, investigating how categories of analysis and categories of practice are related to each other and by highlighting how the conflict has shaped these categories (p. 70). The author takes into account how the «ordering of civil war events by researchers and journalists according to specific features that were seen as the causes of the conflict» (p. 70) has explained the conflict through the notions of *mahallgaroi* and "violence specialists". She argues that these categories have been used to establish processes of selfing and othering that heavily reshaped the everyday categories of practice, transforming «multiple and fluid groups into rigid group identifications» (p. 88).

The same sensitive attention to the role of violence in everyday life is explored in Green's account of the Yup'ik combat soldiers of south-western Alaska. Green describes her interlocutors as people that «shoulder the burden of two wars»: *a*) a racialized class war and *b*) the hardships of combatants. On the one hand she attempts to «situate the experiences of deployment to war by Yup'ik men within a historical context of structural, symbolic and everyday violence» (p. 114). On the other she addresses two main motivational arguments that lead soldiers to join

the army: their hope of creating a future for themselves and their families and their will to reinvigorate a shared cultural identity. Finally, she considers the difficulties of returning from war, describing «the sense of confusion, pain, grief and isolation from others that bears down relentlessly on the psyche and soul of a combat soldier […]» (p. 126).

Both Roche's contribution and Green's one pose the pressing question of how violence reshapes everyday life practices and common sense categories. A similar concern has been recently put forward by Gerd Baumann in his 'Grammars of Identity / Alterity'. He poses the question of how − under the Nazi regime − 'normal' people acquiesced in the project of the Jewish mass annihilation. Convincingly, he demonstrates that it was a perverted use of language that seduced even the 'initially innocent' into complicity with genocidal policies and a politics of language that de-humanised the other. These contributions urge us to consider the problem of violence in the dynamics of its everyday production, in the sometimes opaque − although always pervasive − dimension of the 'banality of evil'.

Finally, Rosen's contribution shows how our «general understanding of the role of children in warfare has been seriously distorted by legal, humanitarian, and popular notions of […] *childhood innocence* distorted and subverted by *adult culpability*» (p. 108). He claims that this trope of childhood as the *locus* of innocence, vulnerability, and dependency is the byproduct of a 19th century cultural and legal shift. To support his claim he brings evidences from the 18th and early 19th century popular culture that describes the child soldier as an iconic symbol denoting public virtue and the nobility of sacrifice. Moving to the analysis of modern accounts of child soldiering and to the contemporary popular fictional literature, Rosen argues that, on the contrary, the contemporary iconic child soldier «serves as a symbolic proxy of the horrors of war» (p. 103).

Here we might ask: why does the trope of child soldiers is effective in raising a feeling of horror in Western audiences? Rosen's hypothesis − I argue − is consistent with Talal Asad's reflections on the *feeling* of horror, as exposed in his

book ‘On suicide bombing’. Westerners’ reactions to child soldiers are in fact professions of horror, caused by the deliberate transgression of a peculiar boundary: that between childhood innocence and the terrifying dynamics of war. So construed, the trope of the child soldier is functional to political rhetorics that aim at distinguishing morally justified and unjustified wars.

All together, one of the main scopes of the volume seems to be strictly related to the transformative power of violence generated by war. The individual that comes within the force field of violence experiences a loss of self (Das); sacrificial violence structures the socio-political organisation (Lecomte-Tilouine) and adds a transcendental “strength” to the martyr (Fabietti); violence shapes everyday categories of practice (Roche) while framing life chances and expectations (Green). Overall, violence is a discursive construct that is itself transformed by our own cultural assumptions (Rosen).

In a counter-intuitive movement, *war as such* is given little attention in this volume. The editor has provoked a polyglot discussion to emerge, which befits its heterogeneous frontiers, rather than imposing a single model or trajectory. Consistently, the authors have chosen to engage in a debate where the wide range of ethnographic contexts (India, Tajikistan, Alaska) and the different levels of analysis (discursive, historical, ethnographic, theoretical) eventually return both the drama and the complexity of what we associate with war. This book should be of interest to ethicists, anthropologists, scholars of religion and violence. More broadly, given the key topic it addresses, the bok will speak to an audience interested in widening the conceptual boundaries of what we are used to define as ‘war’ and ‘violence’.