

BOOK REVIEWS

ABIGAL A. DUMES, *Divided bodies: Lyme disease, contested illness, and evidence-based medicine*, Durham NC and London: Duke University Press 2020, 360 pp. eBook. ISBN 978-1-47800-739-5.

In *Divided bodies: Lyme disease, contested illness, and evidence-based medicine*, Abigail A. Dumes presents a compelling account of the controversy surrounding Lyme disease, from its diagnosis to its treatments, and from its epistemic production and practices to its lived realities. Prima facie, the controversy, according to Dumes, largely centres around whether or not Lyme disease persists after the usual standard of care (i.e., what is known as chronic Lyme disease), based on competing epistemologies. Dumes clearly states that her aim is not to resolve this debate, but rather to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how Lyme disease is lived and treated. What makes Dumes' exploration so compelling is her ethnographic method of 'quantum ethnography', a term inspired by Elizabeth Vann (1995). According to Dumes, quantum ethnography allows her to '*fully and simultaneously inhabit every perspective*' of the Lyme divide (13, emphasis in the original). Like genealogical approaches, this type of ethnographic method contextualizes the various, perhaps at times competing claims, embracing their tension in order to analyse the diverse meanings of Lyme disease. This not only has significance for the ways in which people make claims to truth, but, more importantly, for how to represent and bear witness to them.

Throughout the book, Dumes expertly weaves robust social and anthropological theory with rich ethnography. The book is broken down into five chapters. In Chapter 1, Dumes further unpacks and maps the polysemous and varied complexity of the Lyme disease controversy. To do this, she takes a rhizomatic approach showing that the controversy is not merely grounded in a simple disagreement over the appropriate diagnosis and treatment of Lyme disease. Rather, in addition to a dispute over diagnosis, testing and treatment, the controversy is a combination of other contestations too, such as the species and strains that cause Lyme disease, its geographical distribution, transmission mechanisms and vectors, co-infections, the tension between signs ('objective' and measurable manifestations of the disease by the practitioner) and symptoms ('subjective' experiences of the illness by the patient), and pathophysiology.

Chapter 2 explores Lyme disease prevention techniques through an 'epidemiology of affect', that is, how people's relations with the natural environment shape their engagement with it and the types of prevention techniques that are deployed (66). For those living in Lyme-endemic parts of the United States of America, Dumes uncovers an ambivalence towards nature,

simultaneously revered as a source of beauty and terror. People reside close to nature because of their adoration of it and desire to be close to it, yet there is an environmental risk of contracting Lyme disease that they must manage through preventative techniques. However, these techniques, which usually require another person, are less about the efficacy of preventing Lyme disease than about enacting intimacy and care in social relationships.

Chapter 3 provides insights into the lived realities of Lyme disease, offering five different portraits of how the experience of the illness is embodied and varied. Dumes humanizes a group that is often deprived of compassion. Each story is ethnographically rich and highlights the multiplicity of how Lyme disease manifests itself in these patients' lives: through 'irritability, rage, headaches, muscle and joint pain, neuropathy, dizziness, forgetfulness, and light sensitivity, among other symptoms' (155). It is here that Dumes masterfully depicts the divide within Lyme patients' bodies: the lived experiences of Lyme patients conflict with how the disease is perceived and treated within the framework of evidence-based medicine. Lyme patients, in particular chronic ones, struggle to have their pain recognized and legitimized. For this reason, many Lyme patients turn towards 'Lyme-literate' physicians and/or complementary alternative medicine (CAM) so they can feel validated and, perhaps most importantly, be offered the possibility of feeling better (although not cured).

Chapter 4 focuses on the disagreement over how to diagnose and treat Lyme disease, drawing on ethnographic data from two different approaches: mainstream physicians and Lyme-literate physicians. Mainstream physicians use a biomedical model to distinguish between bodily signs and symptoms, privileging the former over the latter for diagnostic criteria, whereas Lyme-literate physicians take a similar approach to CAM, which considers symptoms to be signs for making diagnoses. In this way, Dumes reveals how the concept of medically unexplained illnesses is contained within biomedicine itself: if bodily signs (i.e., symptoms) are what define a phenomenon as medically explainable, it then follows that the absence of these bodily signs (i.e., symptoms) renders a phenomenon medically unexplainable.

Chapter 5 turns towards the political underpinnings of the Lyme controversy by examining the hegemony of evidence-based medicine, which hierarchizes evidence by giving primacy towards more 'objective' forms of it. Dumes critically analyses what counts as evidence and in doing so demonstrates how evidence-based medicine both politicizes and legitimizes which bodily conditions matter. At the same time, evidence-based medicine paradoxically amplifies contestation rather than resolves disputes because it provides a platform for everyone – patients, practitioners, scientists, politicians – to make claims to medical truth.

In doing all the above, Dumes successfully shows where the tension lies and places the different interpretations of Lyme disease into dialogue with one another. Even though these interpretations may not be reconcilable, at least in the foreseeable future, what is important is that Dumes lays the groundwork for reconciliation by making these conflicting interpretations intelligible. Dumes's notion of divided bodies offers a new and useful framework for making sense of other forms of chronic illness that are medically unexplainable from the perspective of evidence-based medicine. This book makes a wonderful contribution not only to the field of medical anthropology, but also to public health, medical scholarship and anyone else interested in Lyme disease.

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Reference

Vann, Elizabeth F. 1995. Quantum ethnography: anthropology in the post-Einsteinian era, *Lambda Alpha Journal*, Vol. 25-26, 71-80.

NICHOLAS Q. EMLLEN, *Language, coffee, and migration on an Andean-Amazonian frontier*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2020, 273 pp. ISBN 9780816540709.

In *Language, coffee, and migration*, Nicholas Q. Emlen invites us to the agricultural frontier of the Alto Urubamba Valley of southern Peru to explore the interface between ethnic groups, languages, economies and environmental priorities. The book is ambitious in scope, covering not only the complex linguistic ecologies and practicalities of the region, but also the development of new regimes of agriculture and the incorporation of a remote and previously difficult to access region into global trade networks. In order to cover this expansive material, Emlen structures the book wisely, dividing it into two distinct halves. The first half, which provides a foundation for the remainder of the book, covers the socio-linguistic practices and histories of the region and one of its individual multi-ethnic and multi-lingual communities, the Matsigenka community of Yokiri, located at a key site of frontier expansion. The second half explores ethnographically how and in which languages and registers linguistic interaction occurs in relation to the increasing importance of coffee production in the region.

One of the book's most striking contributions emerges early on through Emlen's use of a cohesive blend of ethnography and fine-grained archival work to persuasively challenge a number of binary divisions which are prominent in existing scholarship on both the geography and

linguistics of the region. Emlen's work in complicating and updating the categories and boundaries drawn in previous academic studies is a fine example of applying the anthropological interest in human categorizing activities to our own discipline, field sites and methodologies.

Emlen situates his research within several geographical and academic nexuses, revealing points of continuity where previous research has emphasized more formal categorical divisions. First, the Alto Urubamba Valley sits where the highlands (Andes) and lowlands (Amazon) meet, effectively 'off the map for each group of scholars' (30); previous work within the valley has either focused on one end of it, characterized by Indigenous Matsigenka villages, or the other end, where *colonos* (Quechua-speakers who have migrated from the Andean highlands over several generations) predominantly reside. Working in this overlooked frontier in the middle of the valley, itself located in the middle of the Andean-Amazonian transition zone, Emlen calls on us to think *across* these borders and divisions and to use the trilingual cultural landscape to understand 'the day-to-day integration of these geographical regions rather than the emergence of a distinct, intermediate form at their intersection' (26). Deploying histories of movement both within and across the region, its languages and its socio-ethnic groups reveals not the context of binaries that are typical of the regional literature (Indigenous/settler; highland/lowland), but instead what is shared. Emlen's suggestion that '[a] view from the poles obscures what happens in between' should make us all reflect on where our own research and viewpoints lie (78).

In the second half of the book, the turn to the use of language as it relates to coffee cultivation activities—such as farming itself, but also workshops, the market place, and even transiting coffee [not very clear: transporting coffee?] shows how Matsigenka, Quechua and (Andean) Spanish are spoken in various combinations and indexed to different forms and moments of participation in the coffee economy. Spanish was used in the monthly workshops facilitated by agronomists sent by the Peruvian government. The highly technical register of the Spanish used in these workshops meant, more often than not, that native Matsigenka and Quechua speakers were unable to understand, and consequently practice, the techniques for improving coffee they were being presented with. This shared experience of workshop participation, however, brought the multiethnic group together as agrarian subjects whose common ground is coffee cultivation. On the other hand, Quechua is the primary language used between farmers and brokers, including when selling one's coffee; in this regard Matsigenka farmers are at a disadvantage, given that they are less familiar with operating in Quechua. The argument made here is that, although coffee production an area through which Matsigenka farmers integrate themselves socioeconomically into the wider agricultural society of the region, interactions between these three languages become

sites ‘at which socioeconomic inequality [is] generated and reproduced’ (175). Thus, Emlen shows how socioeconomic integration is, at best, uneven, even as new subjectivities are produced.

The environmental change that occurs on the frontier in the form of shifting patterns of land use are woven with the narrative throughout—we see it most notably as a feedback loop that occurs when changes already in process contribute to individuals’ switching to coffee production, which exacerbates this environmental degradation. Given the wealth of Emlen’s data, it comes as something of a surprise to the reader that there is little in the way of a standalone discussion of these changes or of the region’s environmental future(s). This absence is to some degree understandable, given that this is a slim and tightly argued volume; however, drawing more concrete links with wider discourses on climate change and vulnerable populations would have given the book more resonance beyond its geographical and temporal foci (as the author notes several times, this is a record of a particular time, 2009-2012, on a particular agricultural frontier). Nevertheless, this book will be of immense value to scholars of the Andes and Amazonia (and all the spaces in between), as well as to scholars of agricultural transitions and environmental change, regardless of region.

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MICHAEL G. FLAHERTY, LOTTE MEINERT and ANNE LINE DALSGÅRD (eds.)

Time work: studies of temporal agency, New York and Oxford: Berghahn 2020, 234 pp. ISBN 9781789207040.

The publication of this volume was preceded by Michael G. Flaherty’s year-long visiting professorship at the Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS) between 2016 and 2017, during which a symposium called *Time work: new research on temporal agency* was organized in collaboration with Anne Line Dalsgård and Lotte Meinert. What was not immediately evident to this reviewer was that both the interdisciplinary symposium and book that followed reference (or reverence) Flaherty’s *Time work: customizing temporal experience* and the author’s later expansions (2002, 2003, 2011, 2013 [full details in reference list at end or delete]) on the concept he has defined. *Time Work*, it is suggested, which integrates agency and temporality (Flaherty 2003 [ditto]) and is enacted to provoke or evade various kinds of temporal experience. Flaherty’s opening chapter stands out not only as a conceptual sociological essay preceding ten largely

descriptive ethnographic contributions, but as a theoretical unifier that, unfortunately, reads as superimposed more than emergent.

The breadth and applicability of time work is at once its strength and weakness, as it seems that no human endeavour can evade it. Its enactment requires motivation, necessary skill and resources. Its outcomes can be uncertain, successes or failures. Yet in their introduction the editors state that unconscious and unintended forms also exist, as ‘people in various settings often follow local practices for reasons that have little or nothing to do with temporal agency’ though obviously (to external observers) influencing their temporal experience (4). Time work is often used interchangeably with ‘temporal agency’, and there is enthusiasm for the analysis of these concepts that might ‘reverse the causal arrow’ or correct ‘misconceptions’ that things happen *in* time, rather than *to* it (Robbin 2007 [ditto]). All the while, for Flaherty, time work is explicit in human interventions to modify trajectories of social interaction, often with an aim to solve ‘anticipated problems with temporal experience’ [give page reference for all quotes]; here, the inevitable recognition of causality and exteriority echo definitions anthropologists have previously made for technology and magic alike (e.g. Gell 1992 [ditto]). Linearity is a given, too, in sometimes simplistic portrayals of disorder, whereby dysfunctional time work could spell anxiety ‘generated’ by excessive anticipation of a future, or depression through ‘clinging to a grief-inducing past’ (18).

While it would be excessive to demand a complete philosophy of time, the volume might have benefitted from authors stating which kind of conception of time they, or their informants, are working with. In Williams and Meinert’s fieldwork at a church in northern Uganda, for example, a séance invites ghosts that ‘beckon victims to go back in time, to live in the past’, and in their discussion of trauma, traumatized persons ‘involuntarily return to the past’ (37). But is to recollect to relive? Are flashbacks not always experienced within a present against which it is ‘untimely’? When a local man suggests that in becoming mad one is not ‘really there’ or ‘there in the head’, it is interpreted to mean ‘in other words, you are somewhere else in time’ – but does this follow? A nod to eternalism could organize some of the claims made here.

In a similar vein, in Christensen and Sandvik’s work on infant death in Denmark, parents’ performances of grief serve to ‘invent a new form of time’ [page reference] in which the dead baby is made present, but the argument by which imagination makes for ontologically alternative time remains thin. Some of the anthropologists in this volume refer to Husserl and Heidegger to avow that phenomenological time is ‘fundamental to all lived experience’ and that the past, present and future converge in living, except in moments of trauma where painful experiences become freeze-framed into an ‘eternal present’ (37). In the void of infant loss that Christensen and Sandvik describe, shock or catatonia make past, present and future meaningless, yet for

Ugandan churchgoers' trauma, in reciting rhythmic prayer, the 'work of repetition is to bring subjects back into present moment and contain them there' (38). Vaisman comes closest to elaborating on temporal structure, describing it as a loop and footnoting Hacking's 1996 Mobius Belt [if this is a reference, put in reference end list or delete] (80). Frederiksen in turn lists six authors' theories of time, from 'heterochrony' and 'temporal strands' to 'Siegfried Kracauer's 1969 [reference list or delete] cataracts of time' without explaining what is meant by any of them, or which is employed (163).

If 'we are doing time work when we talk to each other' (23) and perform in the yoke of temporal normativity and the constraint of choices – time work not being synonymous with boundless autonomy – to give in and get up or to punch the snooze button are equally work-like. It is unclear why 'work' was chosen to begin with, given that Flaherty suggests a subcategory, 'time play', such as through the ingestion of consciousness-altering drugs, and if time work is 'rooted in human desire' [rephrase: this clause does not hang together properly with the rest of the sentence] (14) – and would desire not itself be a temporal experience, a directed yearning or imagined future?

Indeed, one of the standout examples here is van den Scott's chapter based on fieldwork in Arviat, a small Inuit hamlet in Canada, where time work is, in a way, idleness. Inuit participants speak of time with intentionality that assures something emic, as 'Inuit time' and 'Qablunaaq [Western] time' are juxtaposed and behaved in differently. Nielsen's chapter on adults with ADHD in Denmark is a stellar example of writing on how time is experienced, rather than its more literal allocation, as synchronicity with others is the main concern and goal of the participants. In Vaisman's work on DNA testing of the 'living disappeared' in Argentina, however, identity seems the more obvious through line [not clear: rephrase]. Likewise, in Thorsen and Dalsgård's evocative depiction of a family fasting for Ramadan in Cairo, to treat gnawing hunger or thirst as 'the substrata of microtemporal embodied sociality' [page reference] may be an unnecessary obfuscation.

The most salient message in this volume is that we should recognize the opportunities the taken-for-granted can afford. Still, particularly as an anthropologist of the 'contemporary West', I take issue with excerpts that take for granted 'our quintessential modern ideals' of self-determinism (61), 'an environment characterised by acceleration' (217) or claims that, as a Western invention, the 'rational formality' of the workday threatens 'the openness and warmth of traditional culture' (90). The strawman is particularly flimsy when analysis of the Protestant work ethic or the idea of vocation are wholly absent; before learning that time work was not about work, I expected a discussion of the ideals by which the temporal boundary between leisure and work is

dissolved. I see Masquelier's description of life becoming dull and depleted when 'emptied of its forwardness' (189) as an interesting reversal of hugely influential contemporary trends of presencing in mindfulness, whereby existing in the past or future is pathologized as failure to stop and smell the roses. For future applications of temporality in ethnography, I propose a call for attention to be paid to subjective pace, as in Nielsen's work. Besides including how *Langweile* becomes lengthy and how flow-states fly by, what kinds of angles might a participant's age or previous experience offer?

Martins Lima's assessment of time work's value for anthropologists is likely the most forthcoming. She writes that this approach is retrospective, experimental and exploratory (105). In this review, I do not mean to discourage an anthropological emphasis on temporality or deny its merits. Yet when humanity is never atemporal, the writer must choose his or her battles.

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JACK GLAZIER, *Anthropology and radical humanism*, East Lansing MI: Michigan State University Press 2020, 258pp. ISBN 978-1611863505 (Kindle edition).

Jack Glazier's *Anthropology and Radical Humanism* frames Paul Radin's ethnographic work within the broader context of American anthropology and African-American culture. A former student of famed public intellectual Franz Boas and a lifelong critic of racial segregation, Radin was one of the first white anthropologists to treat marginalized communities as authoritative interpreters of their own experience. For 45 years he studied Native American societies, producing ground-breaking studies such as *The Winnebago tribe* (1915–16), *Crashing Thunder* (1926), *Primitive man as philosopher* (1927), *Primitive religion* (1938) and *The culture of the Winnebago: as described by themselves* (1949; Glazier p. 20). While less is known about Radin's research on African-Americans, he joined Andrew Polk Watson at Fisk University to create the first systematic record of slavery recounted by former slaves (1-5). Their work challenged false views of Africans and the diaspora with sound anthropological and historical findings (ibid.). While Radin never explicitly compared his studies of Winnebago and African-American communities, Glazier demonstrates why such comparisons are worthwhile (179).

Radin's scholarly commitment stemmed from his personal egalitarian views and professional discontent with an American academic system that he considered responsible for producing, disseminating and circulating 'unexamined racial stereotypes' (2) in social science and humanities

departments that nurtured inaccurate 'racial and nationalistic' myths and influenced racialized public policies (ibid.). For Radin, opposing academic racism meant identifying practices rooted in racial hierarchies and drawing on alternative practices. Radin criticized America's commitment to extinguishing Aryan ideologies and practices abroad while not addressing various forms of racial discrimination at home. The intention of Glazier's book is to acknowledge the humanistic principles that guided Radin's research and to compare the way these principles drove Radin's reflections on selfhood in different contexts (152-3).

So, how does Jack Glazier explore comparisons of the Winnebago and African American communities in *Anthropology and radical humanism*? Chapter 1 describes Radin's long-term career as an itinerant academic. The chapter communicates his concerns about the limitations of being bound to a single university. In addition, the chapter discloses personal rifts with his academic colleagues, which may have made his job security a challenge (50-5). Chapter 2 describes how humanist principles undergirded his resistance to practices and beliefs which opposed freedom and marginalized communities (62). Chapter 3 reveals the support Radin received from black social scientists such as W.E.B. Du Bois and Carter G. Woodson, who had long defended the ability of people of colour to define history and culture on their own terms (1-5, 111). In Chapter 4 the reader learns about the unique efforts of Radin and Watson's narrative project to give former slaves an opportunity to tell about slavery from their own perspective (111). Chapter 5 centres on Radin's research among the Winnebago, explaining the process whereby European invasions, military dominance and forced resettlement led to the undoing of many American Indian societies. These acts caused the marginalization of Winnebago culture and altered personal, political, religious and economic relationships (154-5). Radin therefore considered it vital to record an insider's account of traditional Winnebago life as well while the opportunity still presented itself. In doing so he discovered a religious complex which was quickly losing relevance but still had meaning for the Winnebago. Thus, Radin explored traditional and emerging rituals, ceremonies and ideologies such as the Medicine Dance and Peyotism (155).

For Radin, each religious experience or biography was an entry point into the life of an individual, whether in Nashville or on the Plains. Regardless of location, Radin's research revealed how those he studied had experienced inner turmoil until they encountered transcendence which brought them emotional and psychological stability, a more intimate relationship with God and a sense of liberation (179). Furthermore, they were granted a restored sense of agency in a world that was attempting to strip them of much of their dignity and culture. By collecting these stories, readers are given a more profound understanding of resilience in these two communities.

In conclusion, *Anthropology and radical humanism* contributes to a deeper understanding of two groups that have long been studied but seldom understood by mainstream anthropology. Glazier clearly articulates the way Radin's research served as a corrective in a discipline that often depicted African Americans and Native Americans as 'deservedly apart, separate and justifiably unequal' (180-5). Glazier also makes an excellent case for why Radin's scholarship faced resistance, noting both professional and personal influences. Despite these challenges, Radin's research among African Americans and Native Americans was in the vanguard of anti-racist scholarship in twentieth-century American anthropology (1-5, 111). Ultimately, this book is an ideal reference for postgraduate students of anthropology, various fields of history and any other fields that explore the value of indigenous narratives.

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A. GOLUBEV, *The things of life: materiality in late Soviet Russia*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2020, 240pp. ISBN 9781501752889.

Historical anthropology has been fashionable in the study of late Soviet society for some years, and Alexey Golubev's book, *The Things of Life: Materiality in Late Soviet Russia*, joins this productive canon. The book seeks answers to the puzzle of how so many different and often contradictory subjectivities could coexist in Soviet society: *apparatchiks* and dissidents, poltergeist hunters and materialists, Russian nationalists and committed internationalists. Stepping away from the conventional focus on discourse, Golubev suggests the key to this puzzle lies in the agency of objects used to craft people's selves through interaction with their bodies. He argues that people's 'selves are a result of material, in addition to linguistic, production' (12) and that the material world shaped and influenced Soviet citizens' choices, social trajectories and aspirations in surprising ways, allowing for the creation of alternative conceptions of history and social practices.

The book is based on a host of historical materials, including magazines, newspaper articles, citizens' letters to newspapers, interviews, films, books and official records. After an introduction setting out the research agenda and a chapter on the genealogy of the 'productivist' language of Soviet intellectuals emphasising the agency of objects and machines, the remaining chapters in Golubev's book revolve around particular material objects and spaces. The chapters can be read either as standalone pieces or as parts of a collection approaching the theme of

object-centred subject formation from different angles. Chapter two looks at the plastic models of aircrafts, ships and vehicles that Soviet schoolchildren and modelling enthusiasts constructed and collected, learning about nationally organized military history in the process. This alternative view of history emphasized continuities between the pre-revolutionary and Soviet state, contrasting with the official school curriculum that presented history in the Marxist-Leninist tradition as class struggle. The next chapter discusses wood in the form of heritage timber architecture and ships, which became objects of conservation efforts in the last Soviet decades. Engaging with these materialities produced yet other kinds of alternative historicities, this time Romantic rather than imperial-national.

Chapter four then takes a leap into a wholly different social context to examine the agency of the stairwells, landings and basements of Soviet apartment buildings, which came to provide a refuge for marginalized social groups and unruly teenagers. These spaces of transit ended up becoming sites of social conflicts through their capacity to accumulate the marginalized. The next chapter focuses on a similarly masculine sphere of activity through the materiality of iron – bodybuilding in self-organized basement gyms. Although derided by the Soviet press and excluded from the official sports system, in the minds of its practitioners bodybuilding constituted a mode of self-governance that was capable of creating modern, cultured bodies conforming to deeply Soviet ideas of health and social agency. The final chapter discusses the Soviet TV set and its power to transform the domestic space and Soviet selves. In this chapter, Golubev focuses particularly on the psychic séances broadcast on state channels in the late 1980s in order to showcase the affective potential of the TV set itself to arrange viewers' bodies spatially and temporally. The TV became an object of social conflicts between educated (male) urbanites who disparaged these shows as examples of obscurantism and their mainly female audiences, who believed in their healing power. Still, both groups took seriously the transformative power of television over Soviet bodies.

The first three chapters in Golubev's book thus reveal alternative approaches to time that existed in parallel with official discourses, whereas the last three chapters focus on alternative spaces. In this way, the book provides a glimpse into some of the 'material coordinates of the Soviet self,' demonstrating how material things helped 'Soviet people make sense of historical time and [the] social landscape of late socialism' (14). The human agents in each chapter change together with the specific materials being discussed, from educated specialists in the first half of the book to marginalized social groups in the second half. This represents a critical intervention in the historiography of late Soviet society, which, as Golubev points out, has tended to

extrapolate conclusions about the whole of Soviet society from the experiences of the educated class and urban intellectuals.

Golubev calls for learning from the diverse groups of people he cites, including Soviet officials, journalists and ordinary citizens who evoked the logics of materialism in their understandings of socioeconomic processes. This manner of taking analytical cues directly from the source materials produces occasionally significant overlaps between empirical concepts and the concepts of analysis, but Golubev synthesises the data in novel ways to reveal the contradictions that ‘elemental materialism’ at the heart of Soviet philosophy engendered. Despite the variety of sources and social groups Golubev covers, a potential shortcoming of the book is that it examines primarily male spheres of life, with only the chapter on the TV set explicitly considering women’s relationship with this object. Golubev admits this imbalance in favour of the production of masculinities, reminding us that Soviet women’s consumption habits and Soviet apartments as gendered spaces have been studied by such scholars as Susan Reid and Lynne Attwood. Still, given that the data on which Golubev draws is mainly archival, with contemporary interviews playing only a small part, the omission of women’s spaces and materialities is not a question of limited access to these spaces, but a choice.

Nevertheless, Golubev’s book contributes to a more nuanced understanding of late-Soviet everyday life. Golubev shows how material objects allowed late Soviet citizens to craft alternative ways of life to (or in addition to) outright resistance or acquiescence, and how this production of subjectivities was not simply a matter of discourse. Although written by a historian, this analytical intervention makes Golubev’s book a valuable resource for anthropologists working with materialities and their interfaces with selves and bodies. The focus on materiality also helps explain why Soviet meanings have proved so resistant to change, even though the structures that created them are long gone.

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LESLEY GREEN, *Rock | Water | Life: ecology and humanities for a decolonial South Africa*, Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2020, 320 pp. ISBN 978-1478003991.

At the heart of South Africa’s booming economy is a nation that continues to struggle, post-apartheid, to strike a balance between saving nature (and humans) and capitalism. In this book, Green argues for decolonizing shifts in science, governance and policy that emphasise *care*. Wildlife should be integrated into society, not as an afterthought, and not as something to be

‘controlled’ when tourism is a priority or when climate change causes drought extending to a nation-wide water emergency. In *Rock | Water | Life: ecology and humanities for a decolonial South Africa*, Lesley Green uncovers the intersection of inequality, racism, colonialism and environmental destruction in South Africa, crafting a compelling narrative through a history of racial oppression and environmental exploitation. She calls for new ways of seeing and thinking that connect indigenous knowledge, natural science and anthropology and for placing an “eco” in front of politics and policy. Science, she claims, has become scientism, an ethnocentric, authoritative version of science that has become gospel but is problematic because it complies with economic gain. Green believes that this ‘god’s-eye view’ has separated humans from nature and appropriated knowledge production so that Cape Town has reached a point where extracting resources, conquering territory and exploiting indigenous people is devoid of the emotion and affect needed for humans and nature to coexist harmoniously. This is a journey through fraught debates over water access, gas-fracking, soil and land rights, baboon management and sewage in oceans.

The book’s introduction suggests the need to ask different questions in order to produce different answers, or potential solutions. *Rock | Water | Life* is divided into three parts. The first, ‘Pasts Present’, addresses the way water has become a commodity, its sources of supply pushed far from the neighbourhoods that need it, bought out by multinational companies and measured by meters and electricity bills. When fracking in the Karoo desert, cement is a magical (destructive) substance that is used to create dams and drill for oil and gas, literally blocking the natural flows of both resources: it is a metaphor for human exceptionalism. In part two, ‘Present Futures’ discusses the #ScienceMustFall protests against the discipline’s ethnocentricity, which leads to the Chinese, Arab and Hindu contributions to science being omitted. Soils damaged by climate change need saving, and the pervasive South African philosophy of *ubuntu* or ‘personhood’ and ontology are needed to unmake the ruins of colonial and neoliberal policies. Part three, ‘Future Imperfect’, highlights the issues behind baboon management, including the trajectory of the word ‘baboon’ from its god-like origins to becoming a national insult. Cape Town’s proximity to the sea also means that its marine life, and by extension its human lives, are severely harmed when tonnes of sewage are dumped into the surrounding oceans. Finally, the conclusion presents five concrete proposals for transdisciplinary and transformative scholarship that can resolve these deeply rooted issues.

Green’s book is highly readable, despite being a dense and well-researched compilation of the ways in which South Africa’s colonialist underpinnings influence rock, water and life. The decision to use vertical bars, not commas, in the title symbolizes the clean separation between

each word, indicating the space between nature and society. The more distance the better for purposes of extraction or exploitation. Green cites Marisol de la Cadena, Donna Haraway, Anna Tsing, Mario Blaser and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro as inspirations, all anthropologists who address the interplay of capitalism and environmental justice in their work. She intersperses references to them with quotes from eminent intellectuals like Arundati Roy, Amitav Ghosh, Audre Lorde and Achille Mbembe in order to bolster her arguments.

Throughout *Rock | Water | Life*, the use of creative wordplay engages the reader. In the section entitled ‘The Unbearable Whiteness of Green’, paraphrasing Milan Kundera’s *The unbearable lightness of being*, Green depicts the egregious ways in which white people co-opt environmentalism and ‘save’ wildlife from African poachers, who are charged with destroying both the animals and humanity. It is a textbook example of ethnocentric science delineating the good from what must be saved amid an extractive economy with roots in ecological and structural violence. Green jokes that she herself is ‘Green’, and in tackling green whiteness she confronts her own entanglements as a genealogical descendant of South African racism. Far from overpowering the text with personal anecdotes, she only uses them when the juxtapositions are relevant. For example, she describes biking through a beautiful nature reserve only to find, near the tour buses, baboon monitors with paintball guns—wildlife riot police ready to attack. She also presents the irony of kayakers encountering floating mounds of human excrement in the sea. In scrutinizing these fractured realities, Green comes across as a devoted environmentalist striving for substantial sustainable solutions.

Ultimately, South Africa’s ecological governance is as complex as, and intertwined with, its history of racial oppression. Tucked away among humans’ obvious damage to the earth from relentless extraction and exploitation, Green thinks through decolonizing ways to move forward to bridge the nature and society divide. She presents a beacon of hope, but it needs a collective alliance across disciplines and a commitment to going with the flow, so to speak, in the name of environmental justice.

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BENNO HERZOG, *The invisibilization of suffering: the moral grammar of disrespect*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, 217 pp. ISBN 9783030284480

In his monograph *The invisibilization of suffering*, Benno Herzog explores suffering as an object of critical sociological theory. His overarching argument is that the experience of human suffering

is constructed through social and structural relations, which is then felt by the self. The goal of this monograph is not to end suffering, but rather to understand it as an object of analysis that occupies multiple spaces of invisibility and visibility.

The monograph is divided into three main chapters. The first is dedicated to defining the concept of social suffering *per se*. Herzog invokes the theories of Michel Foucault and Axel Honneth in a rich dissection of the personal, institutional and structural factors that define the universal language of suffering. He does not give a full account of Honneth's theory of recognition, as other scholars have already extensively done. Instead, he builds on Honneth's central idea that all people live under normative conditions of recognition, which then shape feelings of disrespect and subsequent suffering. Herzog claims that all suffering is produced through perceived disrespect of what a person feels they are socially guaranteed and ought to have. While this is a similar definition to Honneth's, Herzog differentiates himself from the latter's definition by focusing on how social suffering is linked to representational problems. He suggests that representing suffering is fraught with difficulty because suffering can be non-linguistic, embodied and painful to discuss. By representing suffering, Herzog claims that researchers risk creating a sense of 'double suffering' for their subjects. This point of double suffering is a meaningful theorization in response to the call for more reflexive research in sociology because it highlights the risk of researchers influencing their object of study through interaction.

Overall, the first chapter of Herzog's monograph constructively builds on Honneth's theory of recognition by analysing the role that representation can play in 'the moral grammar of disrespect'. The only notable shortcoming to this discussion seems to be the role of culture. Although Herzog does mention the moral and cultural codes that influence both Honneth and his theories, not much weight is given to them in the breakdown. He is more concerned with the ways in which institutional and social frameworks influence cognitive and emotional processes in an effort to take immanent criticism seriously. Without deeply thinking about cultural variation, this chapter omits any consideration of the lived experiences of heterogeneity that exist in the world.

The second chapter of Herzog's work explores the ideas of visible and invisible suffering, building on his prior discussion of representation in Chapter one. Within this thoughtful and diverse discussion, he makes the compelling argument that invisibility can be empowering and subversive, somewhat challenging the main tenets of Honneth's theory. Herzog's main example in this argument is that of illegal immigrants in the USA. He claims that these groups undermine state violence directed at a lack of documentation by adopting practices and livelihoods of covertness. This point is insightful because it complicates the usual understandings of visibility and invisibility in the literature on social invisibility. The literature on social invisibility often

suggests that invisibilization does violence to social groups and that attention and representation are two pathways towards equality. Herzog's work presents another way of thinking about empowerment and hegemony, one in which secrecy and self-invisibilization can be utilized by marginalized groups as forms of resistance. This alternative framework is valuable in respect of broader activist scholarships of injustice, which increasingly analyse trauma, oppression and inequality through the gaze of invisibility. Additionally, this type of theory is useful in postcolonial, capitalist and critical race analyses.

Herzog's work also contributes to the growing literature on social contextuality because his theories of suffering and visibility are contingent on the goals of specific groups, such as undocumented migrants in the USA. These ideas fit well within the scholarly paradigm of fluidity that is present in social research. The only complication in this idea of social contextuality is that most of his examples come from the Western world, in particular the USA (e.g. The Oprah Winfrey Show, Mark Zuckerberg, Civil Rights Movement). Therefore, this argument of contextuality is somewhat flattened by the homogeneity of social examples. Despite this, Chapter 2 makes the extremely important point that neither visibility nor invisibility is inherently good nor bad, and that the classic struggle to be 'recognized' is only one way of understanding empowerment.

The third chapter of Herzog's work returns to the discussion of representation in Chapter one. If suffering is elusive, personal and non-linguistic, how can the social researcher represent this without inflicting 'double suffering'? Herzog's main proposals champion the importance of body language, posture, action, empathy, art, aesthetics and non-verbal analyses. The avenue of art and aesthetics is particularly interesting because it thinks past traditional research methods such as interviews, surveys, content analysis and process-tracing. By considering the power of art within a sociological framework, Herzog contributes to discourses surrounding therapy, art and social linguistics. This point also provides a concrete solution to the discursive call for open ethical subjectivity, which is often non-representational.

The monograph as a whole makes apparent the difficulties in analyzing social suffering as a conceptual object because there are many intersecting forms of suffering to consider. This text is a useful handbook for understanding these complex linkages in terms of what they are like empirically, rather than of how they should be. In subsequent system analyses that prioritize holism, this work is indispensable. In all, Herzog's work clearly benefits from its strong attention to detail and its theoretical labour in the field of recognition theory. His blend of interdisciplinary concern and immanent critique is an impressive feat in critical suffering studies.

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DAN HICKS, *The Brutish Museums: the Benin bronzes, colonial violence, and cultural restitution*, London: Pluto Press 2020, 336 pp. ISBN 9780745341767

The primary aim of *The Brutish Museums: The Benin bronzes, colonial violence, and cultural restitution* by Dan Hicks is to make the case that the decolonization of museums does not mean holding on to objects and ‘telling the story better’. No matter how critically or self-reflexively museums attempt to be in this process, Hicks contends that new displays that re-tell the history of empires do not resolve the issues of the ongoing retention and curation of looted artifacts. On the contrary, in his view the display of these artifacts is not merely a consequence of past violence, but a continuously violent act in itself. Building on this idea, Hicks proceeds to demonstrate that, as long as museums continue to display objects that were looted during colonial massacres, they will continue to serve as monuments and memorials to the destructive white supremacist ideologies of colonialism.

The Brutish Museums constructs an innovative theoretical framework for this argument, which is based on two key concepts: necrology and chronopolitics. The first, necrology, refers to the knowledge that we gain by focusing on death and loss, specifically in the anthropology museum. To write a necrography of the Benin Bronzes, the central case study of this work, would mean writing histories of these looted objects in which their accession by museums facilitated a loss rather than an addition of layers of meaning. The emphasis on explicitly acknowledging loss rather than gain or change serves to highlight how museums have functioned to extend this act of violence both spatially and temporally. If the display of looted bronzes represents a loss of cultural meaning and knowledge, then every day that they are on display perpetuates that process.

This understanding is closely related to the second key concept that Hicks proposes: chronopolitics. Chronopolitics refers to the use of time, in addition to territory, as an arena of control, particularly in the colonial context. The effect of destroying Benin City and displaying the looted objects in museums was to present the Kingdom of Benin as if it were ancient ruins when in reality it had only recently been destroyed, having been until then a living culture. Hicks argues that this was not a peripheral effect of the punitive expedition, but a sinister strategy of dismantling the Kingdom’s sovereignty. He claims that the destruction of Benin City was intended to put it into the past, and that the subsequent display of objects seized during the expedition was a message that reinforced the image of the victory of “progressive” European culture over “degenerative” African cultures. The chronopolitics of this era therefore constituted strategies to illustrate the geographical divide between Europe and Africa as if it were actually a temporal divide, with the effect of reducing a powerful sovereign kingdom to a culture of the past in order to subjugate it to “modern” European control.

If we accept the theoretical framework that Hicks constructs, we find that he presents a solid argument in support of cultural restitution. Assuming that the display of looted artifacts indeed constitutes an ongoing form of colonial violence, his subsequent claims in favor of large-scale restitution make eminent sense. Where *The Brutish Museums* is perhaps less successful is in its ability to sway sceptics. According to Hicks, colonial violence and restitution are not separate issues that are divided by time, one historical and one contemporary, but rather are both questions of modern justice that are closely related. As anyone familiar with the restitution debate knows, there are many who would argue the opposite, namely that it is unreasonable to expect cultural restitution to accomplish anything beyond symbolic gestures precisely because they reject the idea that the display of stolen objects is a modern injustice. This is certainly a difficult case for Hicks to make, and while his theory is elegantly crafted, the force of his argument ultimately rests on one's willingness to see displays of looted artifacts as a form of violence. Those sympathetic to the campaign for restitution will clearly see the connections Hicks draws between the violence of the 1897 punitive expedition and the violence of exhibiting the Benin Bronzes around the world. Unfortunately, however, anyone who is already less convinced of the need for restitution could easily perceive this link as an overstated attempt to conflate two different phenomena.

One of the strongest features of *The Brutish Museums* is the conclusion that anthropology museums are not at risk of being made obsolete by the growing momentum for cultural restitution. Despite his apparent condemnation of them as a tool of white supremacy, Hicks does not envision the wholesale abandonment of anthropology museums. He maintains that, because of their entanglement with this violent history, these museums are poised to become sites of reparation and reconciliation. To make this potential a reality, we must work to rebuild museum spaces in which it is not merely acknowledged that objects were stolen, but in which nothing has actually been stolen. This does not mean a future of museums emptied of all of their collections, but rather one in which museums display every object with the consent of all the relevant parties. Hicks argues that such collections will actually enable anthropology museums to enhance their educational roles. It is with this point that Hicks can potentially bridge the gap between the arguments for and against cultural restitution by broadening the scope of restitution beyond a single-minded focus on repatriation.

The Brutish Museums is well worth the read for anyone interested in the increasingly public calls for restitution. Scholars of these issues will find Hicks's theoretical framework thought-provoking, while those who are just arriving at this debate will benefit from his robust analysis of a prominent case study, which is based on an extremely rich set of archival materials on the 1897 punitive expedition to Benin. Though it may not change the minds of those for whom restitution

represents a threat to beloved institutions, most readers will nevertheless struggle to disagree with Hicks's powerful vision of restitution based on relationships of consensual collaboration and exchange between museums across the world.

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BRUNO LATOUR and **P. WEIBEL**, *Critical zones: the science and politics of landing on earth*, MIT Press and ZKM Centre for Art and Media 2020. 560 pp. ISBN 9780262044455.

Critical zones is the companion volume to an exhibition — the fourth co-convened by art director Peter Weibel and philosopher Bruno Latour — that is taking place at the ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe between March 2020 and August 2021. *Critical zones: observatories for earthly politics* is a 'thought exhibition' that tries 'to solve through [a] show conceived as [a] scale model a key existential question that could not be solved in any other way' (8). Like the ZKM 'show', the book is special. Contrary to 'exhibition catalogues [that] are sometimes frustrating because they do not quite replace the experience of being in the physical space of the exhibition', the editors of the *Critical zones* volume have produced 'a *standalone book* which could be, through its original layout, a *demonstration of its own topic*' (9), making it a proper academic publication.

Concerned with the unfolding climate and ecological disasters, the book 'aims at changing the conversation [...] by literally *shifting the ground* on which it takes place' (8). The reader enters the book by witnessing 'the intrusion of an Earth with a surprising shape, size, contents, and activity' triggering 'a triple feeling of *disorientation*: first, in *space* [...] then, in *time* [...] finally, in *identity*' (13). This surprise demands '*aesthetics*, defined as what renders one sensitive to the existence of other ways of life' (19). For the authors, the term 'critical zones' — departing from the modern concept of 'nature' — allows a better localization in the Anthropocene. The word 'critical' reflects the fragility, importance and endangering of this ill-defined 'zone' in need of 'composition'. Now, if one desires 'to settle an issue', one cannot 'count on a unified "nature" to do the composition' for them. One will 'have to compose the Critical Zone, bit by bit, element by element. No shortcuts allowed' (14).

The edited volume is over four hundred large pages long and is generously illustrated. Seventy authors have contributed between one and three texts in a total of seventy-four entries.

The book is divided into eight sections — Disorientation, Disconnected, Critical Zones, Gaia, Terrestrial, Divided, Depiction, Suspended — which can be regrouped into three parts. First, ‘we’ experience *unsettlement* by revealing the complicated and disastrous situation ‘we’ find ‘ourselves’ in (Parts I, II). Second, ‘we’ are *exploring and learning* where and how to land before opting for ‘Terrestrials’ (Parts III, IV, V). Finally, because not all moderns wish to become terrestrials, ‘we’ are ‘Divided’ (Part VI). If ‘we’ are to work — away from war, towards peace — ‘we’ need renewed ‘Depiction’ (Part VII) to ‘reconfigure the sensorium’ (329). This reconfiguration leaves room for a final re-‘Suspension’ (Part VIII).

The vignette articles and essays recreate the experience of an art exhibition very well. The argument is convincing, and I, as a born and bred modern, desire to become terrestrial now. However, I did sometimes find the transitions between the different articles abrupt and wish the editors had included a guide to exploring the volume non-linearly. Besides the overall positive impression and this short comment on the book’s reading experience, I will make three critical comments about it. First, there is an absence of scholarship by Black, indigenous voices and those of people of colour, both as contributors and in the voices channelled through the book’s citations. Second, the paths opened up by the feminist authors in the collection are under-explored. Finally, I weave my surprise to be left ‘Suspended’ (Part VIII) with the problematic ‘we’ of the volume to testify to the book’s lack of reflexivity. Because ‘we’ are moderns, the book seems to tell us that ‘we’ do not need to think with or cite works by scholars who are feminist, Black, indigenous or people of colour.

Despite the balanced gender representation — of the seventy authors I counted, thirty-six are men — and the inclusion of junior scholars, BIPOCs are few, and there are no Black scholars or artists. This observation resonates with interpellations made, by anthropologists Zoe Todd and Kim Fortun among others, in Bruno Latour’s scholarship for largely ignoring the scholarship of those who are ‘already on the forefront’ of various crises. Many people have already lost their worlds, they remark. Although the volume is announced as being directed towards disoriented moderns, would they not have valuable ideas for those learning how and where to land?

In comparison, (white) female and feminist voices are present in the book. In the central part of the book’s argument — ‘Terrestrial’ — the articles have a distinctive feminist orientation, and all except one are written by women. These articles propose a variety of practices in becoming terrestrial. Isabelle Stengers demands that scientists become ‘situated’ and ‘stay with the trouble’ of the Critical Zone’s complexity, Emilie Hache proposes a ‘new myth for earthbounds’, and Jeanne Etelain enjoins us to caress this erogenous layer that is the Critical Zone. Yet, once the section ‘Terrestrial’ has come to an end, the rhetorical ground shifts again, and we are back in a

world dominated by masculine voices searching for new kinds of politics — or rather capital-P Politics. Shouldn't a renewal of 'politics' be grounded in the feminist thought and practice that appeared productively before?

Finally, I left the book with the impression of 'not having moved' much. The editors might retort that this is not a bug but a feature. The moderns who were initially '*suspended* over at least two different and incompatible definitions of the land' (74) are now left 'Suspended' (Part VIII title) to find their way to land independently. Despite being 'pointed in a different direction' (384), hasn't this high-flying thought-exhibition made readers take off even more, with an additional sense of dizziness? Here again, wouldn't the feminist, Black and indigenous thoughts of the past fifty years, which have been centrally interested in the practice of making change, provide some remedy for 'us' feverished moderns?

Overall, this interesting exhibition book will be of great interest to anthropologists and citizens concerned with the Anthropocene as a successful experiment in composition across art, the natural sciences and the humanities. It will hopefully inspire more diverse and inclusive works in the future.

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EUGENE RICHARDSON, *Epidemic illusions: on the coloniality of global public health*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press 2020, 232 pp. ISBN 9780262045605

Using mathematical notation, Eugene Richardson spells out the question that *Epidemic illusions* seeks to address: Pr [global health equity | coloniality] — i.e. what is the conditional probability of achieving global health equity, the field's accepted aim, in the setting of coloniality (Koplan et al. 2009)? Given the epistemic tools that inform global health praxis, the answer is an emphatic zero.

Richardson's thesis is epistemological and ideological: public health as 'an apparatus of coloniality...*manages* (as a profession) and *maintains* (as an academic enterprise) global health inequity' and operates in the service of 'protected affluence' (1). Epidemiologists protect the status quo by using ostensibly objective empirical tools – statistics, causal inference, mathematical modelling – which serve to 'occult' the continued extraction of capital, in the form of money, resources and academic outputs, from the Global South to the Global North (8).

The argument highlights a gnawing reality that haunts anyone working in global health — that no matter how committed its practitioners, whether clinician, activist or academic, deep historical and political structures undermine almost all efforts at achieving equity. Richardson disenchanting our notion that ‘global health’ is somehow different — less patriarchal, less beholden to a Global North-South divide and more about equity and empowerment — than its predecessors, known as ‘international health’ and ‘colonial’ or ‘tropical’ medicine (Greenet al. 2013).

Epidemic illusions is a *carnavalesque* ‘pseudomonograph’ (1), an ironic and satirical postmodern takedown of accumulated public health knowledge and assumptions, complete with references to Shakespeare, an update on Plato’s cave allegory and a slew of pop-culture references from rock-and-roll to film. This style choice, like everything else in this efficient volume, is purposeful. Richardson operates from the premise that one cannot adequately critique public health using its own terms of reference. Further, as an exercise in rhetoric, Richardson contends that linear argument using conventional, empirical evidence combined with moral reason ‘à la Paul Farmer’ is preaching to the converted (12). The objective of the volume is therefore to convince the unconvinced — public health professionals, social scientists, and others who take epidemiological claims as objective representations of truth.

As a global health activist — that is, as one of the converted — I consider *Epidemic illusions* an important book – a manifesto, even – and one whose credibility is bolstered by the author’s experience as an infectious disease physician on the frontlines of global crises from Ebola to Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. The book is a meaningful contribution to the growing discussion on the decolonization of global health. It is a timely entry for a world that has been unequally affected by, and is unequally emerging from, the COVID-19 pandemic across axes of race, class and nationality.

Particularly effective chapters include a fictional ethnography of the ‘Primitive Tribes of Lake Geneva’, in which Richardson flips the ethnographic gaze, directing it towards the international organizations charged with leading the response to the West African Ebola epidemic. This reversed gaze, signified by a mock epigraph from *Ikswonilam Walsinorb* (Bronislaw Malinowski backwards), identifies and unsettles the rituals and fetishes of these ‘tribes’, such as the privileging of cost-effectiveness and disease containment – paradigms with colonial provenance – over treatment. It is hard to disagree with Richardson’s conclusion that the response was rooted in biosecurity (creating an African ‘Ebola Virus Holding Unit’ (34)) rather than human rights.

In my favourite chapter, Richardson creates a fake study in which race change is modelled against the provision of dapirivine antiretroviral vaginal rings, an HIV prophylactic. ‘If Black women at high risk for HIV acquisition turned white and accrued the associated structural benefits, they could reduce their HIV incidence twelvefold’ compared to dapirivine, the study concludes. The study is satirical and instructive. Richardson demonstrates how such imaginative use of alternative categories can change how we construct epidemic models and open up new possibilities of action.¹

Some may lament Richardson’s eschewing of conventional, evidence-based argument. However, part of the book’s efficacy is that the author’s arguments are grounded in the empirical reality of his experience as a global health practitioner. Furthermore, much of the more conventional ethnographic, historical and epidemiological analysis readers may desire is provided in Paul Farmer’s recent book on the West African Ebola outbreak (Farmer 2020). While *Epidemic illusions* eminently stands on its own, it is best read as a companion to Farmer’s and other critical renderings of the outbreak.²

Another issue is Richardson’s vilification of epidemiologists, which I resist on two grounds. First, there are examples of ‘good’ epidemiological research that contribute meaningfully to our understanding of health inequity — indeed, Richardson presents some of these, and works on it himself, though, as he says, they are few and far between. Second, I believe many epidemiologists are motivated by justice and express this through their discipline. These are not, largely, Chicago School economists! Their training might thrust them unwittingly into the iron cage of academic public health, but critical reflexivity can allow methods to evolve that empower and amplify subaltern voices.³ Richardson’s accusations may muffle his (important) call for ‘counterhegemonic knowledge’ for the very people he aims to influence.

That said, given the justice orientation of many epidemiologists, *Epidemic Illusions* should become an important resource for public health training. At the very least, it will help epidemiologists consider the contingency of their ‘truths’ and their own role in a largely extractive academic economy. That alone is an important contribution.

¹ Richardson and colleagues employ this technique more seriously in a recent article in *Social Science and Medicine* that convincingly shows how a program of reparations for American descendants of African slaves would have society-wide benefits in terms of the reduction of COVID-19 infections (Richardson et al. 2021). This is an example of what Richardson has termed anti-racist modelling, in contrast to much of the forecasting and modelling seen over the course of the pandemic, in which a racist status quo is the taken-for-granted norm those models would have us strive for (Kendi 2019; Richardson 2021).

² For example, see Abdullah and Rashid (2017).

³ For an example of such an attempt, see Brar, Hedt-Gauthier and Hirschhorn (2021).

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CHARLES STAFFORD, *Economic life in the real world: logic, emotion and ethics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2020, 208pp. ISBN 9781108716550.

Clear, readable and succinct, *Economic Life in the Real World: Logic, Emotion and Ethics* by Charles Stafford excellently articulates the need for anthropology to engage with economics and psychology for a better understanding of economic discourses in everyday lives. Stafford situates his work in the day-to-day economic life of rural Taiwan and China, emphasising the psychological aspect of everyday economics. For his informants, money and economic activity are not just a matter of rational material accumulation driven by utility maximation, but are shaped by cultural and moral values such as self-education or ‘proper’ conduct regarding ancestral veneration and

filial obedience. Stafford maintains that economic action is ethical and shaped by moral considerations. He illustrates this point through ethnographic accounts showing that religious beliefs are embedded with economic logic, such as the use of divination in a fishing village, where gods, spirits and ancestors inform what action is taken when venturing out to sea.

Stafford illuminates the general antagonism of social anthropologists in adopting and utilising formal economic and psychological approaches to examining economic agency. When anthropologists engage with economics, he argues, it is from a predominantly critical perspective, while the scholarship of psychology is usually completely ignored. Stafford highlights the need for 'humility' in remaining open to modes of analysis that are removed from anthropological sensibilities that value 'micro'-ethnographic details over 'macro'-generalizations. Stafford also mentions the benefits of the anthropological approach to economics and psychology, calling on both to engage with anthropological findings. This resultant blend of anthropology, economics and psychology, Stafford argues, results in a more grounded and broadly conceived understanding of social reality.

In mainly using psychological analyses of economic logic, Stafford rejects the centrality of the historical and cultural context in examinations of economics by social and cultural anthropologists. While social and historical contextualisation is important in economic analysis, Stafford argues that human cognitive faculties, such as memory, emotion, identity, moral judgement and cooperation, influence economic agency. Thus, culture alone cannot explain calculation.

Although supportive of substantivist logic and the idea that economic life is embedded, for Stafford human psychology is recognized as being at the heart of economic agency, elaborated through 'the psychology of attachment and of cooperation'. In this respect, he offers an interesting alternative anthropological approach to analysing economics. He argues that the psychological emphasis is not intrinsically individual but can be influenced by collective factors such as shared intent and moral or religious consciousness. This approach he labels 'substantivist economic psychology', where cultural-historical artefacts such as kinship and religion are analysed as manifestations of psychological mechanisms in which economic life is explained as driven by psychological and not just historical factors. Yet, Stafford by no means asserts a purely evolutionary-cognitivist logic, as he maintains the 'the economic psychology of humans in general is always heavily impacted by cultural-historical artefacts.'

He therefore argues that anthropologists must overcome the current orthodoxy which considers any rationalist modelling, quantification, hypothesis-driven experimentation or idea of evolutionary theorizing as negative. Concerned with micro-analyses which reject any

universalization of economics and psychology, Stafford is quick to mention that anthropologists' strong empirical tendencies might mean them failing to see the wood for the trees.

This book not only provides an excellent introduction to economic anthropology, it also offers a unique insight into it by bringing anthropological, economic and psychological approaches together. The multidisciplinary approach proposed by Stafford is reflective of the contemporary perspective in anthropology, which is more appreciative of eclectic and pluralistic means of analysis. His approach is rich in engagement with theoretical material across three disciplines, enabling a solid foundational understanding of basic economic, psychological and anthropological approaches to 'everyday' economic practice. Although written for specialists, the book is also suitable for readers who are unfamiliar with anthropological perspectives, serving as an excellent means of stimulating discussion within and without the field of anthropology. Despite its short length, it delivers a complex and rich perspective on economics, leaving the reader to ponder and reflect on the pluralism for which it makes such a compelling case.

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