BOOK REVIEWS[1]

LILA ABU-LUGHOD, *Veiled sentiments: honour and poetry in a Bedouin society*, Thirtieth Anniversary Edition. Oakland: University of California Press, 2016, 359 pp. ISBN 978-0-520-29249- 9 (paper).

Abu-Lughod first published *Veiled sentiments* in 1986 and conducted her anthropological fieldwork in the 1970s. She lived for two years with the Awald ‘Ali Bedouins of Egypt’s western desert frontier with Libya. This influential work in anthropology needs to be understood as a part of the debate of the 1980s, when *Writing culture* marked an important post-structuralist turn in anthropology. Abu-Lughod contributed by showing the awkward relationship between anthropology and feminism. “Writing Against Culture” and *Veiled sentiments*, illustrated a new way of writing feminist anthropology.

Veiled sentiments begins by clearly positioning the author as she enters the field: she is unmarried, her father is from Jordan, her mother from the US – as she puts it, she is a “halfie”. We are introduced to the world she is entering when we understand the significance of her father having established her connections to the field, which gives her the respect and status needed to study and live among the Awald ‘Ali, and more specifically with the respected patriarch, the Haj, and his family. Although this is important, it is up to anthropologists themselves to develop their relationships once they enter the field – something Abu-Lughod does gracefully. She becomes part of the sphere of women – because gender segregation is practised – and this perspective reveals the hierarchy of the family, marriage patterns and political structures, as well as the relationships between the genders and between different age groups.

Abu-Lughod forms personal relationships with the women when she washes clothes, witnesses childbirth, cooks, is present during times of grief and wedding celebrations, and is a part of “the joys of a sociable world in which people hug and talk and shout and laugh without fear of losing one another” (p. xiii). Parallels can be made with Beverly Chinas’ book, *The Isthmus Zapotecs: A Matrifocal Culture of Mexico* (Harcourt Brace, 1991), where Chinas distinguishes between the public and the private spheres in society, and how women harness power in the private sphere. Using the discourse of male honour and female modesty, Abu-Lughod illustrates the power and freedom that is harnessed by women through everyday forms of resistance. Much like Saba Mahmood’s work on piety, what is shown is not repressed Muslim women needing to be liberated

from patriarchy, but rather how *all* members of Bedouin society navigate the social to reach the moral state of *hasham* or piety through the tools available within their society.

The informal space of communication, where individuals' teasing, jokes, poetry, flirtation and personal narratives can take shape, is discussed. This "Bedouin account" is relevant because it feeds into current debates on whether "Muslim women need saving" and issues surrounding honour killings. The focus is not on how Islam determines the Bedouin way of life, but rather on how agnatic social organization and moral systems are key in shaping group interaction. She bridges the gap between the West and "the rest" by eliminating the "oriental" through her warm descriptions of these relationships.

Abu-Lughod's discussion of ghinnawas or "little songs" contributes to the field of linguistic anthropology and stresses the importance of language in society. Poetry is a personalized way of expressing oneself and can be recited in everyday life, at circumcision festivities and weddings. This poetry is expressed orally, and Abu-Lughod records the recitations on her Dictaphone. Themes of pain, forsaken love, vulnerability, loss and self-doubt are all expressed, and it is said that "beautiful poetry makes you cry" (p. 177). The context of the ghinnawa is everything, and the first question always asked after a poem is told is "who said it?" (p. 177). The speakers talk about themselves in the third person. Ghinnawas were usually sung by women in female company, employing a distinct meter, content and structure. This has changed over time, and younger men have taken over this form of expression.

Abu-Lughod analyses the poetry and shows the intimacy and compassion that surround this mode of expression. This is an acceptable form of expression in a context where the public code is difficult to navigate without risking shame. The functional role these poems play in women's lives is shown, thus confirming the importance of oral history in anthropology and history. There is a tone among the women that the younger men who are reciting poetry have "stolen" a mode that belonged to the women. It would have been interesting to similarly investigate the role this played for younger men of lower rank.

This book counters the popular discourses surrounding forms of oppression in Muslim society. I wonder, however, whether Abu-Lughod has a tendency towards romanticizing the events in her book – she seems to have become so entangled in her field that she is no longer "objective". She describes the tragic death of the Haj and accepts him as a traditional man who did not let his daughters go to university even though they wanted to. Perhaps over the years Abu-Lughod has softened and crossed the cultural relativism line, the cost of which has been not pushing more for women's rights.

Finally, after thirty years, she writes a powerful afterword, which reflects on fieldwork methods and the entanglements between the anthropologist, the changing world and the deep relationships formed in the field. This book is a beautiful account of a lifetime of shared *'ishra* or moments between Abu-Lughod and the Awald 'Ali Bedouins. Anthropology often looks at "the other", but by representing the emotional dialectics between the informant and the researcher over time, what this book reveals is the impact fieldwork has on the anthropologist. Relationships change and are created through the medium of ethnography, and Abu-Lughod problematizes how this affects the researcher's ethical responsibilities. Representations of people are always captured against a backdrop of political change, where descriptions of fieldwork may be taken out of context, and as Abu-Lughod says, "I do not want any longer to mediate my relationships with these families through anthropology" (p. 298). Although this is her intention, I do wonder whether it is possible for anthropologists to ever step outside their role? Perhaps we open several parts of ourselves in the field, but is it not fieldwork that has laid the foundations for the relationships?

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LAURA BEAR, *Navigating austerity: currents of debt along a South Asian river*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 2015, xiv, 244 pp. ISBN 9780804795531.

At a time when India is facing an economic shake-up and demonetisation has become a key tool of the Indian government's aim of freeing India from the perils of 'black money', a reading of Laura Bear's work, published in 2015, presents a captivating discussion of how individuals and state subjects negotiate and navigate economic policies in their attempts to overcome austerity. The book offers a stimulating account of changes in the state's fiscal policy and its function in generating 'new forms of speculative planning and entrepreneurial citizenship' (2). This is achieved by taking a journey along the Hooghly river in an attempt to reveal the unrevealed 'history of state debt crises' (4). It aims to transcend the official figures, which are seen as performing a fetishizing function in the financialization of state debt, and to present an account by and through Bear's informants. This is evident in section I, where Bear traces the origins and constructs a political history of an official figure, 'the accumulated revenue deficit', in order to show the changing temporality of state debt. Bear reflects on the effects of state debt on governance practices, elaborating on the everyday social relations of the fiscal crisis by tracing the quotidian bureaucratic

life which transforms state debt into ‘social forms of austerity capitalism’, and with it the Hooghly, from a source of public good to a fiscal resource (29; 35). She succeeds in showing what austerity capitalism produces in the name of enterprise and efficiency: ‘insecure livelihoods and unstable forms of capital circulation’ (36). This is visible, according to Bear, in the changing patterns of the short-term leasing of port land, the use of old technology and the rise of unregulated labour, which result from austerity policies premised on the logic of repayment. This has culminated in the construction of a rent-seeking, speculative state apparatus which feeds into a premise of the generation of profit through privatization and, based on this premise, logically justifies engaging unregulated labour and the weakening of public-sector unions.

The question proposed by Bear — ‘How can productivity be created in a time of public austerity’ (4) — is an important one, not only for South Asia or those living and working along the Hooghly, but for all of us who are engaged in economic activities and activities organized by and through the neoliberal economic logic of efficiency and productivity. An illuminating ethnographic account of the old mooring crew who worked on the Ash Ghat distils the discussion of productivity and acts of labour in understanding the production of inequalities. It is suggested that regenerating the ‘ruins of austerity capitalism’ (53) generates social relations along the Hooghly. Bear archives this by analysing the vernacular development of ethics which are informed by workers who are inspired by and develop popular religious and historical narratives. These culminate in contemporary ethical accounts of workers who view themselves through lost *shahosh* (courage) and nationalism, leading to the Hinduization of the Hooghly and the marginalization of certain work forces. The coming together of masculine productivity and religious reenactment aims to revitalise the past. This, together with the Ma Ganga *puja*, the Kali *puja* and the discussion of *shakti* (life force) along the Hooghly, brings to life the project of regeneration. In an attempt to construct fluid linkages between the Hooghly and austerity policies, the Hooghly is presented as a conflux of public infrastructure, a waterscape and a river. It is argued that framing the Hooghly as a waterscape liberates it from its financial framing, as its symbolic value is evoked in public discourses. Similarly, a focus on the river and its fluid nature ‘can reveal key shifts in the management of time spaces linked to austerity policies’ (6). What informs the ethnographic account is the importance it places on going on a journey with Bear’s informants, like one Mr Vikas Bose, and tracing the transformations which mutate the Hooghly from being just a waterscape to a body which guides and manages temporal shift, and functions as a site for revitalising bounded personhood. The ethnographic strength of the book is visible in its discussion of affective relationships of *jogajog kora*, understood as the ‘creation of useful friendships’. It is in this section that the importance of the alliance between bureaucrats and entrepreneurs is brought out, and it is

shown how the practice of *jogajog koro* constructs an entrepreneurial society (99). This is evident in the actions of Vikas Bose, who is seen as a man who gets things done and who follows the flow of the river wherever it takes him.

Running throughout the book, there is a fruitful discussion of and reflection on anthropology's treatment of neoliberalism, and an argument that links public-sector policies not only to neoliberalism but also to state debt. Where the book succeeds is in its assertion that state debt should not (only) be examined through the lens of private credit and classic exchange theories from anthropology, but as 'something' (my term) that generates collective responsibility and 'brings the citizen, state and the market into a network of interconnected obligations' (9). This re-imagination of state debt leads to a renewed anthropology of economic governance which aims to surpass formal/expert knowledge and conceptualize economic governance as a convergence of 'formal practices and popular ethics of productivity' (18). Bear asserts that the reproduction of capitalism and the inequalities that are manufactured through it are made visible by an approach that takes state debt and labour practices more seriously. The destructive potential of austerity capitalism and state debt are brought alive in Bear's work in ways that are more convincing than those presented in official economic discourses (187). By conceptualizing sovereign debt as a social relationship, the ethnography successfully transcends narratives which view debt as a financial undertaking, making us aware and enriching our understanding of those austere times which have the potential to navigate and alter our relations with our fellow travellers and the environment.

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Allen J. Christenson, *The burden of the ancients: Maya ceremonies of world renewal from the pre-Colombian period to the present,* Austin: University of Texas Press 2016, x, 363 pp. ISBN 9781477310267. £24.99.

The burden of the ancients builds on Allen Christenson's previous work on contemporary highland Maya religious and cultural life (2001) and ancient Maya literature (2007). In his latest study, he focuses on Maya ceremonies of rebirth and renewal, during which the Maya perform ceremonies in order to facilitate the yearly cycle of death and rebirth. Christenson's work is richly detailed, and he relies on textual sources that span nearly five centuries, along with extensive ethnographic material he collected over the course of thirty years, beginning with his first visit to highland Maya communities in 1977.

After the Spanish Conquest, the highland Maya were forcibly prevented from publicly expressing their previous beliefs, and most were forced to embrace Catholicism. However, Christenson argues that the Maya interpreted the new Catholic doctrine according to their own world view, leading to the syncretism of the Maya and Catholic traditions. He demonstrates that the Catholic Easter observances became a substitute for the Pre-Columbian ceremonies as a way to restore life after the yearly death of the world. In this vein, he argues that the core aspects of ancient Maya world renewal ceremonies were preserved and transferred to Holy Week, or *Semana Santa*, which takes place during the days leading up to Easter and is observed by the descendants of the Tz'utujil Maya in present-day Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala.

The book is roughly divided into two parts. In the first four chapters, Christenson focuses on Pre-Columbian ceremonies of world renewal. According to 'traditional Maya belief, everything passes through endless cycles of birth, maturation, dissolution, death and rebirth' (p. 1). Even gods and deities suffer death, and their rebirth must be facilitated by a series of complex ceremonies and rites carried out during the *Wayeb'*, the last five days of the Maya calendar year. These days are associated with bad luck, when 'normal life is suspended and the people become susceptible to disease, misfortune, and death, linked to the perceived death of the world preceding its rebirth on New Year's Day' (p. 26). If the ceremonies during the *Wayeb'* period are not carried out properly, the ill-fated days of the *Wayeb'* continue into the following year. Thus, it was crucial that the Maya continue to carry out the ceremonies, or else the world would not be reborn and would remain forever shadowed by death and destruction.

Most of the information on pre-Columbian Maya practices comes from Mayan nobles who described their practices to Spanish explorers and Christian missionaries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Christenson relies on these accounts for his analysis, as well as the surviving descriptions of *Wayeb'*/New Year ceremonies that were compiled by missionaries, particularly Fray Diego de Landa and Fray Bartolomé de las Casas. He locates further descriptions of renewal ceremonies in Maya texts that have survived or were copied from the pre-Columbian period, such as the Dresden and Madrid codices, the *Popol Vuh* and the *Chilam Balam*, which contain compilations of indigenous cultural, linguistic and theological information.

In the following six chapters, which constitute the greater portion of the volume, Christenson focuses primarily on ethnographic material and describes the contemporary ceremonies of world renewal carried out during *Semana Santa* by the residents of present-day Santiago Atitlán. *Semana Santa* encompasses a five-day period during which the world dies and life is temporarily suspended, similar to the ancient Maya *Wayeb'* period, while the residents of Santiago Atitlán perform a series of complex ceremonies in order to ensure the rebirth and renewal of the world.

The preparations primarily begin on Easter Monday (Chapter 5), when the community undertakes the ritual cleaning of houses, businesses and (more importantly) the local church. On this day, the image of Jesus Christ in the church is covered, representing his death and absence from the community while he descends into the world of the dead. Preparations continue into the next morning, and late in the evening of Holy Tuesday (Chapter 6) the town's residents begin the core ceremonies. These are carried on without pause, day and night, through Holy Wednesday (Chapter 7) and Holy Thursday (Chapter 8), and culminating on Good Friday (Chapter 9), when Jesus Christ rises from the underworld and is reborn, thus resuming his role as protector of the community and ushering in the rebirth of the world.

Chapter 10 concludes the volume with a brief look at the final ceremony that brings *Semana Santa* to a close. The final ceremony symbolizes the end of the liminal period in the week preceding the rebirth of Christ and celebrates the renewal of the world that was facilitated by the community during the week-long ceremonies and observances. Just as the ancient Maya believed that the gods would perish and the *Wayeb'* period would continue into the next year if they failed to perform the proper rites, so the people of Santiago Atitlán believe that, if they fail to observe the necessary ceremonies, then Jesus Christ will not be reborn and the evil forces associated with the week preceding Good Friday will similarly continue. For this reason, the traditionalists of Santiago Atitlán have largely resisted any attempts to bring their ceremonies more in line with Catholic doctrine, and they continually struggle to preserve their unique traditions in the face of pressure from the orthodox church authorities.

The burden of the ancients is, in part, a response to the argument that there are no longer any fundamentally 'Maya' traditions or practices left from pre-Columbian societies and that Maya cultures were eradicated by the Conquest and colonial authorities. Yet Christenson finds this problematic, and his self-professed aim for this study was to 'attempt to approach the problem of identifying possible Pre-Columbian and early colonial Maya antecedents to contemporary Tz'utujil Maya practices in a systematic way based on documentary evidence' (5). He certainly accomplishes his goal in this volume, and his work contributes to the growing compendium of studies which assert that Pre-Columbian Maya heritage was not successfully suppressed by the Spanish Conquest and that many Maya peoples continue to draw on ancient Maya practices and beliefs to inform their world views. The study provides substantial historical depth and detailed ethnographic accounts of Maya ceremonies, while at the same time emphasizing that the Maya practices cannot be separated from foreign and Catholic influences. Rather, these traditions are combined almost seamlessly into one and are traced back to the beginning of time by the present-day Tz'utujil Maya. This volume is

highly relevant for anyone interested in South American ethnography, historical anthropology, linguistics and pre-Columbian and South American religious studies.

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RAMSEY ELKHOLY, *Being and becoming: embodiment and experience among the Orang Rimba of Sumatra*, New York and Oxford: Berghahn 2016, xix, 273 pp. ISBN 9781785331596.

In this work, Ramsey Elkholy applies phenomenological approaches to his descriptive ethnography of the Orang Rimba of the Sumatran rainforest. According to the author, emplacing himself in the local environment allowed him to capture and understand the cultural meanings of the everyday lives of the Rimba, a process he calls ‘sensuous fieldwork’ (3).

In part, this methodology appears to have been adopted because of the author’s limited understanding of the language of the Rimba, which led him to focus more on what they did than on what they said (6). For example, Elkholy focuses on body language and speech patterns in what he describes as ‘body-centred’ methodology (3). Theoretically, the book draws on Geertz’s notion of ‘thick description’ (1973), as well as on the perspectives on embodiment put forward by Csordas (1994) and Ingold (2000), to understand the embodied knowledge through which the Rimba make their living and bring forth meaning in their lives within the ecological context of the Sumatran rainforest.

The book is divided into two parts. The first, consisting of four chapters, is entitled ‘Intersubjectivity’, while the second, comprising five chapters, focuses on ‘Body and world’. In the first two chapters the author describes the fieldwork setting, while in the third chapter he focuses on what he calls the ‘corporeal’ mode of social interaction, including grooming and social sleeping, suggesting that human sociality can exist in shared awareness of living in a common sensory world. In the fourth and fifth chapters, Elkholy examines the formation of local identity in the context of movement between forest and village, a theme which leads into the second half of the book, with its

focus on interactions between body and environment through themes such as walking in the forest and hunting. In Chapter 6, Elkholy focuses on the 'tacit knowledge' acquired in the process of learning to hunt in forest. Here, he employs 'body-centred' phenomenological methodology, documenting the process by which he himself acquires hunting skills, learning to 'keep in touch with the forest' under Rimba tutelage (142). In Chapter 7, the author explores how the forest becomes a reference system for the Rimba, acting as a repository for people's memories and perceptions of their world throughout their lives. In the final two chapters the author turns his attention to ritual, exploring how 'ecologies of mind' interact with the outside world through shamanic practice in Ch. 8, and focusing on the Orang Rimba's confrontation with death through mourning practice in Ch. 9.

In many ways this book is an ethnography in the classic anthropological tradition, focusing on a hunter-gatherer society and adopting intensive participant observation as its primary method. The author's phenomenological approach brings a deeper philosophical perspective to this method.

Elkholy's focus on sensory engagement through the examination of practices such as 'social sleeping', 'tactility' and hunting is a positive move that resonates with some of my own work. For example, in my examination of the Chinese Lion Dance in Belfast (Wu 2015), I noted that part of the attraction for many participants was the *ren qi,* that is, the human heat and sweat generated by Chinese bodies moving together in concerted action. It is true that much earlier anthropological work can be criticized for adopting a disembodied and over-intellectualized view of human culture, and this focus on embodied experience is therefore welcome. We might question, however, whether the focus on bodily engagement is really being pushed to its limits by Elkholy in view of the author's limited understanding of the Rimba language. In suggesting that a carer's raised eyebrow to a child means 'Be careful' (48), is Elkholy correctly interpreting culturally specific Rimba signals, or is he projecting his own interpretation of what such a signal would mean in a western context? A similar question arises in relation to Elkholy's conclusion that social sleeping results in a loss of individual boundaries. While this might well be his experience, it is hard to be sure, without linguistic communication, whether it is also the experience of the Orang Rimba.

Theoretically, Elkholy's work could be seen as having something significant to contribute to the understanding of Bourdieu's (1977) concept of 'habitus'. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) describe 'habitus' as 'the instantiation of the social in the body', but they give little explanation of precisely how this process happens within particular environments. Elkholy also focuses on 'habitual patterns of human behaviour' (164), and his detailed account of the process of how hunting habits 'grow into the body'(144) – that is, by learning how to see, hear and act in the forest

through a process of bodily conditioning in which new sensibilities are acquired – may be seen as filling this gap in Bourdieu's theorizing.

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LEYLA J. KEOGH, *Worker-mothers on the margins of Europe: gender and migration between Moldova and Istanbul*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2015, xv, 239 pp. ISBN 9780253020932.

The force of Leyla Keough's ethnography lies in its transnational multi-sited approach and its solid positioning within a framework of feminist, post-socialist and migration discourse. The book is an in-depth study of female migrant labour from Moldova to Istanbul, discussed from the perspective of the women migrants themselves, their employers in Istanbul and the International Organisation for Migration ('IOM'), as representative of the international community. These multiple angles means she is able to reach conclusions as to what drives this specific migration, the effects this has on individual identities and society as a whole, and how the IOM has misunderstood even the basic facts of the migration between these countries.

The subject of Keough's ethnography is the migration of Moldovan women from Gagauz Yeri, a Turkic-speaking area in southern Moldova, to Istanbul, where they stay for a period of six to twelve months working as domestics in the homes of the Istanbul middle and upper classes. Keogh's interest arose from exposure to Moldovan workers in Istanbul retained by her own Turkish

family there and further insights she gained when doing research on Islamism and the veil in Turkey. However, the peculiarities of this migration make it a rich area for novel commentary: women from (what they consider) a fallen but nonetheless modern post-Soviet state moving eastwards under the pressures of the capitalist global economy to a functioning capitalist but 'uncivilized' country. For them Russia remains the 'locus of civilization', and yet today Turkey is the main destination for Moldovan migrant women.

Keough's approach to understanding this phenomenon is to identify the 'gendered moral economies' in which these women are operating. She describes 'gendered moral economies', certainly the key concept in the book, as being 'the way in which ideas about the place of women are instilled in discursive practices of need, entitlement, desire, obligation, culpability, and responsibility in the economic processes of production (and reproduction), exchange and consumption' (8). She analyses such moral economies both in the women's villages and in the Istanbul homes and, drawing these together, concludes that the women are forging new ideas about the roles and obligations of mothers and workers. Along with establishing this theoretical framework with which to understand the drivers of migration is the hope that organizations like the IOM will engage with such detailed ethnographic research, fully understand the situations they are dealing with, and implement policy to effectively handle it. Her realization that the IOM believed that the only migration of women from Moldova to Turkey involved the trafficking of sex workers not acting under their own free will, and that its intended future policies on migrant routes will likely hinder the position of women who are 'trying to get on in the world', may not be entirely surprising, but still make uncomfortable reading. In this regard, one criticism of this book would perhaps be that its strong theoretical tone may prevent such policy-makers from engaging fully with it.

However, although there is evidently great pain involved in this migration and the surrounding conditions, Keough identifies a strong agency in the women involved, who feel they are improving themselves by fulfilling the Soviet idea of the 'worker mother' to support their families and are indeed gaining power in certain contexts of this migration. This, combined with the author's suggestions for how improved understandings of migration would assist policy in assisting those affected by it, leaves the reader with some hope.

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MARCEL MAUSS, *The gift: expanded edition*, selected, annotated, and translated by Jane I. Guyer, Chicago: Hau Books 2016, xvii, 225 pp. ISBN 9780990505006.

Perhaps anthropology's best travelled essay, both within and beyond the discipline, Marcel Mauss's *The gift* receives its third English translation since its original publication in 1925 owing to the direction of Jane Guyer and the energies of HAU. It should be noted that Guyer's careful and caring translation of *The gift* only gently modifies the two pre-existing English translations of Mauss's seminal essay; where this edition truly departs from these previous translations is in its composition and structure. Seeking to reassemble the theoretical, political and affective context in which *The gift* was written, this expanded edition of the text restores two key features of the original volume in which *The gift* was first published: a memorial to Durkheim and those of his collaborators who fell in the First World War; and a selection of Mauss's reviews of texts he had been heavily engaging with while writing *The gift.*

The inclusion of these sections, respectively preceding and succeeding the essay on *The gift* in the book, ultimately frames the essay within the personal and intellectual quandaries that Mauss had been wrestling with at the time of writing. He had just witnessed many friends and intellectual companions succumb to the horrors of World War One and took recourse to ethnographic labour conducted in far-flung corners of the world in his attempt to propose an analytic – the gift – that potentially had worldwide purchase and could therefore help forge a new political imaginary. It is a political imaginary we still await, of course. Guyer's discriminating rearrangement of the text and her foregrounding of the political urgencies that animated *The gift* is therefore an attempt to redraw the horizons for such an imaginary.

Also at stake in this new edition's call for a revitalised engagement with Mauss and *The gift* is a reclamation of a sense of theoretical occasion for anthropology. Launched in conjunction with SOAS's new Centre for Ethnographic Theory, and of course published by HAU Books, this expanded edition of *The gift* is identifiably located within a HAU-led movement to restore anthropology's apparently waning theoretical clout. HAU, after all, took its name from the Maori term Mauss interpreted as the "spirit of the gift". For some, therefore, Mauss and *The gift* are emblematic of a once ascendant anthropology that had theoretical purchase in spheres beyond the discipline.

This review has sought to rehearse neither the arguments nor the counter-arguments of *The gift*, in part because these have already been extensively circulated, but also because the aim of this restructured edition of the text is to encourage new kinds of engagement with a piece of writing that

has already proved to be incredibly generative. These might be engagements that are at once attuned to the ethic and ethics that Mauss hoped to realize. Or perhaps attuned to how shifting economic textures have changed how the gift is constituted and the way gifting is enacted. For all *The gift* has told us about giving, it tells us just as much about what has yet to be given. This expanded edition of the text foregrounds this spectre with renewed clarity.

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WINIFRED TATE, *Drugs, thugs, and diplomats: U.S. policymaking in Colombia*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 2015, xii, 284 pp. ISBN 9780804795661.

Winifred Tate's *Drugs, thugs and diplomats: U.S. policymaking in Colombia* is a scintillating work which, through an exploration of the controversial Plan Colombia, makes a significant contribution to the anthropology of policy-making. Plan Colombia was a US programme of extensive military and economic aid to Colombia, a key component of its War on Drugs in Latin America. By the end of the 1990s, Colombia had become the third-largest recipient of US aid after Israel and Egypt. Tate draws on her experience as a volunteer, freelance researcher and subsequent analyst at the Washington Office on Latin America during those years. It was here that she made her first-hand encounters with the contradictions of policy formation, which prompted her to view policy as an object of anthropological study.

Plan Colombia has retained its significance due to its role as a model for reconstructive efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Thus, it can demonstrate much of US policy formation and its continuities, such as a focus on non-state actors and the dominant role of the military. Additionally, many of the same actors and organizations are involved in the debates over both conflicts. Plan Colombia is particularly useful in demonstrating 'the endurance of Cold War ideological apparatus, discursive practices, and mobilization strategies involved in formulating U.S. policy' (3). Tate further realized that policy, as we consider it, is not merely one coherent plan carefully laid out by experts to ensure the implementation of a greater vision, but various interlocking and contradictory narratives that ultimately combine to create a programme of governance. For example, foreign policy is not a fixed plan for prospective political undertakings, but is formed from narratives created to justify a previous action that attempts to tie it to various bureaucratic projects. Policy narratives attempt to create an impression of a unified, linear initiative in an ambiguous and discursive manner, which limit critics in ways that are not yet clear. Thus, Tate states, policy can be seen as a 'state effect', as

it reorganizes and produces a comprehensive appearance of existing governmental actions and relations.

It is with this understanding of policy that Tate analyses the formation and implementation of Plan Colombia through a network of the interconnected arenas in which policy is negotiated. The agendas and cultural assumptions of various bureaucratic blocs shaped the nature of the aid package while continuously operating within the constraints of the political system. Tate widens her scope to include the targets of the policy, the political allies of the plan and those excluded from this dynamic process, while also identifying 'hidden' sites of policy-making located far from government offices. She recognizes policy-making as requiring profound emotional work, an area recently highlighted by feminist international relations theorists. She notes how policy can reflect and create 'structures of feelings' and expands on Judith Butler's theory of the 'politics of moral responsiveness', in which politics functions through the support of those who are relatable to us. In this vein, solidarity is imagined and performed as well, and policy-makers draw on this solidarity when creating narratives that justify certain political efforts. The 'politics of recognition' plays a major organizational role in American political culture and shapes the way in which civilians imagine themselves in relation to the implementation of these policies in other nations.

The book is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter gives an overview of the conflict and the emergence of the US's view of it as a national security threat, which prompted a change in policy formation in the direction of interventions and saw the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC) in Colombia classified as a 'meta-threat'. The second chapter explores how the growing human rights lobby used its many narratives to turn the perception of abuses into specific policy reforms. Tate particularly focuses on the formation and consequences of the Leahy Law, which forbade the US from providing counter-narcotics assistance to paramilitary units with credible allegations of abuse. Chapter three traces the development and adaptation of counterinsurgency as it emerged as a powerful non-state actor operating in areas with little state control. Washington viewed these armed units, several of which were sanctioned by the Colombian government, as evidence of an absent or failed state, creating a narrative which minimized their human rights abuses and instead portrayed them as an expression of middle-class discontent. Chapter four examines the continuously embattled 'outlaw' region of Putumayo and the efforts of its inhabitants to determine their political future. Tate recounts the experiences of local officials and civilians, who have an often overlooked history of political organization with various connections to both national and transnational networks, as the region was transformed due to the 1990s coca boom. The fifth chapter relates stories of policy-makers, which are then explored to examine the role of agency in pursuing multiple objectives. The penultimate chapter analyses the production of solidarity and how it extended to existing identities and organizations to grow into an effective and

overreaching apparatus in policy-making. It recounts the ways in which local figures from Putumayo attempted to create their own policy alternatives in order to avoid and challenge exclusion from the dominant discourses. Tate concludes by querying to what extent Plan Colombia can be considered a success by its own official objectives.

Drugs, thugs, and diplomats is an ethnography that is both elegant and disturbing, one that makes a major contribution to the new field of the anthropology of policy. Her determination of policy is that it is a continuously negotiated discursive process which attempts to create a cohesive impression. Tate's work fundamentally challenges the way US operations in Columbia have traditionally been viewed, an understanding that has been and continues to be reproduced in Iraq and Afghanistan and that might be applied again to drastic effect in the future.

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REVIEW ARTICLE

TWO BOOKS ON THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGY

SUSAN C. SEYMOUR, *Cora du Bois: anthropologist, diplomat, agent*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 2015.

REGNA DARNELL, MICHELLE HAMILTON, ROBERT L. A. HANCOCK, and **JOSHUA SMITH** (eds.), *The Franz Boas Papers, Vol. 1: Franz Boas as public intellectual – theory, ethnography, activism*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 2015.

In *Cora du Bois: anthropologist, diplomat, agent*, Susan Seymour follows her subject from birth to her last days in a thorough and insightful biographical narrative. Du Bois's own travel logs, personal diaries, letters and other written accounts permeate Seymour's text, giving it a vibrant and direct tone.

In her account of du Bois's personal and professional life, Seymour places great emphasis on du Bois's journeys, whether by sea or by train, which, according to the author, marked the most significant stages of du Bois's life (p. 131). Cora's own voice fills the pages of the book to the extent that it reads as a sort of written documentary with plenty of commentary to accompany the archival footage. Seymour diligently lays a solid groundwork of analysis for the reader to better contextualize what the original sources make manifest. This, however, is often done in superfluous detail such that, while demonstrating the author's exceptional research and knowledge of everything to do with du Bois, it may leave the reader wondering if the narrative would flow better without what at times appears to be trivial information about her subject. Furthermore, and despite Seymour's evident endeavour to link every piece of information to a specific event in Cora's life and environment, some inferences seem to have been made on less strong grounds, as when she associates Cora's family relationships and her own sexuality with her particular interest in anthropology: 'growing up with a seriously problematic brother and having to come to terms with her own stigmatised sexual orientation *probably* contributed to her special interest in combining the study of other cultures with a psychological focus on the individual and that person's fit within society' (p. 81, my emphasis).

Cora du Bois, as portrayed by Seymour, though perhaps unintentionally, appears to start off as an aspiring intellect who does not actively engage with social and political realities on the ground. In Seymour's narrative, as a graduate student at Berkeley Cora seemed to immerse herself in studying and socializing with her peers, having a lifestyle that was 'marred only somewhat by the

October 29, 1929, stock market crash and the beginning of the Great Depression' (p. 85). Nevertheless, and despite the limited influence the Great Depression had on her financial situation, Seymour tells us that the young du Bois continued to enjoy a privileged Berkeley life-style without appearing to worry about the national economic and social crisis or engaging with those who were less privileged. Seymour is only mildly critical of du Bois's stance as a graduate student and seems to be rather admiring of the elegant lifestyle unveiled in Cora's letters. Only later would du Bois become ever more conscious of the significance and impact of the economic crisis on the country and people's lives, including her own.

Du Bois became the first woman to hold a full professorship with tenure in the School of Arts and Sciences at Harvard, the fifth woman to become president of the AAA and the first woman to preside over the Association for Asian Studies, and she also became the head of Research and Analysis for the OSS's Southeast Asia Command during World War II. In Seymour's words: 'Cora du Bois's intelligence, competence, and integrity outweighed the sexism of the day' (p. 185). Although Seymour pays particular attention to gender issues and du Bois's remarkable pioneering work in areas dominated by men, she omits to mention the equally important absence of non-white men and women in the workspaces du Bois was entering.

Despite such minor weaknesses, this book is of great importance to anthropologists, especially due to its meticulous exploration of a figure whose contribution to the discipline has not been given the attention it merits. Moreover, it may be of particular interest to those embarking on their first period of fieldwork, as it not only provides many insights into the workings of diligent and shrewd ethnographic work, but also addresses common doubts and questions that most young anthropologists have to deal with before and during their first experiences in the field. After all, no matter how much ethnographic contexts may differ in time and place, the young ethnographer frequently feels what du Bois expressed as the 'business of sink or swim' (p. 141). Through Cora's field notes the reader can be guided through the ups and downs of her fieldwork, the moments of exciting encounters together with those of exhaustion and distress. Anxieties, uncertainties and pitfalls alternate with brilliant findings, laughter and the formation of affectionate relationships. Cora also gives valuable advice to those returning from the field by suggesting that the 'return culture shock' can be equally, if not more intense than the culture shock of fieldwork (p. 166). All these field adventures are vividly illustrated through du Bois's own accounts, which Seymour has carefully integrated into her text.

Another very important lesson one can draw from du Bois's work is her understanding of cultural diversity as she witnessed it on Alor. This 'seemingly remote island', Seymour notes, had made it particularly difficult for Cora 'to piece together the complex merging of so many different

cultural influences' (p. 144). Decades before Sahlins or Wolf, du Bois had made important observations around misconceptions concerning alleged cultural isolation and argued that even what may appear as a remote or isolated culture is in fact enmeshed in a long and tangled web of diverse cultural encounters, as much as any other place in the world. Cora du Bois contemplates timeless philosophical questions about life and points to issues that are always relevant and essential to anthropological enquiry. In the mid-1960s she was already voicing some of the most pertinent concerns that defined the 1970s anthropological turn and critical ethnography by asking: 'To what extent are we committed to a gradual understanding, empirically based, of other societies; and to what extent are culturally pre-determined techniques and rhetorics to form not only our own students, but our national and professional world view?' (p. 313). Du Bois's insights reflect the brilliance of a pioneer, and Seymour importantly helps to restore Cora's place within anthropology by assiduously assembling the great many contributions that spanned a long and prolific lifetime.

The second book this review will be discussing is *The Franz Boas papers, Vol. 1*, which inaugurates the Franz Boas Papers Documentary Edition series, an ambitious 25 volume series. The fifteen contributors to the first volume come together from a variety of disciplines and thematic standpoints in order to reflect the great diversity and intellectual range of Boas's work and to counter criticisms of his work through a nuanced reading of it. Determined that Boas's work and legacy merits critical reassessment, the authors call for a wider, multi-disciplinary approach (as opposed to one emanating solely from anthropology) and shed light on the underexplored qualities and the potential relevance of Boas's work for anthropology today. At the same time, this volume is an open call to all anthropologists and scholars from other disciplines interested in the work and the relevance of Boas's influence to research the vast archival resources and re-assess his contribution to the discipline and beyond. By virtue of Boas's commitment to anthropology *along with* a broad range of other disciplines within the social and political sciences, the volume's editors and contributors give him the epithet of 'public intellectual' and explore three dimensions of his stature as such, namely theory, ethnography and activism.

Regna Darnell, the volume's general editor, calls our attention to the importance Boas gave to 'the native point of view' and the need for the anthropologist to 'set aside the assumptions of his own culture "and observe the manifestations of the mind of the man under varying conditions"' (p. 10). In arguing for this, Boas heavily criticized intellectuals and philosophers such as Nietzsche for 'the modern doctrine of prerogatives of the master-mind' (ibid.) and warned against the dangerous fusion of science and prejudice. This would be one of the first instances of what would later become his characteristic activism.

Herbert S. Lewis aims to rectify the ‘stereotype of Boas’s approach to culture as integrationist, uniformitarian, essentializing and blind to the individual’ (p. 33). He highlights instead the importance Boas gave to the individual within society and the individual’s ability for change and to influence culture, as well as the great diversity within groups of individuals. ‘No individual can be considered as representative of any existing group, because the members of all groups vary markedly among themselves’ (p. 30), wrote Boas.

In the third chapter, Christopher Bracken discusses Boas’s ‘theory of complex growth’ (p. 46) and his conviction that ‘change is an impulse communicated between zones that simultaneously join and separate along a limit’ (p. 47), something that affects all aspects of a culture. In Chapter 4, J. Edward Chamberlin argues that Boas shared ‘many of the tenets that characterized both the literary principles of New Criticism and the phenomenological practices of the natural and physical sciences, acutely conscious of the ways modes of perception condition interpretation and evaluation’ (p. 66). Michael Silverstein, in Chapter 5, focuses on the links between Boas’s archive and oeuvre and ‘the late nineteenth-century emergence of professionalised disciplinary linguistics’ (p. 86). Through a diligent comparative approach, Silverstein shows how Boas viewed ‘anthropology as the philology of the oppressed’ (p. 104) and exerted himself to ‘ensure the accurate, inductive scientific discernment of the sound system – and hence the proper means of transcribing and spelling – of languages such as the exotic-sounding ones of the North American Artic and Northwest Coast, on which he had already begun to work in the field in 1886’ (p. 102).

Sean O’Neill demonstrates Boas’s contribution to the development of ethnomusicology as a profession and argues that ‘learning the language well enough to understand the music was an integral part of his initiation into professional anthropology’ (p. 130, 132). Boas’s interest in music also encouraged many of his students, such as Melville Herskovits, Margaret Mead and George Herzog, to explore the role of music in the social contexts they studied (pp. 138-139).

Isaiah Lorado Wilner’s essay, perhaps the most finely balanced between praise and criticism of all the contributions to this volume, discusses several controversial aspects of Boas’s work ethic and attitudes in the field. It delves into the long relationship established between Boas and George Hunt, who had grown up among and married into the Kwakwaka’wakw and served as Boas’s research assistant for several years. Hunt was much more than an ‘informant’; he was a thinker and a teacher (p. 164) who maintained a rich dialogue with Boas for several years and provided him with valuable insights, ethnographic observations and other material.

In Chapter 8, Andrea Laforet explores the influence of Franz Boas on James Teit, their ethnographic legacy and their role as activists to secure land rights for the Thompson Indians of British Columbia. David Dinwoodie and Robert L. A. Hancock, in Chapters 9 and 10 respectively,

explore Boas's engagement with anthropological activism and remind us that his commitment 'to the great liberal struggle … to get the state to treat its members as individuals only, without favouring or disfavouring particular ethnic or religious or gender identities' (p. 229), is still relevant and has 'much to offer to current debates about the roles anthropology can play in those fields today' (p. 240). Joshua Smith, in Chapter 11, focuses on Boas's public advocacy and his struggle to make sure appointments at the Bureau of Indian Affairs would be beneficial to indigenous groups.

Jürgen Langenkämper sheds light on the adventures of Boas's personal library, which was originally intended to be donated to the Museum für Völkenkunde in Hamburg, and his final decision not to make the donation in the light of the dramatic political changes in Germany and the limitations imposed on the freedom of scholarly research (p. 278). As a Jewish intellectual, Boas remained attuned to his native Germany and seemed to have had a remarkably astute and almost prophetic take on the rapidly shifting political situation. 'The behaviour of a people is not significantly determined by its biological origin, but its cultural tradition. The realization of these principle will save the world, and especially Germany, many difficulties', Boas said in July 1931 (p. 278).

Julia E. Liss argues that the role of the two world wars had been particularly influential in urging Boas to engage with socio-political events within and outside academia and decisively shaped him as a public intellectual. These wars impelled him to 'consolidate a public position against war and imperialism' (p. 297) and gave voice to some of the arguments previously formed on the relationships between race, nationality and nationalism. The author also importantly shows that, despite Boas's passionate public engagement and achievement of a certain influence (especially academic), he continued to face harsh criticism and opposition, but nevertheless adhered to his principles and continued voicing his opposition.

The two last chapters by Timothy B. Powell and Michelle Hamilton give details of the overall project's aims, one of which is to increase digitization and 'Native community access to Boas's fieldwork notes, linguistic texts, and correspondence' (p. 351), with a hope for the eventual 'intellectual or digital repatriation' of archival material (p. 352).

Reading the two volumes alongside each other is interesting not only because they both shed light on, and call for a critical reassessment of, the work of two American anthropologists, but also because of the personal and intellectual connections between the two.

Du Bois had enrolled in a year-long course in anthropology at Barnard taught by Columbia professors Franz Boas and Ruth Benedict, in which Margaret Mead, then a graduate student and also a student of Boas, served as a teaching assistant. Franz Boas proposed a topic for a possible

PhD dissertation in anthropology to her, namely ‘a study of the medieval contacts between Western Europe and East African societies’ (Seymour 2015: 65-66). Cora did decide to pursue a career in anthropology but did not accept Boas’s offer, deciding instead to study with two of Boas’s former students, Alfred Kroeber and Robert Lowie, at the University of California, Berkeley.

Du Bois and Boas conducted fieldwork in entirely different geographical and time-related contexts. However, the lessons we can draw from their experiences prove that fieldwork has a diachronic quality that may continue to enrich our knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity and humanity, even when particular conclusions may no longer appear relevant.

Boas, the ‘father of American anthropology’, laid the foundations of a discipline whose range extended beyond academia alone. His anthropological project was intended ‘for a broad reading public’ (Darnell et al. 2015: 301), and this is why he endeavoured to engage, as a public intellectual, with people and issues that were multi-disciplinary in scope and practice. He ‘took stands on seemingly all of the major debates’ from the 1920s until the end of his life (ibid.). Furthermore, his ideas on equality and race, his position against restrictions on immigration and his unabated zeal for freedom of expression can only strike one as extremely relevant in the turbulent and sobering political world of today, which seems to draw its inspiration from the very same theories that Boas so adamantly refuted.

Boas was a strong propagator of the idea that ‘each culture must be understood on its own terms, not merely in relation to other cultures, as the “comparative method” once dictated in earlier lines of anthropological thought’ (Darnell et al. 2015: 129). Du Bois too ‘had come to believe’ that the comparative method ‘gave preference to form over meaning’ (Seymour 2015: 331).

In the Cold-War era, by contrast, Cora du Bois withdrew from the academy entirely and threw herself into government. ‘Academic life and anthropology have lost much of their vitality for me’, she wrote, explaining that it is in her job in the government, not the university, that she felt she could be a ‘useful citizen’. She continued: ‘I have at long last and by circuitous routes become a “socialized” being’ (Seymour 2015: 206). Although such statements may appear paradoxical for an anthropologist, they are consistent with the inconsistencies of life and the dilemmas we all go through at different moments in our lives under often changing, and exceptionally tense, political and social circumstances. Du Bois at the time strongly believed that it was her role in the OSS, not in academia, that gave her the ‘potential for influencing State Department decisions’ (Seymour 2015: 209). Unlike Boas, who never abandoned academia – but equally never exclusively belonged to it either – du Bois, for a great part of her career, chose a different springboard from which to engage politically, as she thought it would offer her a broader scope for action.

In the years of general distrust and suspicion that were cultivated throughout the Cold War period, and towards the end of her career in government, du Bois appears to have had critical questions and doubts about the limits of free enquiry. She began to question her workplace, as the government was ever more preoccupied with two 'threats' that directly affected du Bois and her partner's lives: anti-communist paranoia and a 'fear of the sexually "different"' (Seymour 2015: 232). Her OSS colleague and life partner, Jeanne Taylor, was forced to resign when she was branded a communist. Du Bois herself entered McCarthy's list when she declined a job at Berkeley by refusing to sign a university anti-communist loyalty oath (Seymour 2015: 247-8). From that point on, and for several years, she would be frequently questioned by the FBI. It was also in these years that she started echoing Boas in defending the principle of unconditionally free scientific enquiry, writing that, 'whereas … scrutiny may be justified in sensitive agencies of the government, it seems unpardonable in academic institutions, one of whose important functions is to foster the spirit of free and fearless inquiry' (Seymour 2015: 205). Importantly Cora also wondered about the kinds of security measures that could be 'compatible with a democratic state' (p. 246). In asking such questions her writings become extremely relevant and contemporary.

During her years at Harvard, du Bois's major research project 'was to investigate post-World War II sociocultural change in India following independence from Great Britain in 1947' (Seymour 2015: 284). She was then strongly preoccupied with change and the consequences of great events for societies, showing once again great academic affinities with Boas's work, without, however, making this explicit. Nonetheless her explicit commitment, at this stage of her academic career, for 'free and fearless inquiry' (Seymour 2015: 287), which strongly echoes Boas's ideals, urged her to reject passionately all attempts to conduct intelligence research under the guise of academic research and development projects funded entirely by U.S. government agencies, and she advised her students accordingly. 'If I ever learn that any graduate students have taken money from the CIA, I'll personally see to it that they never graduate from Harvard', Cora reportedly said (Seymour 2015: 288). Boas, on the other hand, always maintained a non-governmental position and struggled to prevent the use of scientific knowledge for political ends (Darnell et al. 2015: 307). In fact, before the late 1930s, Boas would try to keep his 'scientific' work apart from his 'political' work.

Finally, reading these two books side by side allows one to see how both Boas and du Bois adhered to the ethical principles that guided their academic careers, while still being able to reassess their own positions critically and redefine them.

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