

Book reviews

Robin Archer, **WHY IS THERE NO LABOR PARTY IN THE UNITED STATES?**, Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007, xvii + 348 pp., \$35.00 and £19.95 (cloth).

In this meticulously researched study, Archer addresses, or re-addresses, ‘the Sombart question’, now so widely recognized even by non-aficionados that one does not need to state what that question was. True, Archer seeks to distinguish his quest for the non-existence of a labour party in the United States from the wider one of why there was no socialism there – never mind how, even in 1906 when Sombart’s essay was first published as a book, one could have debated what socialism was. Still, Archer’s distinction may be over-finessed since several of the arguments that he rehearses were exactly those used by Sombart in his original work. Of course, there *were* labour parties in the United States, at least two of some national electoral significance in their time, but none the less the burden of the relevant literature has been voluminous on the genuine question of why labour-based politics did not finally succeed in the United States. For example, Seymour Martin Lipset, perhaps America’s most distinguished political scientist in the latter half of the twentieth century, devoted a major focus of his life’s work to this topic. Thus, given the plenitude of existing writing on the topic, one might reasonably wonder what further contribution could be made to the previous debates.

Yet Archer has managed splendidly to do so. He has done this in a way that is unusual, though really very obvious in its simplicity. Whereas most of the analyses of the failure of a labour party in the United States have been quite explicit (as was Sombart) that their comparison was with countries in Europe, Archer’s Australian background gives him a distinctive pedigree in using the alternative comparator of Australia. The general analyses of ‘American exceptionalism’ have sometimes drawn on comparisons with Canada and there is a modest literature on the different frontier experiences of the United States and Australia. However, a comparison in terms of the success of a labour-based politics has been less well developed, surprisingly so given that by the end of the nineteenth century Australia was far advanced also of Great Britain in that regard.

Archer may or may not be a devotee of Durkheim. The latter’s mode of arguing his case, well exemplified in his *Suicide*, has been described as *argumentum per eliminationem* (albeit with an invented Latinism and also bad Latin on other grounds), but it also describes Archer’s general analytical approach – knock out alternative explanations, leave the confused reader floundering in wonder for what the correct explanation could be, before rescuing him or her from that confusion by presenting one’s own theory. Or perhaps Archer had in mind one of Sherlock Holmes’ precepts of detection as expressed to the puzzled Watson in *The Sign of Four*: ‘How often have I said to you that when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, *however improbable*, must be the truth?’

Thus, using the Australian comparator Archer rehearses, and systematically rejects, many of the standard arguments about the failure of labour politics in the United States. His research on some of these issues has been particularly meticulous. He is well able, on the basis of the Australian experience, to refute Sombart’s ‘roast beef and apple pie’ explanation for the failure of American socialism. Apparently, the Australians were, as shown by data that Archer found on food consumption, more indulged and indulgent than the Americans when

it came to *haute cuisine*, to the extent that there were health-policy concerns in Australia at the time that were the equivalent of the present-day worries about obesity.

Readers of this journal may be less interested in Archer's general explanation of the failure of labour politics in the United States, which is particularly concerned with the greater role of repression there and with a number of distinctive and pivotal events in its labour history during the 1890s. Instead, however, they may be more interested in the argument why the issue of race in American politics was not the reason for the failure of American labourism. Archer's argument here is that, whilst Australia had no slavery issue as such as in America, it had the equivalent of an underclass from indentured workers who came to work particularly in Queensland from the South Pacific Islands. Whilst non-Australian readers will be aware of how Australia's indigenous population was treated and of the debates about colonial genocides, this other historical fact about Australia may be rather less known to them. One may perhaps wonder whether Archer is stretching a little too far the similarity between the presence of this indentured workforce and the American legacy of slavery. On the other hand, there is no doubt that both American and Australian workers alike were often deeply hostile to immigrant Chinese workers in their respective countries.

One might in any case doubt the premise that the history of earlier slavery would work against the genesis of a labour party, at least among the white working class. The standard argument for this, which is not Archer's, is that the existence of a racial hierarchy and the desire to preserve it worked against the development of a social movement based on proletarian solidarity and what, in pre-feminist times, would have been called 'the brotherhood of man'. However, as Archer demonstrates from the degree of racial hostility in Australia, there is no necessary reason why a racial hierarchy, and the desire to maintain it, should militate against the formation of racially exclusionist labour politics. Indeed, in Australia calls for white working-class solidarity may have assisted the emergence of labour politics. There are also many historical examples of labour politics and labour politicians being hostile or, at best, ambivalent towards the inclusion of oppressed non-indigenous or ethnic-minority workers. Who could forget the reputed greeting of the famous trade unionist Ben Tillet, pillar of the 'new unionism' of the 1880s and 1890s, to a group of foreign Jews arriving in London at the end of the nineteenth century? 'Yes, you are our brothers and we shall do our duty by you ... but we wish you had not come to this country.'

Overall, Archer's book is sociology as it ought to be – factually and historically informed and researched, well argued, devoid of jargon and vapid theorizing, and contributing in an original manner to a major theoretical debate.

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Robert D. Bullard (ed.), **THE BLACK METROPOLIS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: RACE, POWER, AND POLITICS OF PLACE**, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007, xi + 282pp., £17.99 (paper).

Edited by Robert Bullard, *The Black Metropolis in the Twenty-First Century: Race, Power, and Politics of Place* compiles scholarship on black urban—and increasingly suburban—life in America. A collection of general essays, case studies, and calls to action, *The Black Metropolis in the Twenty-First Century* will appeal to scholars across multiple academic disciplines, including African American studies, sociology, urban planning, policy studies, political science, urban history, economics, and environmental studies. The book highlights enduring social problems in the United States such as racism, class disparity, poverty, and institutional discrimination, and examines the social, political, and economic limitations that structural racism and geographic isolation place on black Americans and communities.

The general essays focus on the racialized residential spaces of cities and broader geographic regions. Bullard's introduction and first chapter invite readers to investigate the

social problems that all classes of metropolitan blacks confront amidst residential sprawl. John Powell advocates a 'federated regionalism': the coordination of institutional efforts in order to rectify the spatial construction of racism (p.55). In a compelling aside, Powell discusses globalization's ability to diminish federal power and intensify racial disparities in communities. Joe Darden examines the racialized metropolis in terms of residence, suburbanization rates, and home-ownership rates, concluding that race affects residential patterns more than class. Edward Blakely and Thomas Sanchez discuss gated communities and 'equality' as suburbanites increasingly segregate themselves from each other. Michael Stoll uses the dissimilarity index to portray the relationship between sprawl and what he calls 'jobs mismatch' for black Americans: as metropolitan sprawl increases, the spatial isolation of blacks from employment opportunities increases (p.144). Though often limited in theoretical scope, these essays give sufficient insight into the racial structuration of urban space vis-à-vis the institutionalization of racist social practices.

In contrast to the general essays, the case studies focus on the dilemmas of spatial separatism in majority-black urban areas. Sheryll Cashin's provocative study about Prince George County, Maryland, confronts what she claims is a classist dilemma: on the one hand, affluent blacks, like affluent whites, do not want to live near poor blacks, or poor whites; on the other hand, both affluent and poor blacks want to maintain majority-black neighborhoods. The essay addresses the costs of black separatism by dispelling various myths about life in middle class suburbia. Robert Bullard, Glenn Johnson, and Angel Torres provide a descriptive overview of Atlanta's perception as a 'black Mecca' while sprawl, limited public transport, and long commutes disproportionately overburden black Atlantans. J. Eugene Grigsby III provides an interesting and data-rich examination of the health status of African Americans in the Los Angeles metropolitan area since the 1965 Watts riots. Providing ample descriptive statistics, Grigsby argues that as black Americans suburbanize, their health disparities decrease relative to other groups.

One of the most insightful case studies in the volume, and a must read for anyone interested in the intersection of history, racism, politics, community, and institutional discrimination, is Beverly Wright and Robert Bullard's study on pre- and post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans. The authors trace the contemporary, structural racial geography of New Orleans to freed black slaves in the 1720s who were residentially confined to the flood-prone 'backswamps' (p.174). Impacted by an historically racist mortgage industry and the lack of urgency of FEMA assistance to Katrina survivors, New Orleans's black population continues to suffer from social, political, and economic injustices.

Finally, in contrast to both the general essays and the case studies, the calls to social, organizational, and political action aim to energize debate about the future of black political leadership and equitable development via coalition-building. Although presuming that black political power is coherent and unified, David Bositis's essay calls for blacks to build coalitions with other disenfranchised groups in order to keep the issues important to people of color at the forefront of politics. Angela Glover Blackwell calls for broad coalitions between residents, local leadership, elected officials, community institutions, and regional opportunities in order to foster developmental equity and, thereby, to engender healthy, stable communities.

According to the majority of the authors in the text, some progress for African Americans has been made since the civil rights movement, especially in terms of the residential options for black middle classes. The issue of 'progress', however, must be deeply qualified. Indeed, as the authors relate, black Americans of all classes continue to endure structural inequalities in all places typically associated with the 'good life' for white Americans. These practices continue to keep black Americans from achieving their full potential.

Philip Davies and Iwan Morgan (eds), **AMERICAN'S AMERICANS: POPULATION ISSUES IN U.S. SOCIETY AND POLITICS**, London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, University of London, School of Advanced Study, 2007, xviii + 382pp., £15.00 (paper).

This edited volume arose from the first academic conference to be held in Europe on American demographic issues and politics, co-organized by the British Library's Eccles Centre for American Studies and the University of London's Institute for the Study of the Americas in May 2006. Editors Philip Davies and Iwan Morgan have compiled a diverse and multi-disciplinary set of essays from the fields of demography, planning, sociology, political science, history, geography and literary studies, considering not simply the socioeconomic and cultural consequences of population change but also the political and policy implications of a growing, aging, and increasingly diverse American population. The book comprises an introduction by Iwan Morgan and sixteen chapters, sub-divided into three sections.

The two chapters in the first section offer useful overviews of population change, identifying new demographic patterns and analysing the potential consequences these emerging trends hold for American politics. William Frey's 'The Three Americas: Reflections on America's Americans in Regional Context' identifies demographic patterns of regional settlement and argues that the old geographic distinctions between urban, suburban and rural are giving way to regional demographic dispersions – the Sunbelt region attracts domestic in-migration to its suburban areas, the Melting Pot region draws new immigrants and is increasingly diverse, and the Heartland is slow-growing, attracting neither in-migration nor immigration. The second chapter, Rhodes Cook's 'Through the Prism of Demographics: America's Political Scene,' contends that there are electoral consequences of demographic change, as old state-based patterns of 'Red' and 'Blue' erode and are mitigated by increased voting power of the baby boomers and the Hispanic population.

The second section considers the socioeconomic and cultural contexts of population issues and is arguably the weakest section of the book. Many of the chapters are overly historical and descriptive or are only tangentially related to the volume's underlying theme of current population issues in the United States. Notable exceptions are the chapter by David Fasenfest and Jason Booza on racial and ethnic integration in metropolitan neighbourhoods, in which they demonstrate how descriptive analysis can be effectively used to reveal interesting patterns and elucidate new questions surrounding regional patterns of demographic change and Kenneth M. Johnson and Daniel T. Lichter's contribution, which uncovers patterns of population change in persistently poor counties in the United States. Their chapter is particularly novel for emphasizing the necessity of explaining patterns of longevity as well as change. Natasha Kumar Warikoo's chapter also stands out for its comparative analysis of micro-level, individual responses as indicators of the prevalence of racial and ethnic integration in public high schools in London and New York.

The final section analyzes the politics of population, with a specific focus on policy changes and outcomes resulting from demographic shifts. As in the previous section, some of the chapters seem only tangentially related to the book's themes; it is unclear, for example, how the extent to which the American public's lack of engagement with the so-called 'morality war' between traditionalists and progressives (chapter 10) and the evolution of Native American's struggle for self-determination between the Nixon and Reagan eras (chapter 11) are demographic issues, other than the fact that they involve people. Other chapters, however, provide new and interesting insights into the political consequences of population change. For example, Vivien Miller's analysis of prison populations demonstrates that demographics tell a racialized and gendered story, while Andrew Wroe's essay demonstrates the connection between immigration politics and electoral and ideological politics. Particularly impressive is "Urban Electoral Coalitions in an Age of Immigration" by Raphael J. Sonenshein and Mark H. Drayse, which asks how increased diversity in Los Angeles explains and/or shapes political coalition patterns. Their successful integration of

geography and political science approaches demonstrates that racial and ethnic voting blocs were reinforced by residential concentrations of ethnic groups in Los Angeles and provides an excellent example of how interdisciplinary work can retain analytic rigour and value.

The central theme of this volume, population issues, can clearly be manipulated in a number of ways: it can refer to the politics of population growth or decline, the political and policy consequences of changes to the demographic composition of the U.S., or, more broadly, it can be construed to encompass any issue that involves groups of people. The latter of these stretches the scope of the book slightly too far – the chapters which are, at best, tangentially related to population issues detract from the strength of the collection as a whole. Ultimately, however, this is a solid book that is relatively successful in its use of multi-disciplinary methods and approaches to explore the politics of population.

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Steven Epstein, **INCLUSION: THE POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE IN MEDICAL RESEARCH**, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007, 416pp., \$29.00(hb).

This is an impressive book that provides an invaluable perspective on recent dramatic shifts in our understanding of the connections between race and biology. Epstein recounts and assesses the emergence over the last two decades of the ‘difference-and-inclusion paradigm’ in the biomedical arena in the United States. At its core, the story of this development is deceptively simple. Activists, responding to the exclusion of women and racial minorities from medical research that relied on white males to represent the standard human, mobilized to achieve ‘two substantive goals: the inclusion of members of various groups generally considered to be underrepresented previously as subjects in clinical studies; and the measurement, within those studies, of differences across groups with regard to treatment effects, disease progression, or biological processes. (6)’ Epstein acknowledges this development ‘as a victory worth savoring in a long struggle to bring medical attention to the excluded and underserved,’ but suggests the host of unintended consequences that followed—centered around ‘a truncated understanding of the biological and social production of bodily difference (204)’—may make critical political work around race more difficult and complicated.

Epstein’s account is characterized by a potent combination of specificity and breadth. For instance, he finds that ‘the broad-brush assertion that the adult white male had become the universal human subject fails to do justice to the varying particularities of research designs, the competing ideas about human sameness and difference, and the creative and sometimes troubling ways in which researchers have responded to practical exigencies in order to carry out their work. (50)’ He articulates this point not to deconstruct the activist narrative but to place it in historical context in such a way that we can recognize the unanticipated directions in which this development is leading us. The prominence of white males in medical research was partly due to reforms in the 1970s that responded to exploitative medical uses of ‘vulnerable populations’—women, racial minorities, and children. The subsequent two decades of reform has now placed group identity ‘squarely within the biomedical arena’ in a manner that ‘has precluded direct attention to reducing inequalities in the domain of health, while encouraging the misleading notion that better health for all can be pursued through study of the biology of race and sex.(1,4)’

Epstein’s awareness of the varied consequences of political activism directed towards science and medicine stems from research for his first book, *Impure Science: AIDS, Activism, and the Politics of Knowledge*, (1996). In this current work, Epstein similarly considers how the agendas and actions of social movements both impact and play into the interests of government agencies, biomedical researchers, and pharmaceutical companies. But he does so by wielding a far more developed sense of social theory and by a commanding a daunting

range academic literature on processes of knowledge formation, the politics of institutional change, and the making of identity and difference. The result is that he generates a series of powerful concepts that should prove exceedingly useful for further examining the impacts and products of the 'inclusion-and-difference paradigm.' For example, Epstein tracks the *operationalizing* of sex and race for biomedical purposes, which involves 'transforming dimensions of social reality into "variables" that can be measured in quantitative terms. (14)' This process hinges upon *categorical alignments*: 'the merging of social categories from the worlds of medicine, social movements, and state administration. (13)' Such alignments lead to *niche standardization*—'transforming human populations into standardized objects available for scientific scrutiny, political administration, marketing or other purposes (135)—that, in turn, produce *recruitmentology*, the science of enrolling and retaining 'hard-to-recruit populations' in science research.

A further accomplishment of Epstein's delineation of the 'inclusion-and-difference paradigm' is that he demonstrates the need to go beyond well-worn arguments about the social construction of race and gender. Certainly, he both supports and draws upon these arguments by highlighting the ambiguities, confusions, and subjective aspects of trying to make diverse humans fit standardize boxes. But he suggest this paradigm—by profoundly affecting how people think about their categorical identities, investing their biological dimensions with greater significance—will lead social constructionist arguments increasingly to loose traction in public debates.¹ As well, he raises the concern that the elaborate political and scientific infrastructures supporting these biological notions of difference will do little to help us grapple with the problem of health disparities. For one, they are inadequate to the task of addressing 'the ways in which inequalities and power differentials in the broader society affects people's exposure to health risks (299).' For another, 'they may obscure other aspects of social hierarchy that are highly relevant to health, such as social class.' Furthermore, 'they may disincite us from recognizing that in many situations the practices one engages in, the networks within which one moves, and the resources one has on hand may be much more immediately relevant to health risks than one's membership in a categorical group.(300)'

Note

1. For more on this development, see 'Is Race Still Socially Constructed? The Recent Controversy over Race and Medical Genetics,' *Science as Culture*, 17:2, 163-193, 2008, John Hartigan Jr.

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University of Texas.

David S. Goldstein and Audrey B. Thacker (eds), **COMPLICATING CONSTRUCTIONS: RACE, ETHNICITY AND HYBRIDITY IN AMERICAN TEXTS**, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2007, xxviii + 320pp., £27.00 (hardback).

The shifting conceptualisations of race and ethnicity have been of paramount importance, not just in American texts, but in society at large. A good example of this was during this year's primary season where, expectedly or unexpectedly, the issue of race came to the fore again, resulting in Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama delivering an arguably historic speech on 'A More Perfect Union'. The speech addressed issues of racial tensions, inequalities as well as black anger and white resentment in the United States.

The compelling volume *Complicating Constructions*, edited by David Goldstein and Audrey Thacker, similarly engages in examining notions of race (socially constructed from without an ethnic group) and ethnicity (usually defined from within) and how the two concepts interact with American literary texts of all genres. The editors brought together a variety of ethnic and

non-ethnic American texts ranging from the early nineteenth to the late twentieth century. This synthesis of majority ethnic and minority ethnic literatures, one of the many strengths of this book, is similar to the efforts in the social and educational sciences where, of late, academics have also started to explore the ways in which ethnic and non-ethnic identities intersect. The fourteen essays that make up this volume are organised into three sections.

The first six contributions look at how race has been intertwined with personal and collective identities in American texts. Drawing on Ruiz de Burton's work, Jesse Alemán argues that 'whiteness is not a natural racial category but a cultural identity marker contingent on class status, labour politics, market capitalism, legality, and public performances' (p. 23). He shows how these Mexican American novels stretch America's concept of whiteness by including Hispanics whilst excluding Native Americans and African Americans. Andrea Tinnemeyer's analysis of Bret Harte's 'Gabriel Conroy' builds on this notion to argue that, in post-1848 America, Mexicans were defined socially as 'white' and granted citizenship while California Indians and Chinese were deemed 'non-white' and excluded from citizenship. In contrast, Ariel Balter looks at Weldon Johnson's 'The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man' to show how race, class and sexuality are ambivalent and shifting concepts depending on one's imagined or socially constructed identity. 'In order for the Ex-Coloured Man to succeed in a white-run society, he must adopt the ideologies of his oppressors' (p. 57). Moving beyond the black-white double-consciousness dichotomy, Annamarie Christiansen maintains that the historically tragic mulatto image of the outsider in nineteenth-century American literature has been replaced by a powerful narrative in contemporary novels and led to the emergence of a hybrid African American identity. Chapter five focuses on Asian American literature and explores how the protagonist of Gish Jen's 'Mona in the Promised Land' negotiates her Jewish Chinese American identity. 'What emerges is not a sense of fixed and static identities but identities that are interstitial, contingent and ever in the process of becoming' (p. 103), Jeffrey Partridge writes. In contrast, Joe Lockard returns to the theme of ethnic essentialism in his analysis of William Pierce's white-supremacist anti-Semitic novel 'The Turner Diaries'.

The three essays in the second part shift the focus from textual representations of race to how race informs our understanding of Western history. Edwin McAllister examines anti-Chinese fiction to show white people's animosity to the newly arriving Chinese in the American West. 'The fiction exposes anxieties among white middle-class Americans that a new wave of soldiers and settlers would come not west to east in the classic American pattern of settlement, but from east to west (...)' (p. 145), bringing smallpox and opium with them and eventually taking control of the United States. Georgina Dodge analyses twentieth-century African American autobiographies to maintain that 'the story of becoming American is one of negotiating individual and community identities within racist culture' (p. 158). The double nature of culturally-situated autobiographies by immigrant authors of colour results in an increased value of these texts both as literary works and social documents, Dodge says. Tracy Floreani compares two birth scenes in a 1953 novel and a television sitcom, variously depicting post-war consumerism and how ethnic identity and social class inform consumer desires.

The five essays in the final part move from textual analysis to broader issues of theory and criticism. William Over's essay argues that modern black dramatists recognise 'that the reified division of racial identities must give way to a genuinely historical and dialectical approach to the representation of race' (p. 208). Like Blackness, whiteness is not a monolithic category, but a multifaceted concept. Alexandra Schultheiss then draws on Darryl Pinckney's 'High Cotton' to critique psychoanalytic theory. Psychoanalysts such as Sigmund Freud argue that the subject is a real thing with a fixed structure operating in predictable patterns. By contrast, for poststructuralists like Schultheiss, 'the constitution of the subject in language is an *ongoing* phenomenon in the subject's life rather than a one-time event in infancy' (p. 233; my emphasis). Derek Parker Royal's essay encourages literary critics to approach contemporary Jewish American fiction as an ethnic literature and to read this literature in terms of postmodern ethnicity (p. 252). Drawing on Du Bois's double-

consciousness theory, in which the 'I' is forced to choose between two distinct cultures, the authors in chapter thirteen found that the protagonists in their texts reject the notion of double-consciousness in favour of an individualised hybrid identity. Finally, José Torres-Padilla reminds us just how difficult it can be to construct and maintain that hybrid third space. 'Braschi has not created a text [Yo-Yo Boing] that through hybridity produces ambivalence, but rather she has consciously created a hybrid text to sustain a point about ambivalence' (p. 297).

The essays are impressive because of their engagement with various theoretical paradigms such as whiteness theory, psychoanalysis, double-consciousness, hybridity and postmodernism, and the relevance of the selected literary texts for our understanding of contemporary societies and identity formations. I would have liked some reference to Europe, particularly in the introduction, given that some of the contributors (notably Balter) hinted at the difference between the United States and Europe with regard to 'race'. Arguably, in twenty-first century Europe, it is no longer the concept of race that is the 'problem' (to use Du Boisian terms), but religion which is dominating multiculturalism discourses. This accessible and thought-provoking volume will appeal to a wide audience in the humanities and social sciences.

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Thomas Greg, **THE SEXUAL DEMON OF COLONIAL POWER: PAN-AFRICAN EMBODIMENT AND EROTIC SCHEMES OF EMPIRE**, Bloomington: IN, Indiana University Press, 2007, 224pp., \$21.96 (pb).

Unique in its scope and radical in its agenda, *The Sexual Demon of Colonial Power* brings a Pan-African analysis to bear upon both white and Black writings on gender and sexuality. This approach to the topics under examination is vitally important not only for the corrective that it provides to the ongoing reification of white epistemologies within the academy, but also for the ways in which it clearly points towards a mode of academic praxis that engages in criticism for the point of furthering both political and intellectual goals, rather than simply for the sake of criticism. In this regard, the book centres upon two intersecting points of critique in relation to research examining the lives and sexualities of Black people living in a broad range of relationships to the African diaspora.

In regard to the first point of critique, Thomas clearly and eloquently outlines the whiteness and eurocentrism of sexuality studies, and in so doing highlights not simply the often unmarked racial assumptions made by such research, but also the field's potential incapacity to adequately represent the lives of Black people. For example, Thomas questions how the categories of 'man' and 'women' are always already intimately enmeshed with a racialized biological discourse that was historically deployed to legitimate slavery. Thomas suggests from this that the application of these categories retrospectively to those groups of people who have experienced ongoing systemic violence under colonial rule fails to recognize both the historical inaccuracy of these terms (when colonised people were depicted as non-humans, and thus where analogies between white and black women on the basis of gender ignore the forcible location of Black women outside of gender in its racialized patriarchal form), as well as the incommensurable understandings of 'gender' that circulate between white and Black communities.

As for the second main point of critique, Thomas questions how research conducted by Black people has often been put to work in the service of furthering the research agendas of a white academy. Thomas interrogates both Black and white writers in regards to the ways in which particular voices are often silenced when they are either appropriated, ignored, or misrepresented. Importantly, Thomas outlines how the study of Black sexualities and genders has often failed to actually 'see' the lived experiences of Black people as a result of

the ways in which those voices that speak against dominant accounts are routinely marginalised. Furthermore, Thomas suggests that gaps in current representations of Black people within queer studies may not solely be the product of poor recruitment strategies on the part of white researchers, nor the fact that the statistical majority of queer people are white. Rather, Thomas suggests that Black people may also refuse to engage in research when the terms of the research are set in ways that are viewed as incommensurable to the worldviews of Black queer people, and where the research may be viewed as fundamentally unable to respectfully represent the specificities of Black queerness.

In regard to limitations, there are only two in what is an otherwise challenging, erudite and immensely important text: First, whilst Thomas' Pan African agenda obviously has a specific focus on the lives of particular groups of people, further writing on this subject would benefit from examining not only how racialized violence continues to be enacted against those from African diasporas, but also how those brought against their will to the colonies nonetheless continue to live upon the lands of those First Nations people who experienced dispossession. Elaborating the intersections of these quite difference histories is an important task that requires ongoing attention. Second, Thomas often provides uniquely insightful elaborations of the mutuality of sexuality, racism, and class that are captured very succinctly, but which would benefit from extended examination and elaboration in relation to historical or contemporary events. Obviously this may well be the project of future work, which I certainly look forward to reading.

To reiterate, then, I found this book to be not only a stimulating and thought-provoking read, but also one that was impressive for how accessible Thomas made such a thorough-going analysis of a broad range of fields. This review can but only hint at the richness of the text and the powerful nature of the argumentation. Thomas must be commended for his ability to so clearly capture such an in-depth critique in ways that are always already reconstructive at the same time as they are deconstructive.

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Cedric Johnson, **FROM REVOLUTIONARIES TO RACE LEADERS: BLACK POWER AND THE MAKING OF AFRICAN AMERICAN POLITICS**, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007 xl + 294pp., \$20.00 (pb).

In this subtle and sophisticated reassessment of the Black Power era, Cedric Johnson argues that the focus on race-based mobilization in Black communities in the U.S. during the 1960s and 1970s ultimately served conservative ends. He contends that for all its radical aims and intentions, the ideal of Black Power ultimately helped channel a democratic mass-based movement into a politics of ethnic brokerage that served mainly the interests of elites. In fair and judicious fashion, Johnson delineates the undeniable internal logic, practical utility, and short term achievements of Black Power. He explains that it was not illogical for activists to believe that race-based grievances required race-based remedies. He acknowledges the important cultural achievements of race based politics in helping turn negative ascription into positive affirmation, in challenging the pervasive anti-Black assumptions and practices of the U.S. racial order. Yet he argues that by placing so much emphasis on solidarities of sameness, the movement turned a constructive search for racial unity into a destructive insistence on racial uniformity. Johnson maintains that the ideal of a singular Black political subject occluded class divisions within the community, elevated embodied identities over common interests, and reduced significant dimensions of Black politics to the simple pursuit of placing a few dark faces in high places.

Johnson's concerns with organization, mobilization, and collective struggles for power guide his selection of research objects. This is not primarily a study of the actions and ideas of Malcolm X and Kwame Ture or of the Black Panther Party, the League of Revolutionary

Black Workers, or the Republic of New Africa. Johnson focuses on thinkers and organizations who envisioned radical possibilities in electoral politics, international solidarity work, and cross-class alliances inside the Black community. He presents wonderfully original and astute analyses of how Harold Cruse and Amiri Baraka influenced the development of race-based mobilization and organization. Johnson recuperates both the radical promise and the conservative limits of the National Black Political Assembly and the 1972 Gary Convention, and he offers insightful descriptions and analyses of the functions served by mobilizations in solidarity with anti-colonial liberation movements overseas as well as efforts to form independent Black political organizations inside the U.S.

One important theme in Johnson's study is the damage done to the movement by the vanguardism and sectarianism of radical political parties. He argues that the Black Power movement largely abandoned the forms of participatory democracy that had proven so effective in promoting political participation among the Black working class and the Black poor in the southern civil rights movement. He demonstrates how the successes of loosely organized coalitions like the African Liberation Day Coordinating Committee stemmed at least in part from their flexibility, spontaneity, and non-bureaucratic nature. Johnson underplays the importance of how the brutally repressive tactics deployed against Black organizations by police agencies and private vigilantes provoked the bureaucratization and militarization of the movement, but he also makes a valid argument in contending that militaristic nationalism and its mania for ideological purity also promoted hierarchy, secrecy, and autocracy in Black Power organizations. By defining ideological clarity as a precondition for mass struggle rather than as its outcome, nationalist militants deprived their own supporters of the transformative experiences and collective learning that characterizes successful egalitarian struggles.

Johnson makes valuable contributions to scholarship and civic life alike with this thoughtful study of the origins and evolution of race-based political mobilization in the mid-twentieth century. Some readers may feel that he goes too far, that the book underestimates the enduring appeal, utility, and even necessity to combat race-based injuries with race-based remedies. Many of the environmental justice organizations he salutes toward the end of the book as alternatives to race-based organizing actually combine expressly anti-racist politics with cross-racial alliances and associations. As Claire Jean Kim demonstrates in her indispensable book *Bitter Fruit* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), Black nationalist groups sometimes function productively within the broader Black community to limit the collaborationist and accommodationist tendencies of Black elites and to secure concessions from them for the working class and the poor. Yet there can be no doubt that Johnson has identified an important part of the truth. As SNCC activist Courtland Cox once explained to Kwame Ture, in the struggle for emancipation "Blackness is necessary. But it is not sufficient." (Kwame Ture, *Ready for the Revolution* New York: Scribner, 2003, 158-9).

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Ania Loomba and Jonathan Burton (Compilers and Editors), **RACE IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND. A DOCUMENTARY COMPANION**, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, 300 pp, £17.99 (pb).

Andrew Valls (ed.), **RACE AND RACISM IN MODERN PHILOSOPHY**, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005, 293 pp, \$21.95 (pb).

The first of these books asserts that 'sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England cannot be understood without examining the development of ideologies of racial difference at the time'. The most questionable word in this proposition is the adjective *racial*. There were conceptions of difference that may possibly be called ideologies, though the appropriateness

of doing so cannot be taken for granted; since ideologies are normally defined as distortions of objective reality, the grounds for describing a conception as ideological should be specified. The bigger issue is the adjective. Not everyone in the USA today is agreed about what can properly be qualified as *racial*, while in Western Europe most educated people would, I believe, strongly object to any utilization in their countries of the conception of race that featured in Question 6 of the 2000 USA Census. Before 'ideologies of racial difference' in the past can be examined, present-day assumptions have to be analyzed systematically.

Nor is our generation the first to object to loose use of the words *race* and *racial*. They have been current for five centuries, but have meant different things to different people. To read a 'racial' meaning into statements by persons who did not use this idiom is particularly questionable. Our predecessors for many centuries have commented on why some humans looked different from themselves. As some of their explanations seem so inadequate, it can be educative to trace the advance of knowledge about the sources of human difference (bearing in mind that it will advance further after we are gone). This is to write history forwards. By contrast, readers should be on their guard when they encounter authors who believe that they can support their present-day political opinions by presenting the past in terms of a modern conception (like that of the US census). This is, in one respect, to read history backwards.

Recent writing on race by philosophers in the USA (exemplified in the second book), has not been adequately reflected in the pages of *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, partly because some publishers have not sent review copies to our journal (Cornell University Press please note!). The new trend started with the Critical Race Theory movement that held its first conference in 1989. It had begun in the law schools, with the fear that the advances of the civil rights era were being cut back. Whereas practitioners have to accept judges' decisions about what the law is, the movement emphasized 'legal indeterminacy'; in many important cases the arguments had been finely balanced and the decisions could have gone the other way. The outcome of contentious issues was being interpreted to validate an image of US society and its history that downplayed racial discrimination and failed to reflect the experience of minority groups.

That history did not start in Jamestown in 1607 or Cape Cod in 1620. The colonists had brought with them an intellectual heritage of ideas about human nature and the rights of parties to legally sanctioned relationships. Those ideas are now splendidly documented in *Race in Early Modern England*, which, after a thirty-six page introduction, presents extracts from six texts of the Classical era, twelve from the Bible, six from medieval times, ninety from the early modern era, and eleven from early modern dictionaries. Much of the material will appear weird to the modern eye. By the end of the twentieth century the scholars who wished to correct the prevailing image of US society and its history had concluded that they needed also to document and reexamine the sequence by which their generation's conception of race had been fashioned. Among them, Robert Bernasconi has been a leading figure, notably as the editor of nine volumes (published by the Thoemmes Press) of facsimile reproductions of the principal eighteenth and nineteenth century texts that deployed conceptions of race to account for human differences.

The arguments of the main political philosophers of the seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-centuries are reviewed in *Race and Racism in Modern Philosophy*. It assembles thirteen original essays by various authors. They ask why Descartes had little to say about either slavery or race, whether Hobbes should be considered a racist (answer: yes), and why Spinoza thought the very idea of race to be without foundation. Though Leibniz has been cited as one of the first authors to use the word, he appears not to have used it for classification. Locke is revered as a philosopher of liberty, yet his political theory was employed to justify slavery and he himself was deeply involved in the sanctioning of slavery. Therefore we 'should be disturbed by the ease with which some commentators excuse Locke of racism'. Berkeley owned slaves, and his views were highly ethnocentric; nevertheless, it is said, he was 'not guilty of racism'. Notwithstanding Hume's belief that blacks were inferior, any claim that his philosophy was 'racially coded' is to be rejected. Rousseau attributed the lower development of some non-Europeans to differences in environment; unlike Kant, he

had no teleological vision of history, so while Kant's writing potentially justified 'the Europeanization of the world', Rousseau's did not. Hegel's whole philosophy was infamously ethnocentric. Mill considered liberty and self-government inappropriate for members of 'backward' societies. Marx 'failed to account for the complex relations between race and class and the importance of racial identity'. Nietzsche 'believed that races were real and had great causal significance in shaping thought and culture'.

These, and some similar books, suggest that many philosophers in the USA have been obsessed with the question whether their intellectual predecessors are to be accounted racist. Why they should feel obliged to pass a moral judgment is not discussed. Nor is it easy to determine where any line should be drawn. Which of an author's prejudices or misdemeanors are purely private? Is Wagner's anti-Semitism relevant to a judgment of his music? Like the thirteen authors discussed, we are all of us in some measure ethnocentric and have our lapses. So the collection would have been the richer had it included a discussion of the problems in passing judgment upon persons who may be counted as deceased colleagues.

The absence of reflection on what is taken for granted when present-day assumptions govern judgments of the past becomes evident when Barbara Hall (p. 43), writing about Hobbes, states 'there is little controversy regarding the notion that race *does* exist as a socially constructed phenomenon. Thus, it is still valid to maintain that... X is or is not a racist'. A phenomenon? I would have expected a philosopher to say that *race* is a word used to account for an observation, and possibly to say that it was an observation about a phenomenon; the several steps in such a progression should not be collapsed. The census-style conception of *race* employed in the monitoring of fair employment practices does not affect a citizen's obligation to pay taxes or observe the road traffic regulations. Some differences are increased by voluntary decisions. It has often been remarked that eleven o'clock on a Sunday morning is the time when blacks and whites in the USA are most divided, but a whole article could be written about whether any construct of *race* is needed to account for that observation. In which circumstances in the USA is a social construct of *race* employed? Is there such a construct in contemporary Germany, France, or Sweden? Philosophers are surely the very people others of us expect to set an example of careful reasoning about such matters.

I would also have expected the authors, as philosophers, to look more carefully into earlier writers' conceptions of whatever it was that they wished to designate when they used the word *race*. Many intellectuals in the USA seem now to make it a hungry word that gobbles up others. For example, Debra Nails (p 67) states 'The usual Latin word for race is *gens*. The more common term in Spinoza is *natio*...' She quotes another author who 'uses "race" as a near synonym for "religion" when she attributes to Spinoza... [some] later writings'. Neither *gens* nor *natio* can be equated with *race*. To the contrary, there are many dimensions to contemporary differences between blacks and whites in the USA that should be distinguished. One can be represented by the meaning of the Latin *gens*, another by that of *natio*, a third can be seen in religious observance, a fourth in the census question, and so on. Surely philosophers should take the lead in exposing the ways in which ordinary language usage can distort apprehensions of reality?

Valuable as both of these books are, there is a sense of anticlimax at the end of each of them because their narratives lead to no conclusion. That is a consequence of their backwards vision. *Race in Early Modern England* is dedicated to 'all students, scholars and activists fighting against racism'. From it, readers will learn much about the libidinal fantasies and religious prejudices of the male authors. They will note the frequency with which tall tales have been recapitulated and built into a kind of folklore. From *Race and Racism in Modern Philosophy* they will learn as much about philosophy teaching in the USA as about notions of race.

Mikael Gravers (ed.), **EXPLORING ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN BURMA**, Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2007, £16.99(pb)

How many ethnic groups are there in Burma (aka Myanmar)? To answer the question depends on how 'ethnic' is defined and who does the defining. It is certainly the case that the territory today lying within the internationally-recognized borders of this country includes people with very diverse cultural traditions. Nonetheless, as all the contributors to this book recognize, following the lead of Edmund Leach in his foundational work *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (first published in 1954), ethnicity cannot be defined by a distinctive cultural heritage. Each of the contributors accepts the premise that, to quote Gravers in his introduction, "ethnicity is basically relational" (p. 8), and, such relationships are, as Chit Hlaing (F.K. Lehman) ("Some Remarks upon Ethnicity Theory and Southeast Asia with Special Reference to the Kayah and Kachin"), observes, "political" in character (p. 107). Recognizing this does not make the significance attached to "historic claims to distinctiveness of certain communities from the Burmese polity" a manifestation of false consciousness (Mandy Sadan, "Constructing and Contesting the Category 'Kachin' in the Colonial and Post-Colonial Burmese State," p. 38).

Sadan makes reference to the argument made by Robert Taylor in his influential paper "Perceptions of Ethnicity in the Politics of Burma" (*Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, 1982) that the ethnic identities which have become the basis for mobilizing people for communal action in postcolonial Burma, including resistance to the state, are a "burden" created during the colonial period. It is impossible, however, to "decolonize" (a term used by several contributors) ethnicity in Burma because for some peoples their ethnic history began with British rule. The Kachin, the Chin, and the Naga developed their shared identities as distinctive ethnic groups because of their almost total conversion to Christianity which was introduced by missionaries during the colonial period. (On the Kachin see Sadan, Chit Hlaing, and Karin Dean, "Mapping the Kachin Political Landscape"; on the Chin see Lian H. Sakhong, "Christianity and Chin Identity"; the Naga are not the subject of any paper, but are discussed to some extent by Gravers). The Kachin and Chin also live in divisions of the country that appear because of their names to be ethnically distinct 'states'. However, like the states named 'Shan', 'Kayah' (formerly 'Karenni', 'Kayin' (Karen), and 'Mon' those named 'Kachin' and 'Chin' are neither ruled by peoples with these ethnonyms nor even are populated exclusively by such people.

If the contributors to this volume had undertaken more than they do to situate ethnicity in Burma in comparative perspective, it would be clear that the classification of ethnic groups within a modern society is not the product of colonial domination alone but has been shaped by the influence of 'scientific' ethnology even in societies never under colonial rule. (See, in this connection, my "'The Peoples of Asia': The Science and Politics in Ethnic Classification in Thailand, China and Vietnam," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 61.4: 1163–1203, November, 2002.) Michio Takatani ("Who Are the Shan? An Ethnological Perspective") notes that the military-led government that rules Burma today asserts that there are 135 "national races", but "from an ethnological point of view... the number 135 has not been supported by any intensive survey" (p. 188; also see Sandra Dudley, "Reshaping Karenni-ness in Exile: Education, Nationalism and Being in the Wider World," p. 81). There is too much post-colonial history associated with the 'colonial' names of Mon, Shan, Kachin, Chin, Karen, Karenni or Kayah to be 'decolonized' through a new Burmese equivalent of the ethnic (*minzu*) classification project undertaken in China in the 1950s.

The papers in this volume explore how ethnicity in Burma is a product, thus, of relations between people in the context of the post-colonial state and of social memories of both the precolonial and colonial pasts. As several authors note, the charter of a multi-ethnic post-colonial Burmese state is usually traced to a conference held at Panglong in the Shan States in 1947 on the eve of independence. Many Shan, Karen, Mon, Chin, as well as the Kachin consider the "undelivered promises" of the Panglong agreement (Dean, p. 142), that is the

failure of the Burmese government to create a federal state with autonomy for the major ethnic groups, to be justification for the mobilization of fellow-ethnics to resist the state.

Until 1989 it appeared that ethnic separatism comparable to what occurred in the former Yugoslavia was the only solution for those not belonging to the Burman Buddhist majority. The ceasefires that have been negotiated with most of the ethnic-based insurgencies since 1989 have, as Ashley South ("Ceasefires and Civil Society: The Case of the Mon", p. 165) concludes, "created some military and political 'space' within which community level associational networks may re-emerge" (or just emerge). In what I believe to be little discussed before this volume appeared is that despite the horrendous human rights abuses of the military-led government, it has, nonetheless, allowed the development of a tenuous, but still growing civil society in Burma.

This volume is marred, unfortunately, by numerous typographical and proofreading errors such as the absence of a number of references in the bibliography that are cited in the text. Perhaps NIAS Press will consider bringing out a better edition.

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Richard C.M. Mole (ed.), **DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS OF IDENTITY IN EUROPEAN POLITICS**, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007 xii + 236pp., £50 (hardback).

This collection edited by Richard Mole explores the relationship between identity, discourse and power in Europe. The contributors consider how power holders can employ specific discourses to create social reality for instrumental purposes, how constructs take on the appearance of facts, and identities and groups are constructed and treated as real. Nor do discourses simply reflect the will of political elites: they can exist independently of actors to condition and constrain their actions by legitimising and delegitimising particular policy options.

The book argues for the relevance of discourse and identity in analysing politics and society in Europe. Part One addresses theoretical issues involved in studying discourse and identity, showing how different forms of discourse create, challenge and recast identities. Part Two comprises case studies considering how identity discourses exert a hegemonic effect on social and political action, addressing social order, xenophobia, domestic and international politics and security.

This is a daring interdisciplinary endeavour: contributors speak from literature, media, sociology, politics, international relations, critical discourse analysis and communications. The chapters are also remarkably diverse, covering the construction of ethnic group identity with a focus on Israel (D. Ellis); Danish literature (C. Thomson); internal EU committee meetings, migrant focus groups and an Internet debate forum (R. Wodak); the reception of Greek television news (M. Madianou); political metaphors writ large (E. Ringmar); 'everyday' discourses of racism (G. Delanty and P. Millward); the relationship between identity and security in the Baltics (R. Mole); the conceptual battle around the meaning of old and new Europe (J. Ifversen); and a narrative perspective on 'European identity' and 'European security' (F. Ciută).

However, this diversity is double-edged. The reader is often more tantalised than satisfied by hints of broader claims that could potentially emerge from the details of the material examined here. This is particularly true of the ambiguity surrounding the 'grip' of discourse and parameters for action. The contributors generally agree that discourse matters in shaping identity formation by interpreting and giving meaning to symbols, traditions, myths and events. The process is inherently political, featuring winners and losers. Some interpretations of the social world and some actors attain a hegemonic position; others are delegitimised.

Yet the grip of discourse remains unclear. Is it used instrumentally or does it exist independently? Is it constructed or manipulated? How do actors perceive its effects? We are

presented with a range of responses, among them: Mole describes Baltic political actors who fashioned and manipulated an external discourse of Russian otherness that ultimately escapes their control when turned inwards; Thomson presents the Danish reader-as-participant who sees through the 'storyness' of national history while partaking in it; for Madianou the Greek television news viewer is selectively sceptical of manipulation by political elites; Ringmar concludes individuals cannot transform the exercise of political power through metaphors as these are part of the conceptual furniture of everyday lives, and instead may only reinterpret them subversively; Ciută asks whether anyone can produce a narrative of European identity or are we 'all prisoners of powerful narratives, of which we can only be more or less suspicious?' (197).

While a fascinating window into processes at work, the volume demonstrates the complexity of the theme rather than providing broader, substantive arguments as to how to interpret this ambiguity. Such may well be the nature of the beast (and this is acknowledged as an area for future research) but this reader found it frustrating to be confronted with the same questions in both the introduction and conclusion of the book. A unique opportunity was missed to address these issues comparatively across countries, cases and, more importantly, disciplines. In a volume focusing on discourse and communication, there is remarkably little dialogue – especially debate – between contributors, a deficiency which could have been addressed through a more robust concluding chapter.

Contributors could also have engaged with literature on transnationalism, politics and identity formation. A level of analysis is missed in the move from the national to the supranational. How do transnational, diasporic discourses cut across the 'nexus' of EU identity discourses of inclusion and exclusion that Wodak analyses, and enable and constrain migrants? Ellis' examination of ethnic identity construction of 'Israeli Arabs' is also puzzling in this respect. In a period where the majority of Israeli Arabs identify themselves as Palestinians by nationality and Israeli by citizenship, the absence of the term 'Palestinian' in his contribution is curious. Among other consequences, this omission erases processes of Palestinian identity formation that take place beyond the territory of Israel/Palestine yet condition and constrain action within it.

These comments aside, this volume is both theoretically and empirically rich and insightful and provides a useful discussion point for scholars interested in the interplay of identity, discourse and power in Europe.

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Magdalena Nowicka, **TRANSNATIONAL PROFESSIONALS AND THEIR COSMOPOLITAN UNIVERSES**, Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 2006, 280pp.

Magdalena Nowicka's book "Transnational professionals and their cosmopolitan universes" is an enriching work as it unlocks an emergent sociological theoretical approach long overdue in the study of modernity, mobility and space. Addressing the conventional methodological nationalism dichotomous view of geographical/social space, whilst filling the gaps in post-modern interpretations of space, mobility and globalisation, Nowicka reflects on contemporary relationships beyond mental maps, without undermining essential dichotomies such as presence/absence and distance/proximity. This book provides a novel conceptualised research based on an equally innovative case study of international professionals and the way they construct their lifespaces. By using this group as an illustration, albeit not a representation, the author identifies the space and mobility relationship beyond space determinism, providing a significant contribution to the understanding of globalisation in cosmopolitan sociology.

The book introduces a thorough chronological review of contemporary sociological developments about modernity, the concepts of space/time duality, and the relationship

between the two, with special reference to mobility. This builds on the main debates that have enhanced theories on mobility and space in sociology. Nowicka considers every main contribution from Georg Simmel's dualism theories and interpretations of proximity and distance, through to reflexive modernity theory with the work of Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck, particularly on spacial relations as dynamic processes in a context of extensive mobility. This academic journey, whilst more thorough than critical, is well contrasted and sets the grounds for the subsequent assumptions.

Nowicka's empirical case study whilst innovative is weak at times, due to the methodology for sampling and the data collection methods applied. Whilst the focus of the investigation is the group of transnational professionals, the selected sample consists of only thirteen elite individuals taken from a single international organization (IO). This observation is not meant to focus on the debatable qualitative methodological issues of representation, but rather on the straightforward drawback of sampling a group composed of individuals all of which enjoy explicit privileges related to the membership of an IO with the aim of exemplifying the average experience of international professionals. Transnational professionals as a group of frequent travellers and migrants is not exclusive of, neither reflected by these IO professionals, as much as these IO professionals are not illustrated by the lives of thirteen individuals. The author, though, clearly recognises the methodological limitations emphasising the illustrative rather than representative purpose of the exercise. Furthermore, Nowicka compensates by providing a detailed interpretation of the data, together with an in-depth and constant theoretical reflexive examination.

The book presents a sound analysis of how space is constructed in the lives of mobile individuals by exploring the content of their interactions and the conditions related to the environment in which these are embedded. It reveals the influence of both exogenous and endogenous conditions in determining individuals' relationships, particularly in terms of the dualities of presence/absence and distance/proximity. Interestingly, whilst moving beyond modern dualisms, the book shows that temporal aspects of distance and proximity are still fundamental to individuals in a globalised context, and reveals the importance of further dualisms, such as attachment/ disembeddedness. The author calls into question the identity of space with individuals or places, but rather than discarding such arguments, proposes multiplying the understanding of space to boundless interpretations.

The way the author connects her intersected theoretical arguments with the analysis of the empirical data is noteworthy, as is the refreshingly clear language. One exception is an occasional overuse of metaphors that tends to lead to an excessive level of abstraction—particularly the metaphors nested within metaphors or those extended to their (internally) logical conclusions. Yet the excellent organisational structure of the book encourages the reader to engage in Nowicka's elaborated arguments.

Establishing herself as a notable theorist on cosmopolitan sociology Magdalena Nowicka formulates persuasive arguments to demonstrate that contemporary mobility and changes in time-space conceptions have significantly altered the relationship between physical distance and proximity. Remarkably she also manages to establish that when clear of all mental maps physical space (understood as beyond the modern homology of space/time) is still an important element to analysing mobility. The contemporary value of the book is also attested to by recent writings in the field, some gathered in the volume 'Tracing mobilities: Towards a Cosmopolitan Perspective' (Weert Canzler, Vincent Kaufmann and Sven Kesselring (Eds), 2008, Ashgate Pub Co), which focuses on mobility and social changes and includes significant fragments that can be read as a continuation of the discussion that Nowicka introduces as the central concern of her leading edge book of cosmopolitan sociology.

Victor Jeleniewski Seidler, **URBAN FEARS AND GLOBAL TERRORS: CITIZENSHIP, MULTICULTURES AND BELONGINGS AFTER 7/7**, London: Routledge, 2007, (International Library of Sociology), xxiv + 302pp., £65.00, (hb).

This is an interesting set of reflections on some difficult questions in the aftermath of the July bombings in London. Drawing on a range of sources, academic, journalistic and personal, the author suggests that we are at risk of being overwhelmed by fear and anxiety, in the face of what seem to be almost existential threats. He argues that we need to step back from these immediate understandable reactions and see how they risk closing off other possibilities, in the form and content of our thinking about identity, belonging and citizenship in what he admirably envisages as a cosmopolitan polity. We need, he insists, to move beyond the confines of a too rationalistic, Eurocentric, secularised frame of reference, still shaped in many ways by its Christian roots. We must recognize the presence in Britain of large numbers of people with transnational affiliations and loyalties, for whom other religious beliefs are profoundly important, who feel excluded and marginalized in a narrowly defined nation state. Their emotions have been inflamed by the conduct of our leaders in recent years, notably in foreign policy. This is becoming close to orthodoxy now on the liberal left, as multiple citations from the *Guardian* here testify, with lengthy extracts from some of its columnists, although the regularity with which they appear is no guide to their intellectual coherence or rigour. Unfortunately too many of the often lazy assumptions that are made by such commentators are allowed to pass unchecked here. The claim, for example that a "war on Islam" is actually being waged by the West, needs proper, critical examination. How does it square, most obviously, with the wars undertaken by the same West to restore the sovereignty of Kuwait, or to protect the Muslims of Bosnia or Kosovo in the previous decade? The fact that some people make a claim, which on closer examination proves to be inaccurate and deeply misleading, may be as important (arguably more so) than the repeated recognition that this is what they think. More attention needs to be paid to the mechanisms through which such ideas are articulated and deployed and to the ideology which shapes and sustains such beliefs. There is no recognition here of the important analyses of writers such as Fred Halliday or Malise Ruthven or Paul Berman on how the old and the new are combined in such potent ways by Islamic fundamentalists today. The parallels or continuities with European Fascism and Nazism may be contentious but what these writers have reminded us is that Fascism and Nazism too were popular, that they too exerted a sustained mass appeal, drawing on deep discontents and a profound sense of marginalization, invoking a utopian alternative whose realization required and legitimated extreme violence. How serious a threat such beliefs now are and how to meet it are profoundly important questions and here too there are some difficulties with the author's angle of vision. Is his insistence that we are overwhelmed by fear and anxiety wholly justified? He pays tribute himself to the reaction of Londoners in the aftermath of the bombings, to their resilience and overt insistence on the multi-cultural and democratic character of the city. How quickly was this resilience and normative commitment dissipated? Some would argue that what is most striking is the way in which, at every level, it continues. Has any significant political figure sought to mobilise on the basis of a politics of conflict and intolerance? If not, why not? It may well be, as the author argues, that we need to strengthen and extend this commitment and that references to the spirit of Blitz are not enough, (though their anti-fascist component is surely not to be disowned). The author makes a strong and in many ways moving plea for a more radical politics of inclusion, for mutual recognition, for a place for both emotion and religious belief in our public space and discourse. But are not the grounds for this inclusion a commitment to the values of a cosmopolitan democracy which not everyone it seems is prepared to share. How do we treat as legitimate partners in a dialogue those who advocate the killing of Jews, the stoning of homosexuals and violence against women, and show an overt contempt for

democratic institutions? It is to the author's credit that he provides some telling instances of such attitudes but it would be interesting to have a clearer sense of what responses he thinks we ought to make to them and why.

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