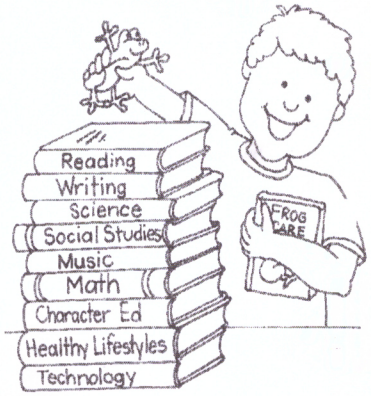
EDUDOC SERVICES: BOOK REVIEWS



Book Reviews

December - 2019

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INTRODUCTION

Book Reviews aims to identify the books published recently on all the subjects relevant to **NCERT**.

Book Reviews have been selected from Learned Periodicals & Newspapers received in **LDD** during the month of **December, 2019.**

Book Reviews are arranged under broad Subject Headings. Details about the Author, Title,Place of Publication, Name of Publisher, Year, Pages, Price, ISBN followed by analytical review with exact reference to periodicals in which reviewed appeared. It will be our endeavour to bring out this Book Selection Reference Tool.

Book Reviews will be useful to our faculty members in selecting / recommending relevant book for our library and also to keep abreast of latest publications in their specialization.

We eagerly await to receive your views and comments.

Chairperson, LDD

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Book Reviews

David A. Bell. *Napoleon: A Concise Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp 139. $18.95.

David Bell quips that among historians Napoleon is a "heavy" rather than "cottage" industry (125). Indeed, since 2000 alone numerous excellent biographies of this world historical figure have appeared in English, which prompts the question: why another one? The answer lies in Bell's subtitle. Unlike other works that run to many hundreds of pages if not multiple volumes, this svelte study performs its work in 113 lively pages. As a renowned revolutionary-era historian at Princeton University as well as a public intellectual whose essays and reviews appear in *The New Republic*, Bell possesses unsurpassed credentials to deliver on his goal of providing "an accurate, readable portrait of Napoleon that incorporates the results of recent scholarship but is also concise and is accessible to those without specialized knowledge" (x).

Bell's work will become indispensible not only for the undergraduate classroom and advanced secondary students but also for non-specialist instructors assigned to teach lessons on the Napoleonic period. It is both admirably thorough despite its concision as well as a pleasure to read thanks to the author's talent as a story-teller and writer. All major events and themes receive due attention, as Bell chronicles Napoleon's astounding career from the early years as an ambitious Corsican and French revolutionary general—wildly successful in Italy, less so in Egypt—to his ascension as First Consul in 1799 and then reign as Emperor from 1804 to 1815. Somehow, a short work about a complex figure never feels rushed, and Bell's knack for the intriguing anecdote serves the dual purpose of engaging the reader while reinforcing central themes. For example, the opening scene about the dramatic "encounter at Laffrey" in 1815, at which Napoleon, having escaped from his exile on Elba, confronts and wins over Louis XVIII's soldiers during the Hundred Days, exemplifies for Bell the "stage management" (4) that is critical to an understanding of Napoleon's

career and subsequent legacy.

Already valuable as accurate and captivating biography, this study simultaneously offers an important interpretation of the Napoleonic phenomenon. Drawing on insights from his 2007 work, *The First Total War,* Bell demonstrates convincingly how the political upheaval of the French Revolution and accompanying transformations in the nature of warfare provided the indispensible context for a talented and ambitious Corsican to become a significant French general by age 26 and "the new Caesar" (25) before age 30. Bell's depiction of Napoleon's complex relationship with the French Revolution—the man whose rise stemmed from the Revolution and who in 1804 claimed "I am the French Revolution" both incarnated and undermined revolutionary principles—is one masterful element of a masterful book.

Nonspecialist readers will especially benefit from the epilogue in which Bell first assesses Napoleon's legacy among the general public and historians from 1815 to the present and then concludes with his own judicious evaluation of that legacy. In the end, Bell acknowledges Napoleon's political and military genius and comprehends the reasons why subsequent generations have remained fascinated with the "sense of sheer human possibility" (113) that Napoleon's life represented. At the same time, and while correctly rejecting any false analogy with twentieth-century dictators, Bell expresses sympathy with the school of historical thought critical of Napoleon: "The reestablishment of slavery, the endless slaughter on the battlefields, the authoritarian rule, the imperial ventures [in Haiti and Egypt] all make for a damning and lengthy indictment" (112). Throughout the biography, however, Bell focuses on understanding his subject rather than prosecuting him.

It is neither a surprise nor a criticism to suggest that, in a brief book about a monumental life, concision exacts an occasional cost, such as in the following instance: on page 55 we learn that Napoleon and Pope Pius VII negotiated a Condordat in 1801;

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the pontiff's attendance at the Emperor's coronation ceremony in 1804 is noted on page 61; we next encounter Pius VII on page 81, after unexplained clashes with Napoleon have led to the pope's imprisonment in French territory. Bell simply does not have space to follow all the twists and turns in, and provide context for, the tumultuous relations between the papacy and Napoleon from 1796 to 1815. To explore this and other topics in greater depth, readers can consult the endnotes and guide to further reading—useful resources that provide yet one additional reason to recommend this book enthusiastically to university and high school students.

Illinois State University Anthony Crubaugh

Jane Ziegelman and Andrew Coe. *A Square Meal: A Culinary History of the Great Depression.* New York: Harper, 2016. Pp. 314. $15.99.

A Square Meal is a highly entertaining book tackling the food history of the Great Depression. In it, the authors have combined many threads of the story: how nutritionists thought Americans should eat in the face of economic collapse; how families faced with shortages actually ate; and how politicians thought about and inadequately addressed the problem of hunger. The authors put their work into a larger historical context, examining how World War I changed the government's and the public's approach to food, as well as American food traditions in the years leading up to the Depression.

The authors begin with World War I and the food lessons generated by that conflict. They also spend a significant amount of time discussing food in both Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt's White Houses, making clear that food took on contrasting political meanings in each. In the Hoover White House, opulent dining was meant to signify that the Depression was temporary and business as usual should dominate. The frugal,

The Hindu; 19/12/19; Pg. 16

The boisterous Mr Haldane

Samanth Subramanian's latest biography, *A Dominant Character*, captures the British-Indian scientist's thoughts on how science and politics play off each other

PREETI ZACHARIAH

When British-Indian scientist John Burdon Sanderson (JBS) Haldane moved to India with his wife, Helen, he had carried along with him a dozen jars of live fish in the cabin hold. The fluctuating temperature in the baggage hold would kill them, he had explained to an ISI official, also assuring him that "they will be sealed up and will not smell."

In many ways, this was typical of the British-Indian scientist best known for his work in physiology, genetics, evolutionary biology and statistics – he bent the rules and defied authority consistently.

"He had a lack of tolerance for idiots," agrees journalist and writer Samanth Subramanian, whose latest book, a biography of Haldane, titled *A Dominant Character: The Radical Science and Restless Politics of JBS Haldane*, is peppered with incidents such as this one.

Written in evocative prose that makes a reader cringe, laugh out loud, and get emotionally invested in the life of this layered, complex man, the book focusses on what Haldane "thought about science and politics and how they would play off each other."



New craft: This is Samanth Subramanian's first attempt at writing a biography • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A dominant character

"I knew him first as a British biologist who moved to India, and that in itself was intriguing," says Subramanian. "There were all these little witty things that would come up in my reading," says Subramanian of the "instantly quotable" man.

The title of the book – *A Dominant Character* – is both a nod to Haldane's personality and the science he loved (dominant and recessive inheritance patterns are essential to Mendelian genetics).

Haldane was indeed a Renaissance man, a polymath of vast and varied interests. He wrote cutting opinion pieces on politics, his own boisterous life, his views on government and philosophy, history and literature. And science, always science: "columns that unpicked the convolutions of science for the inexpert reader," writes Subramanian, going on to quote Arthur C Clarke who described Haldane as "the most brilliant scientific populariser of his generation."



A life well lived

Haldane's life – lived not in an ivory tower of scientific research, but in the real world – had all the elements of a great story.

He fought in the First World War and Spanish Civil War. His first wife was a much-married woman, his second he met when he was still married to his first. Then there was the tragic irony of never being able to have children, despite being obsessed with genes. And the moral dilemma of the Lysenko affair, which pitted his politics and science against each other.

"That was his one misstep," says Subramanian. A deviation, almost, from all the values he had espoused; he was against imperialism, rampant capitalism, racism or eugenics.

Throw in his personal evolution. A diary, written when he was ten, for instance, may have echoed his mother's conservative, empire-lauding politics. But he left Britain for India, at 65, because he thought that the country's involvement in the Suez Affair made it a "criminal state". And add a dash of acerbic wit. "One of my reasons for settling in India was to avoid wearing socks."

This is Subramanian's first stab at a biography; his previous two books, *Following Fish* and *This Divided Island: Stories from the Sri Lankan War*, were a travelogue and a narrative history of post-war Sri Lanka respectively.

"I first thought of it as an expansion of a long-form profile," he says. But he soon discovered there was a different craft to it. "I had to learn from scratch. But playing with form is something I'm fond of," he says.

Unlike his previous books, where he had the luxury of the first-person experience to enliven his narrative, Subramanian cobbled together Haldane's story from archives mostly. "I spoke to only three people in this book, but consulted 18 archives across the world," he says.

One of his most significant sources of information was Haldane's own writing – detailed and illustrative if a trifle illegible. ("His handwriting resembled ants somersaulting through snow"). Thankfully, his writing was mostly typed up by his secretary.

"Haldane was 100% engaged with the world. That isn't common now," says Subramanian. In the age of genetic manipulation and designer babies, questions raised around these things aren't just scientific; they are political and ethical, he says. "It is important for scientists to resume that role of a public intellectual."

A dominant character : the radical Science & restless Politics by Samanth Subramanian

4

Diminutive Gandhian won a war, but was denied his place in the sun





LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI: POLITICS AND BEYOND

by Sandeep Shastri

Rupa, ₹495

The public memory of Lal Bahadur Shastri, India's Prime Minister after the death of Jawarhalal Nehru, is almost anecdotal. The stories that stick are about how he resigned as railway minister in 1956 taking moral responsibility for a railway accident; the slogan "*Jai Jawan Jai Kisan*"; his leadership in the 1965 war with Pakistan; and the mystery that surrounds his death in Tashkent after the war. Not much has been written, at least in popular literature, about the man himself.

Shastri, whose 19-month prime ministership was hemmed between Nehru and Indira Gandhi, has, without doubt, not got the space he deserved in public memory. After the emergence of the BJP and its desperate efforts to appropriate the legacies of "neglected national icons" (mostly Congress leaders), there is a sudden interest, in politics and in other circles, about the lives and contributions of such leaders to the making of modern India, be it Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, Subhas Chandra Bose or Lal Bahadur Shastri.

The book — *Lal Bahadur Shastri: Politics and Beyond* — by Sandeep Shastri is a serious study of the life and legacy of the man best known for restoring India's pride and self-confidence by winning a war against Pakistan in 1965, three years after a humiliating defeat by China, and also for his initiating the process to make India self-reliant in food production. The narrative fits the muscular nationalism of the current establishment, but on the other hand, his *Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan* slogan remains relevant, more so in these times of acute farming crisis.

The diminutive Gandhian had stepped into the large shoes of Nehru and successfully faced many challenges putting to rest doubts about his ability to keep the country together. Shastri's humble background endowed him with a keen practical sense and he was grounded in local reality. He rose from the grassroots and worked at different levels in various capacities before assuming the reins of government. Although mentored by J.B. Kriplani, G.B. Pant and Nehru at different times, he had walked out of their shadows and certainly left his imprint.

Was he Nehru's natural successor? The book leaves no one in doubt that Shastri was almost groomed by Nehru as his successor. He was the man in charge of the party's electioneering in the 1952, 1957 and 1962 general elections. He was a permanent feature in Nehru's cabinet between 1951 and 1964. In 1961, Nehru had entrusted him with the home portfolio after the death of G.B. Pant, virtually ignoring the claims of Morarjibhai Desai (who, after Nehru's death, was to become a prime ministerial aspirant). That Nehru favoured Shastri as his successor became more evident when he recalled him to his Cabinet as a minister without portfolio a few months after his exit from the government under the Kamaraj Plan. It was but natural that the powerful syndicate headed by K. Kamaraj had to select him, ignoring Morarji's claims for the prime ministership. Shastri and Nehru had enjoyed a good relationship, with the former backing him strongly during hours of crises. The transition was smooth, thanks also to Shastri's affable and non-confrontationist approach, which had endeared him to his colleagues both in the party and the government. This is notwithstanding the buzz (which has endured to this day) that Nehru and the syndicate wanted Shastri as a "stopgap arrangement" to keep the seat warm for Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi. The book refers to Kuldip Nayar's memoirs, *Beyond the Lines* and other sources that allude to Shastri's acknowledgement of the fact that Nehru wanted Indira Gandhi to be his successor, but avoids any comment on whether he at all resented this.

There are anecdotes reflecting Shastri's personality and values. A telling instance: He rebuked his underage son for managing to procure a driving licence and recommended action against the official who issued the licence.

The book dwells on the deft manner in which Shastri handled the anti-Hindi agitation, highlighting his adherence to the principles of democracy. True democrat that he was, he acceded to the demands of the non-Hindi speakers despite, perhaps, his heart being with the votaries of Hindi becoming India's sole official language. Not relenting under the pressure from the Hindi speaking majority in the party and the government, he went beyond Nehru's commitment and clearly delineated the Centre's language policy, which remains the cornerstone of India's pluralistic democracy (occasional noises notwithstanding).

One chapter is devoted to the leadership displayed during the 1965 war and describes Shastri's decision to move the Army into Pakistani territory as the "first surgical strike".

There are anecdotes reflecting Shastri's personality and values. A telling instance: He rebuked his underage son for managing to procure a driving licence and recommended action against the official who issued the licence. That sums up Shastri as a man who stood for integrity, humility and simplicity, in personal and public life.

The book quotes Shastri's cabinet colleague T.T. Krishnamachari as saying that Shastri could well have been a "parenthesis in history". His relatively short tenure as Prime Minister and the Congress Party's exclusive focus on the Nehru-Gandhi family are the reasons given for why Shastri has been denied his place in the spotlight.

The writer is an independent journalist based in New Delhi

THE ASIAN AGE ; 1/12/2019 ; Pg. 9

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Curriculum, instruction and assessment in Japan: beyond lesson study, by Koji Tanaka, Kanae Nishioka, and Terumasa Ishii, London, Routledge, 2017 £22.00 (hardback), ISBN: 978-1-138-89251-4

This book, which is one volume in the *Routledge series on schools and schooling in Asia*, is a welcome addition to the extant literature, because it introduces the history and current practices in Japan regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment. It specifically focuses on the situation from 1945 onwards in primary and secondary schools, and provides specific instances of how teachers and researchers in Japan have collaboratively attempted to improve education and teaching skills over several decades. It is authored by three education specialists – Tanaka, Nishioka, and Ishii – who all belong to Kyoto University, Japan. Although it is not an edited book, each chapter has been written by one of these three authors. Given the readership of *Assessment in Education*, the current review primarily focuses on issues related to assessment.

The book begins with the Introduction in Chapter 1, followed by Parts 1–3 (each of which comprises three chapters), and ends with the Conclusion in Chapter 11. Chapter 1 (Introduction), written by Tanaka, provides a historical overview of how the national curriculum guidelines as well as school instructional and assessment practices were modified in response to the social problems and debates of the time. Then, Part 1 (Chapters 2–4) targets curriculum. In Chapter 2, Nishioka summarizes the conflict between the school-based curriculum practiced autonomously by teachers and non-governmental educational research organizations on the one hand, and the national curriculum regulated by the government on the other, with the enforcement of the latter becoming increasingly impactful. The current national curriculum focuses on developing abilities required to think logically; make judgments based on available resources; and express facts, ideas, and opinions, which encourages performance assessment along with collaborative and active learning.

Chapter 3, by Tanaka, conceptualizes curriculum development from a different angle. He argues that the curriculum target has been modified approximately every 25 years, oscillating between 'child-centred education (focusing on daily life experience) and discipline-centred education (focusing on science and study)', as well as between 'problem-solving learning and systematic learning' (pp. 28–29). This chapter emphasizes the importance of striking a balance between both types of acquisition of academic ability. Chapter 4 elaborates on the development of academic achievement models. Initially, around the 1950s, scholastic abilities were mainly associated with reading, writing, and arithmetic. Currently, academic competencies are considered to comprise much wider capabilities, such as the ability to 'use and create knowledge meaningfully', to conduct 'autonomous sustained inquiry', and to 'autonomously organize and reconstitute social relationships' (pp. 47–48). The author (Ishii) suggests ways to establish a meaningful connection between the curriculum, instruction, and assessment on the one hand, and a broad range of abilities required in today's world on the other, taking students' developmental stages into consideration.

Part 2 (Chapters 5–7) mainly focuses on instruction. Chapter 5, by Ishii, provides an overview of how 'lesson study' has been utilized to develop teachers' capabilities over the years in Japan. Lesson study refers to 'a method of in-school teacher training in which teachers learn from each other through conferences [held] before, after, or during lesson presentations' (p. 57). Stigler and Hiebert (1999) influential publication introduced this unique method to places outside Japan. This chapter convincingly conveys the impact of the lesson study method on teacher training and collaborative network formation. Chapter 6, by Tanaka, explains the philosophies and educational practices of four exemplary teachers who advocated and improved the lesson study method. Their practices indicate how to improve instruction and assessment, such as using class observation as part of formative assessment to shed light on students' learning processes. In Chapter 7, Ishii deals with teachers' competencies for conducting creative, dramatic instruction, and presents five factors for successful lessons: 'goals and objectives of teaching', 'teaching materials and learning tasks', 'structures of learning arrangement and environment', 'instructional skills, techniques and technology', and 'educational assessment' (p. 87). In this context, assessment is conceptualized as a way to identify progress and problems, and improve instruction.

Part 3 (Chapters 8–10) focuses on assessment, and particularly classroom assessment. Chapter 8, by Tanaka, recounts how assessment systems have historically been modified in Japan, from a combination of relative assessment (i.e. norm-referenced assessment) and intra-individual assessment, to a combination of objective-referenced assessment (i.e. attainment, achievement, or criterion-referenced assessment) and intra-individual assessment. The changes in assessment systems reflect the changes recorded in students' cumulative record summaries (i.e. transcripts) and report cards, which are provided to the students and their guardians. The author describes the advantages and disadvantages of relative and objective-referenced assessments, revealed when the systems were implemented. For example, objective-referenced assessment allows students to identify their current achievement levels and teachers to reflect on their teaching based on the students' progress, but it can also invite teachers' subjective judgment and lower objective expectations so as to be achieved easily.

Chapter 9, by Nishioka, presents the use of portfolio assessment in the Period for Integrated Study ('Integrated Study', hereafter). Integrated Study was started in 2000 as embodying the relaxed educational policy, based on the view of child-centred, problem-solving learning, as discussed in Chapter 3 of the book. It has been implemented for 3rd- to 12th-year students, in the form of an interdisciplinary subject aiming 'to help students develop qualities and abilities to identify tasks, learn and think on their own, proactively make decisions and better solve problems' (p. 112). After summarizing the definition of portfolio, types of portfolio, and points

to be noted in instruction, the author provides a detailed description of procedures for using portfolio in Integrated Study. The author also provides a definitive example to help readers learn how the 4th-year students deepened their thinking in class, through self-exploration, conferring with their teacher, and class discussions. Although this chapter elaborates on the strengths and possibilities of Integrated Study, when adequate procedures are incorporated into the lessons, it would have been preferable to include more explanations about how students built their portfolios and how the teacher evaluated the quality of the portfolios.

Chapter 10, also by Nishioka, emphasizes the importance of performance assessment as a tool to elicit 'students' abilities to utilize knowledge and skills in real-life contexts' (p. 127). The author classifies various assessment methods for measuring academic ability, according to written versus demonstrative modes, and simple versus complex types. Her definition of assessment methods is comprehensive, with performance assessment covering all the applicable assessment methods except selected response methods, and with portfolio assessment covering all the applicable assessment methods. This chapter also introduces procedures for constructing performance tasks and rubrics collaboratively, and implementing performance tasks in lessons based on Wiggins and McTighe (2005). It is evident in one instance in this chapter that lively learning took place through reflection using worksheets, notes on the blackboard, debate activities, and self-assessment based on a rubric. However, readers may benefit from more examples on how the rubric can be used in teacher assessment, peer assessment, and self-assessment, and how assessment results inform students and teachers on how to improve their learning and teaching. Chapter 11 (Conclusion) summarizes the key points of each chapter, which readers would have expected to read in the introduction.

While considering lesson study as critical for improving education, this book successfully elaborates on the concept and presents an in-depth view of advancements and developments in curriculum, classroom instruction, and assessment in Japan; these issues have hitherto been neglected in English-language literature in this field. One weakness of this book is the lack of linkage between the same concepts in different chapters and a rather brief coverage of some key concepts, which could have been elaborated upon. More links between chapters and more background information would have helped readers – particularly those unfamiliar with Japanese educational contexts – to better understand the thematic flow of the chapters. Nevertheless, this book is an invaluable resource for educational researchers, policy makers, and practitioners interested in the Japanese education system and educational practices in general, given that many of the topics covered in the book (such as lesson studies, curriculum design, and portfolio and performance assessment) have significant potential for further improving the quality of education in many parts of the world.

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ued fracturing of these states. 'In the vast area between a cratering Levant and an internally troubled China, no state is improving its capacity to govern effectively. They are all either weakening or headed nowhere good' (p. 28). China, for instance, is called 'a crucible'. Internal stresses (particularly economic and ethnic tensions or those arising from authoritarianism), fuelled by globalization and technology, will weaken centralized control of these states even as they become increasingly nationalistic and aggressive beyond their borders. Fragility and chaos will therefore prevail.

The resultant map of Eurasia is reminiscent of medieval times. Kaplan uses the travels of an iconic explorer from the Middle Ages as a narrative framework to map the future contours of geopolitical flashpoints across Eurasia: Kurdistan, Central Asia, the Black Sea, Pakistan, and the Indian Ocean. The Silk Road on which Marco Polo traversed has today been revived as the BRI, thus bringing us full circle. What then is the US role in this 'singular battle space' that spans from Central Europe and the Adriatic to China, 'a world in which territory still matters'? Kaplan locates his answer in Marco Polo's return by sea: 'Sea power is the compensatory answer... in the face of an infernally complex and intractable situation on land' (p. 39). But this is by no means a mere matter of squaring Mahan with MacKinder. Kaplan refers to weightier concepts that continue to agitate US foreign policy thinking: national interest, great power responsibility, and principles of engagement. The way forward for the US, in Kaplan's estimation, is one paved by caution and restraint.

It is here that Kaplan's older essays, entries that stand on their individual merit, collectively contextualize Kaplan's positioning of American power against the emerging 'neo-medieval map' of Eurasia. Broadly classified under the categories 'Strategy', 'War and its Costs', 'Thinkers' and 'Reflections', the essays form an amalgamation of history, geography and international relations juxtaposed against real events, lived experiences and defining personalities in American foreign policy. They probe what the US stands for, what has defined its external engagement and how it must behave in a period of relative, but not absolute, decline. Interests are pitted against values; morality against limitations; individuals against forces of fate. Tellings of American misadventures, from Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan to Syria, reflect on the costs of intervention as well as the burden of land warfare and small wars. A vigorous defence of the actions/major works of three stalwarts who subscribe(d) to various shades of realism – Henry Kissinger, Samuel Huntington and John Mearsheimer – puts into relief the underlying potent forces of culture and geography, and how they translate into interpretations of responsible American power. It bears mentioning that even as Kaplan gives fresh lease to Huntington's clash of civilizations thesis, on the question of the US-China face-off he leaves the reader with a question rather than an assessment: 'Once violent hostilities begin, how do you *end* a war with Russia or China?'

These provocations on America's response to a changing international order – in which Eurasia, Asia (and China) are taking centre stage – make compelling reading against contemporary developments. To name a few: The Trump presidency, China's 'new normal', the rise of 'middle powers', the resurgence of authoritarianism, and the emerging Indo-Pacific construct. Consider Kaplan's narrative on connectivity. It engenders both coherence and claustrophobia – even as roads and railways depreciate time and space, they are carriers of conflict – to the effect that it will leave 'a much more ambiguous legacy.' This can be juxtaposed against the competing connectivity visions on offer, particularly across the broader Indian Ocean region – the Eurasian rimland – that Kaplan deems pivotal to US strategic response in the 21st century.

As a whole, the collection is vigorous in style; rich in vision, observation and grasp of history. This is no neat summation of ideas, but a sprawling collection that nonetheless does not overextend. Even for those familiar with the prolific author's writings, it is at least worth reading for its original, opening essay, penned in late 2016, or better yet with other publications that offer alternate frameworks and perspectives, such as Graham Allison's *Destined for War*, Parag Khanna's *The Future is Asian*, and Maçães' *The Dawn of Eurasia*.

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DICTATORS WITHOUT BORDERS: Power and Money in Central Asia by Alexander Cooley and John Heathershaw. Yale University Press, New Haven, 2017.

IN *Dictators without Borders* Alexander Cooley and John Heathershaw challenge the prevailing notion of the Central Asian region being perceived as an isolated territory. The authors argue that Central Asia is, in fact, deeply interconnected with the rest of the world within the framework of a vast financial and legal outsourcing network comprising of offshore bank accounts, foreign

arbitration and tax havens. They go on to explain that the ruling elites in the Central Asian countries 'use western financial, legal, and policing systems to both extend their power back home and to selectively access western institutions, status symbols and legal protections.' Apart from the financial and legal aspects, the extraterritorial locations also serve as an arena for skirmishes between the ruling elites and their regional opposition. Elaborating on the 'patterns of extraterritorial repression', Cooley and Heathershaw note that the dictators often 'pursue their opponents with an eye to efficiency across three phases, from warning and intimidation (stage one), to arrest and confiscation of property (stage two), to rendition, disappearance and attack, including assassination (stage three).'

The authors classify what they refer to as the three 'myths' surrounding the perception of Central Asia in general: Central Asia as a distant heartland of Asia; the failure of liberalization in the region; and the notion of its 'localism' which suggests that Central Asia's political predicament has local or cultural causes. Elaborating on the first myth, the authors argue that the region comes across as distant owing to the information gap that has arisen due to the relative ignorance and lack of public and media interest towards the region. With regard to the second myth, the authors suggest that 'a closer look at the economies of Central Asia reveals that their problems are not those of the complete failure of liberalization, but rather its partial and selective adoption' as a result of the concurrence of authoritarianism and capitalism.

In other words, the countries are plagued by 'a lack of democratic reform but considerable convergence with the global market economy, enabling transnational networks of kleptocracy and capital flight.' This aspect reflects the global nature of Central Asia's predicament since the elites as well as their cronies are deeply integrated into global business and finance markets, therefore extending their economic and political presence far beyond their borders. This argument also supports the authors' observation regarding the third myth of 'localism' in Central Asia. Elaborating on the crucial role of global factors at play, Cooley and Heathershaw note that the western systems 'provide the opportunities and vehicles for large-scale corruption' in Central Asia but 'commentators often struggle to see' (or admit) that the internal and external affairs of the region are closely associated.

Thus, at the heart of the book's theme is the rampant corruption in the Central Asian states which transcends its landlocked territory. Beginning from the infamous Panama paper leak, the authors cite various instances to expose the corrupt elites and their personal dealings abroad at the expense of the impoverished state of public affairs in their country. The authors go beyond the argument of corruption within the region by also uncovering the role of western corporations functioning in a 'practically ethics free zone of wealth management and luxury property' whilst their governments remain complacent.

Cooley and Heathershaw also touch upon the new offshore silk roads comprising of the US-led New Silk Road and the more ambitious China-led Belt and Road Initiative, that are seen as promoting connectivity and the resultant global integration of the landlocked region. These initiatives, the authors warn, are likely to further rent seeking tendencies rather than bring actual gains for the local residents. As such, these connectivity projects 'are likely to continue to involve playing many offshore games, whilst the touted gains will be afforded to the region's kleptocrats, not their impoverished citizens.'

A topical study, the book is insightful and offers a fresh perspective to the study of politics in Central Asia. The four case studies of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan reflect the intensive research undertaken by the authors to bring out the global interconnections of Central Asia and uncover the role of western agencies in furthering the rampant corruption in the region. The book is detailed and offers ample information even for a casual reader. The appendixes are a must read for anyone who wishes to gain an in-depth knowledge of the region.

At the same time, even though the book offers a fresh perspective by highlighting the global connections of Central Asia, its major arguments are neither restricted to the region in question, nor something completely unknown in the public domain. As the Panama leak itself shows, the holding of offshore assets is not unique to the ruling elites of the authoritarian states alone. In addition, the authors often compare the (lack of) reforms in Central Asia with that of other post-Soviet states of Eastern Europe which witnessed comparatively greater engagement from the West, particularly the European Union. The authors seem to suggest that the Eastern European countries, unlike the Central Asian countries, were able to undergo successful reforms during the transition phase. They observe, 'Central Asia and Eastern Europe experienced post-communist extrication and the new international environment as independent states in very different manners.

The Central Asian states were not transformed, as Eastern Europe was, by the forces of globalization and interactions with western states and international organizations.' As a result, the 'globalized transition' in Central Asia, 'unlike in Eastern Europe, has failed to produce states and polities that conform to the liberal-ideal type of marketised democracies.' Although the premise is correct, this proposition comes across as a little far-fetched given that with the exception of the Baltics, the success of reforms in other Soviet successor states (western flank of the former Soviet Union) remains questionable. Nevertheless, Dictators without Borders makes for an interesting and engaging read as it deals at length with the often-overlooked region. With deep insights and details, the book serves as a valuable primer for the study of Central Asia.

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DARK SHADOWS: Inside the Secret World of Kazakhstan by Joanna Lillis. I.B. Tauris, London and New York, 2019.

FOR a country that is almost the size of Europe, little is known about Kazakhstan. Joanna Lillis shines a light on the history and people of the nation in her book *Dark Shadows: Inside the Secret World of Kazakhstan*. The book is extensive in its scope, moving across the nation from the Aral Sea in the southwest to the nuclear testing grounds of Semipalatinsk in the northeastern part of Kazakhstan and from the formation of the Kazakh Khanate in 1465 to present day Kazakhstan. An ambitious undertaking, Dark Shadows covers the key issues that have shaped, and continue to shape, the Kazakhs.

Lillis divides the book into three sections. The first, 'The Making of a Potentate', analyses the rise of authoritarianism in Kazakhstan under its first President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who was previously the first secretary of Kazakhstan's Community Party before the disintegration of the USSR. As the author notes, there is a whole generation of Kazakhs who have grown up never knowing another President but Nazarbayev (he stepped down in March 2019). In a sense, understanding Nazarbayev's rise and his strong grip on the country's politics is key to understanding contemporary Kazakhstan itself. However, the history of post-independent Kazakhstan is not limited to Nazarbayev's story.

Tracing the nation's slide into an authoritarian state, the author also recounts a litany of actors (and organizations) that fight against the government for the freedom of speech and the freedom to protest. Reading about those who pushed-back against Nazarbayev can both inspire readers and leave them in despair. When oil workers went on a strike protesting inadequate compensation in the town of Zhanaozen in December 2011, the violent crackdown on the protestors by the riot police landed many in the hospital, and some in the town's morgue. For authoritarian Kazakh leaders who witnessed the Rose Revolution in Georgia in 2003 and Ukraine's Orange Revolution in 2005, followed by the Arab Spring, dissent is only a step away from a revolution and hence any opposition must be crushed. However, despite the heavy-handed tactics of the government, there exist people like Gulzhan Kamitovna, a journalist who ran one of the most outspoken publications in Kazakhstan, and Yevgeniy Zhovtis, one of Kazakhstan's most prominent human rights campaigners. In Gulzhan and Yevgeniy's stories, the readers get a glimpse of the indomitable spirit of the Kazakh people.

The second section in Dark Shadows, 'Identity Crisis', explores the history 'that turned Kazakhstan into a melting pot of peoples.' Given the author's background as a journalist, not a historian, the chapters in this section focus as much on the lived experiences of the people as on crucial historical milestones. For instance, the anti-Soviet uprising in the winter of 1986, considered to be the harbinger of Kazakh independence, is told through the tale of the 21 year old Kayrat Ryskulbekov who was sentenced to death for his role in fomenting the rebellion.

While each chapter in this section begins with a historical episode, the author links the past to the present in a seamless manner. For instance, in chapter 10, 'Kingdom of the Kazakhs', the author narrates the history of Kazakhstan's nationhood, which finds its basis in the foundation of the Kazakh Khanate in 1465. As Lillis navigates this centuries-old history, she connects it to the imperatives that underpin present-day Kazakhstan's celebrations of statehood. In 2015, when Kazakhstan celebrated the 550th anniversary of the Kazakh Khanate, it was as much about celebrating the nation state as it was about countering Vladamir Putin, the President of Russia, who had stated that Kazakhstan had no history. While the two nations have shared a close relationship through history, reviving the tale of the Kazakh Khanate was a useful exercise as Kazakhs watched Putin annex parts of Ukraine. Just as the history of the Kazakh Khanate is linked to Kazakhstan's defiance against an expansionist Russia in 2015, the author connects other historical incidents to present-day grievances in the second section.

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BOOK REVIEW

Fairness takes centre stage

Fairness in educational assessment and measurement, edited by Neil J. Dorans and Linda L. Cook, New York and London, Routledge, 2016, 311 pp. (paperback), ISBN 978-1-138-02619-3

Fairness issues in educational assessment, edited by Hossein Karami, London and New York, Routledge, 2016, 171 pp., ISBN 13: 978-1-138-64794-7

Since the 1970s, successive editions of the authoritative American 'Standards For Educational and Psychological Testing' (hereafter referred to as 'the Standards') have included references to fairness. But the 2014 edition (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council for Assessment in Education, 2014) broke new ground in allocating an entire early chapter to fairness, giving it apparently equal prominence to validity and reliability. In the words of Frank Worrell, we appeared to be moving from the 'big two' (Validity and Reliability) to the 'big three',[1] although at times the 2014 'Standards' appears to treat fairness as a subset of validity – as, indeed, do several of the chapter authors in the two books reviewed here (some more explicitly than others).

Dorans and Cook (eds), Fairness in educational assessment and measurement

This is an American book explicitly limited to 'educational assessment in the United States', concentrating almost entirely on written or computer-based tests at pre-college level. All the authors are American and the editors and several of the chapter authors are linked to the Educational Testing Service (ETS), which financially supported the volume's preparation. There are no references to assessment of practical skills, vocational competence or portfolios of work, to classroom [or workplace]-based assessment or to assessment of very young children. That said, the limited focus is explored with commendable thoroughness and detail, and from different intellectual perspectives, including not only the expected contributions from psychometricians and measurement theorists, but also chapters on legal aspects of test fairness and 'philosophical perspectives'. The volume starts and finishes with engaging bookends by the editors, setting the discussions in the context of past and present social issues in the USA.

The aspects of testing covered include some which are too often overlooked by academic commentators, including practicalities of test administration and use of 'derived scores' (where test scores contribute to measures with a different purpose from the tests themselves). All the chapters are apparently new to publication and most have comprehensive lists of references.

The book is clearly structured into three parts, each containing 3–5 chapters (by separate authors), followed by a 'Commentary' (by a different author, not the editors). Part I ('Ensuring fairness in test design, construction, administration and scoring') systematically goes through these stages of testing to consider how to identify fairness or unfairness. The chapters appear to share an understanding of fairness as construct-validity and unfairness as construct-irrelevant invalidity disadvantaging groups of candidates, identified by factors such as ethnicity, gender, disability and language competence.

It is to be expected, therefore, that most of the technical approaches used to identify [un]-fairness are linked to the analysis of 'differential item functioning' (DIF) and readers with expertise in DIF analysis will find interesting material here, including some variants which were new to

this reader, e.g. 'differential feature functioning' to be applied to the features used for automated scoring of constructed response items, for example in tests of writing.

In contrast to the theoretical density of some of the chapters is the practical content of the chapter by Wollack and Case on test administration, largely drawing on ETS guidelines. The detail of some of the examples used (for example, the ETS guidance on words which are acceptable and unacceptable for inclusion in test questions) may seem odd to a non-American reader, but that is less important than the principle of having clear guidance on such matters and following it. However, the chapter is less self-critical than it might be about the link between the good practice it describes and fairness. Cheating in a test is clearly wrong. But why is it *unfair*? Unfair to whom? To the other candidates? What if there is only one candidate?

The authors in this section appear to share some assumptions which are open to question – for example, that unfairness applies only to test-takers/candidates and to groups rather than individuals. Another is that the purpose – or the most important purpose – of tests is to differentiate among candidates. Hence, as Wollack and Case point out, if one candidate cheats – and gets an invalid score – that 'compromis[es] the test score validity for all candidates'. But surely that is not so for all tests. Take, for example, a test of driving skills. If a driving examiner in one town is unduly severe, that does not invalidate the outcomes for others who take the same test in a different town. Not all assessment is about competition for limited benefits.

Part II ('Assessing the fairness of comparisons under divergent measurement conditions') contains four chapters exploring different aspects of the interpretation of the scores of different tests (or different versions of the same test) from the point of view of fairness. These chapters provide welcome structure and vocabulary for evidence-based answers to some of the most politically heated questions of the day – about conclusions from test scores about students' progress and comparisons of test scores within and between countries. Mary Pommerich addresses the fairness of comparing test scores across different modes of administration (e.g. between pencil-and-paper and computer-based tests) and between different tests. She starts with a helpful account of her understanding of the concept of 'fairness' – linked to the use of tests rather than the tests themselves and focusing on 'comparable validity for individuals and groups'.[2] She suggests methodologies for examining different types of 'score equivalence' of tests taken on paper and by computer and then surveys the methodologies used for linking the outcomes of different tests. Which is fair depends on the circumstances.

There follows a chapter by Castellano and Kolen entitled 'Comparing test scores across grade levels' which considers three models for comparing scores over time (for example, for accountability purposes) – a 'vertical scales' model, 'conditional status' model (measuring growth against a norm or expectation) and a 'categorical model', where the scale used is weighted to give priority to attainment at a level of particular importance. Tellingly, they point out that post hoc standard setting for the linked scales may conflict with the initial standard setting of individual tests.

Stone and Cook explore the issues around 'testing individuals in special populations', using the examples of candidates with disabilities and English Language Learners. They refer approvingly to the advocacy by the 'Standards' of 'universal design' which aims to make sure from the outset that tests are accessible to as many candidates as possible, thus minimising the need for adjustments later in the process, and the chapter contains a lot of helpful practical advice on how to put this principle into action. Also central is the distinction between 'accommodations' (e.g. producing a test paper in large print) which do not change the construct assessed and 'modifications' which involve a change of construct (e.g. omitting a listening test from an English language test taken by a deaf candidate). The chapter points out that some approaches to DIF analysis may be difficult to apply in evaluating the fairness of any accommodations/modifications, not least because of small sample sizes of candidates with low-incidence disabilities. Lastly, they raise the vexed question of whether scores from non-standard test administrations should be 'flagged'.

This is a helpful discussion of important and topical issues, although the relevance to 'fairness' could be explored more – for example, comparing fairness to disabled candidates with fairness to other candidates, and considering possible unfairness in the judgements made to categorise candidates as qualifying for special considerations.

There follows an interesting discussion (by Sireci, Rios and Powers) of different statistical and qualitative approaches to the comparability of scores from the same test taken in different languages. The key message is that 'simple translation does not guarantee comparability' and there is a need for work to be done to link (rather than 'equate') scores from tests in different languages. This area is highly topical both within countries and internationally, as tests such as PISA, which are translated from an English source version, acquire increasing policy significance.

Part II concludes with a commentary by David Thissen which is modest in its claims but among the most perceptive contributions to the volume. He points out that earlier generations of test theorists saw tests as being about the measurement of psychological constructs, while their successors have thought of tests as 'contests', and that is one reason why the concept of fairness has become so prominent, together, one might add, with language using metaphors from the worlds of sport such as the 'starting line' and the ubiquitous 'level playing field'. That poses the question of the relevance of fairness in situations where the model of 'contest' seems inapplicable.

In Part III ('Perspectives on Fair Assessment'), Edward Haertel and Andrew Ho examine the practice of using 'derived scores', shifting from the 'developer construct', for which the tests were designed, to a (different) 'application construct' for which the test scores are used as evidence. They suggest a framework of analysis and apply it to English language proficiency tests, assessments of 'college and career readiness' and the use of 'value added models' to evaluate teacher effectiveness. They argue that the validity of the use of the scores for the new purpose needs to be tested as much as the validity of the original tests, and points out the risks associated with the changes of use, including that of missing other factors which are relevant to the new construct. The link of the argument in this chapter to fairness is not always clear, although there are clearly underlying risks of unfairness to individuals (teachers, for example) disadvantaged by inappropriate conclusions taken from 'derived scores'. However, this chapter should be a required read for policy-makers on both sides of the Atlantic.

The last two substantive chapters cover 'legal aspects of test fairness' (SE Phillips) and 'Philosophical perspectives' (Barbara Zwick and Neil J Dorans). The legal chapter is largely descriptive, citing recent US court judgements on issues which have been considered earlier in the book. It would have been interesting to see a little more critical analysis of the judgements and a distinction between legal arguments based on fairness, and those based on human rights or anti-discrimination, but the chapter is a helpful tour d'horizon for test administrators, not only in the USA (see for, example, Cumming, 2008). The examples show the increasing willingness of the US courts to use the 'Standards' as an authority on good professional practice. In their turn, the authors of the 2014 'Standards' have incorporated concepts from the courts in their account of fairness.

The interesting chapter on 'philosophical perspectives' takes the view on fairness (or, in some cases, justice) of three philosophers – Aristotle, (who saw 'justice' largely as 'fitness for purpose'), the twentieth-century libertarian Robert Nozick and John Rawls, whose account of 'justice as fairness' appeals to a hypothetical 'original position' in which one does not know how advantaged one is and opts to maximise benefit to the least advantaged. They then apply these approaches to three current issues about testing which have been raised in legal challenges. They rather summarily dismiss the utilitarian perspective as irrelevant to fairness (although reading a late twentieth-century utilitarian such as RM Hare might cause them to think again) (Hare, 1977), and they tend to favour a Rawlsian approach, while acknowledging that there are insights from all three perspectives. The chapter does not ask directly whether the three philosophers are talking about the same thing – only Rawls gives centrality to the word 'fairness'. Also, it would

have been interesting to read the authors' own analysis of the concept of 'fairness in assessment'. But the inclusion of the chapter is welcome and should stimulate further thinking.

Karami (ed), Fairness issues in educational assessment

This is a reprint of articles originally published in 2013 – before the publication of the 2014 edition of 'Standards' – in the journal *Educational Research and Evaluation*.[3] It is less of a unified volume than Dorans (ed), but it is roughly structured into two parts, the first 'theoretical' and the second 'psychometric' (although the editor accepts that there are elements of both approaches throughout). Perhaps because of its looser structure, this collection of articles includes more critical thinking, uses examples from a wider range of assessment settings and touches on more radical approaches than are found in Dorans (ed). There is a slightly more international spread of authors, though most are North American. The degree to which the articles focus on fairness varies greatly: some are reports of detailed technical work on aspects of assessment which are simply assumed to be linked to fairness, or which appear to have used the theme of 'fairness' as a convenient peg for publication. My focus in this review is on the articles' treatment of fairness: I cannot do justice to the technical detail of all of the articles in their own specialised fields.

The first article, by Camilli ('Ongoing issues in test fairness') (Camilli, 2013), is the best overview in either volume of current approaches to questions of fairness in assessment. It addresses head-on the tension between 'individual and group fairness' and explores the limitations of different statistical approaches to select evidence of 'unfairness', including DIF and 'differential prediction'. It then applies the various theoretical approaches to examples from employment testing, test development and classroom assessment.

In 'A "conditional" sense of fairness in assessment' (Mislevy et al., 2013), Mislevy and his colleagues argue that fairness requires approaches based on 'conditional inferences' which take account of the possibility that 'surface conditions that differ in principled ways for different learners can provide equivalent evidence'. This approach is preferred to 'marginal inferences' which assume that differences between student responses to different types of items tend to average out. The authors then describe Toulmin's model 'assessment argument' structure, and build on to it their proposed combination of 'Evidence Centred Design' and 'Universal Design for Learning'. The latter, more technical, part of the article reflects this approach in a psychometric framework based on von Davier's General Diagnostic Model. This article bravely attempts to provide a language and structure for the much needed dialogue between psychometricians and advocates of 'universal design'.

In total contrast, the article by Lantolf and Poehner (2013) describes approvingly 'dynamic assessment' (DA), based on Vygotsky's theory of learning through the learner's assisted interaction with his/her 'zone of proximal development'. In contrast to the twentieth-century norm of assessment standardised at a point in time, DA involves 'mediations' to prompt the learner to move from his/her initial response to a task, and different learners will be treated differently, as they respond differently to mediation. The authors argue that DA is fair if all learners have access to the same amount/quality of mediation. Readers might foresee problems with meeting challenges to DA test scores used for purposes such as college selection, but in response the authors might argue that DA is more valid for other purposes, such as the diagnostic assessment of the ability of students at the beginning of a course. This article serves as an intellectual sorbet in a volume that is dominated by psychometrics, and its inclusion is welcome.

In 'The quest for fairness in language testing' (Karami, 2013), Karami starts with an overview of recent thinking on fairness in language testing, largely within the psychometric tradition, including different views on the relation between 'fairness', 'justice', 'access' and 'comparability', with some using 'fairness' as a technical term contributing to the wider social concept of 'justice', while others (notably Kunnan) use 'fairness' as a wider term covering the others. The

second half of the article explores the alternative approach of 'Critical Language Testing' (CLT), which portrays tests as 'tools of social control'. Karami suggests that a compromise between the psychometric approach and CLT is possible, although he does not elaborate on how that might be done. There is an interesting discussion of where responsibility lies when tests are used for harmful purposes.

The second, more 'psychometric', group of articles starts with a review by Sireci and Rios of a range of methods for applying DIF to investigate the outcome of items for different groups of candidates. The article (Sireci & Rios, 2013) is about 'how analysis of DIF can be used to promote validity', with a reference to fairness in the introductory paragraph and nowhere else. That said, it starts with a helpfully clear account of DIF, then selects five of the most frequently favoured statistical methods for DIF analysis and sets out the theoretical advantages and disadvantages of each. The article also identifies relevant problems such as 'how to define groups to be studied', although the solutions for some of them – for example, lumping together in one category different disabilities with small sample sizes – may be more problematic than the authors acknowledge.

The article by Gierl, Lai, and Li (2013) is about the methodology for detecting DIF in the context of multistage computer adaptive testing. It opens with another somewhat cursory reference to fairness, as defined in the 1999 edition of 'Standards', and proceeds to evaluate the performance of the Computer Adaptive Testing-Simultaneous Item Bias Test (CATSIB) in detecting DIF in a context (hitherto neglected by research, according to the authors) where both the studied and the matching subsets are examined adaptively.

In my view, computer-based adaptive testing is important in the context of fairness for at least three reasons: first, as the authors point out, it is increasingly used for tests which are very important for candidates' life chances, including professional qualifying exams for accountants and doctors. Second, adaptive testing offers multiple pathways and hence risks providing very small sample sizes of candidates who used each path, thus presenting methodological problems for some of the more established approaches to DIF. And thirdly, the use of computers in a more sophisticated way than replicating paper and pencil processes may create new potential sources of unfairness (and DIF) – for example, differential computer facility.[4]

In striking contrast to Gierl, Lai and Li, Rex Kline starts the abstract of his article ('Assessing statistical aspects of test fairness with structural equation modelling') (Kline, 2013) with the statement 'Test fairness and test bias are not synonymous concepts'. He describes fairness as 'societal' – and hence 'not strictly within the realm of science' – while bias is 'evidential' and supported by statistical evidence. He appears to see bias as a necessary but not sufficient condition of unfairness. Whether or not one agrees with that – arguably he underestimates the 'societal' influences on factors used in statistical analysis of bias – it is welcome that he has considered the relationship between fairness and bias and not jumped from one to the other in the manner of some of the other authors in this volume.

The rest of Kline's article is a review of types of test bias followed by a detailed outline of related statistical techniques.

The article by Molenaar and Borsboom (2013) refers to fairness in its title ('The formalisation of fairness: issues in testing for measurement invariance using subtest scores') but the word 'fairness' occurs only twice thereafter, each time referred to in passing, with no argument. The article is about measurement invariance in psychological testing, particularly in the relationship between the latent variable (e.g. a psychological attribute) and the observable indicator (e.g. a test score) for groups of candidates. It may well be a useful reference point for further work on statistical modelling of psychological tests, but the reader is none the wiser about why the approach recommended is a 'formalisation of fairness'.

The final article, by Solano-Flores and Li (2013), explores ways in which generalisability theory can be used to promote 'fair and valid' – these terms appear to be treated as synonyms – assessment of linguistic minorities. After an introduction outlining generalisability theory and

its applicability to different types of measurement error, the article reports on the results of tests of English Language Learners (ELLs) at grades 4 and 5 in mathematics and science using both their 'native' language ('L1') and the learned second language, English ('L2'). The results are complex – for example, ELLs do not necessarily do better in the tests using L1. The authors suggest an approach involving ELLs in the piloting of tests, and use of generalisability indices in a way that is 'fair' to the group with the greatest measurement error.

Discussion

The volume edited by Dorans and Cook is narrow in its focus but systematic and the inclusion of the 'commentaries' is helpful and should encourage readers to read all the chapters, not just those in their own intellectual discipline (although a glossary of technical terms and acronyms would have helped those doing so). Although the examples used are almost all from the USA, it is not difficult to see how they could be applied in other settings. The inclusion of a range of 'perspectives' is welcome. However, the treatment of fairness is not really *cross*-disciplinary – rather it is a varied sequence of uni-disciplinary chapters and could have benefitted from more challenge from one discipline to another within individual chapters.

Karami (ed) is a convenient reprint of a special journal edition with a variety of articles using examples from a wider range of assessment contexts. The short 'editorial' does not do more than summarise each article, and there is less attempt to compare one with another or draw general conclusions from them. Readers with specialised interests may wish to scan the index and dip in as appropriate.

I conclude with four observations from reading both volumes. First, some authors (particularly the psychometricians) appear to underestimate the scope for bias or inaccuracy in the categories used for their analysis. For example, no one directly questioned the basis for judging the relevance or irrelevance of constructs. For those who equate fairness with the absence of construct-irrelevant variance, that is crucial. Thinking has changed over time on such matters as whether a candidate's blindness is relevant to his/her suitability to be a doctor or whether a deaf student can have all the knowledge and skills required in a music assessment. And the assessments used – for example, by psychologists – to categorise candidates are often themselves matters of dispute. Uncertainty over these could affect the usefulness of any analysis done using them.

Second, none of the authors in either book adequately answers the question 'Fairness to whom?' There appears to be an assumption that fairness in assessment is fairness to candidates ('test takers'). But what about fairness to test users (for example, employers or colleges using tests for selection) or to future clients of candidates being assessed on their fitness to practise? And, as I have observed, many of the articles assume that fairness applies to groups rather than individuals. This point is rightly picked up in the chapter by Mary Pommerich in Dorans (ed)[5] and by the editors at the end of that volume, who suggest that as some groups become less clearly differentiated in future (e.g. through racial integration) the focus for fairness may have to move more to individuals. I agree. And that may pose methodological challenges to some of the psychometric approaches reflected in both volumes.

Third, there was a disappointing lack of conceptual analysis of fairness in either volume. What does 'fair assessment' *mean*? Even the authors of the chapter on 'philosophical perspectives' in Dorans (ed) shied away from doing their own analysis. Some of the authors in Karami (ed) do start by stating what *they* mean by 'fairness', and its relation to other concepts, notably validity. But I would have welcomed more critical discussion of this.

Lastly, the largest underlying issue for readers from the Western testing tradition is the link between validity, fairness and social justice. Should validity always trump other requirements? Or are there circumstances when it should be consciously traded off with another imperative?

As Karami points out,[6] if the concept of 'validity' is stretched to cover everything that is good in assessment, that question has to be rephrased as 'what are the priorities in validation?' But in my view that formulation would miss the important challenge to the testing world that should follow from a critical read of these volumes. Perhaps there are more important things in assessment than validity? We at least need a conceptual vocabulary to consider that question.

Notes

1. Dorans and Cook (eds), op cit, page 284.
2. Dorens and Cook (eds), op cit, page 112.
3. Op cit, vol 19, issues 2–3 (February/April 2013).
4. The authors attribute this point to Zwick (e.g. Zwick, 2000).
5. Mary Pommerich, 'The fairness of comparing test scores across different tests and modes of assessment', Chapter 7 in Dorens and Cook (eds), op cit.
6. Hossien Karami, 'The quest for fairness in language testing', in Karami (ed) op cit, page 67.

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The primary behaviour cookbook & the secondary behaviour cookbook, by Sue Roffey, Oxon, Routledge, 2019, 144 & 190 pp., £22.99, ISBN: 978-0-8153-9338-2 & 978-0-8153-9340-5

The Primary and Secondary Behaviour Cookbooks are a set of reference guides which offer support and advice for people working with children to help them develop practical strategies for responding to behavioural issues in classrooms. Anyone working in a classroom will at one point or another find themselves in need of behaviour management strategies, and these can be extremely varied depending on the individual needs of the child and their circumstances. Roffey responds to this by creating "recipes" within her books which identify useful interventions intended to resolve specific kinds of behaviour. This is a very appealing approach as it immediately encourages any reader to think about the individual needs of a child carefully, rather than rely on a broad brush, one-size-fits-all approach to classroom management. The books take this idea one step further by considering potential causes for a young person's behaviour and offering ideas for support in the long term, alongside strategies that can be tried immediately.

The books are broken down into six main categories: Getting Things Done, Dealing With Disruption, Social Interactions, Coping With Conflict, Emotional Distress and Behaviours of Special Concern. Each category provides a wide range of "recipes" which offer supportive suggestions and ideas to improve specific behaviours taking an inclusive, non-punitive approach to behaviour management. Recipes are broken down into an information gathering stage ("What you need to know"), immediate responses to the problem ("Today in the classroom") and further ideas to maintain positive change in the future ("Longer term change"). While these are not books that would necessarily be read from cover-to-cover, the structure helps readers to quickly identify information that would be useful for them and tailored for individual children in a clear, accessible way. The emphasis on "practical" strategies is very important as there are often occasions when support strategies can sound good on paper, but be extremely hard to implement in practice in the classroom. Roffey's experience as a teacher and educational psychologist is evident here, as the "recipes" take care to offer advice that could realistically be put into practice in a typical classroom without significant extra resources or staffing required.

There is a bibliography before the "recipes" section in the books and plenty of research is cited as a basis for the interventions . Additionally, the depth and detail offered throughout the books, and Roffey's own professional background, provide reassurance that they are based on practical experience as well as research. These books would be useful for anyone involved in

supporting children with behavioural difficulties and would prove a valuable resource for teachers, SENCOs and educational psychologists in developing individualised interventions to meet specific, complex behaviour needs.

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Dyscalculia: from science to education, by Brian Butterworth, Abingdon, Oxon, Routledge, 2019, 118 pp., £24.99 (paperback), ISBN: 9781138688612, £105.00 (hardback), ISBN: 9781138605, £24.99 (ebook), ISBN: 9781315538112

Brian Butterworth proselytises for the view that a "core deficit" associated with a numerosity module, underlies the concept of "dyscalculia". Importantly, he presents evidence to support this view. This perspective is analogous to the view that a "core deficit", namely weak phonological awareness and skills, also underlies the concept of "dyslexia".

Children may be behind in arithmetic for a variety of reasons. He presents a difference between those learning issues which involve the specific numerosity module and more "domain-general" issues. He is concerned with the heritability of this "core deficit". Controversially perhaps, he wants to distinguish between "true dyscalculics" and those who are delayed or weak in mathematics for other reasons.

The numerosity module has its origin in the skill of subitising (the immediate recognition of sets) and the use of a mental (logarithmic) number line. Butterworth marks out a developmental pathway, which may hinder numeracy development–including counting–which proceeds to the concept of cardinality. There are downstream effects upon learning arithmetic. A parallel neurological model is provided.

Research and assessment methods include the speed of naming sets, the speed of matching the magnitude of sets, and estimating the ordinal position of numbers upon a number line. Butterworth presents a list of tests which may be used, largely online, including his own. Numerosity should be assessed; not merely arithmetic. Essentially, he wants the "meaning" of number emphasised, with the use of concrete materials.

Unsurprisingly there are differently nuanced views (c.f. Hulme & Snowling, 2009, Chapter 5). Their preference is to suggest a cascade of influences rather than clearly distinguishable "subtypes" of Mathematics Disorder (MD). "Primitive estimation skills" differ from "exact computation skills". Children with both RD (Reading Disorder) and MD, outnumber children with pure MD, and tend to have more significant problems. They prefer a cognitive path beginning jointly with a "preverbal magnitude system"–Butterworth's "core deficit" area–and with a separate influence of "executive functions and working memory". Both feed into MD.

Despite the evidence that MD impacts the economic value of both individuals and society, an inability to be fluent with number is not viewed with the same concern as RD. Many prior resources associated with the DfE are no longer available. Dyscalculia has a low salience in the assessment of SEN. Consequently, Butterworth wishes to see more training of professionals in

this field, including educational psychologists. This would be a useful textbook for this purpose.

Recommended for: specialist teachers and educational psychologists to expand knowledge of this topic.

Style: The book is well constructed and easy to navigate, proceeding narratively from definition to policy. Reading from cover to cover there are many redundancies. However, this makes it very easy to dip into and select passages and chapters. There is detailed cross-referencing. Although technical in parts, the narrative is easy to follow.

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The teenager in the greenhouse – a psychologist's guide to parenting your teenager, by Graham Ramsden, Woodbridge. John Catt Educational Ltd, 2018, 226 pp., £15

In this very accessible book, Dr. Ramsden draws on his experience as a parent as well as his 30 years of educational psychology practice - including time spent sharing and discussing the concepts upon which the book is based with groups of parents. The book is structured across 9 chapters and although each chapter has a distinct theme, Dr. Ramsden ensures key concepts are revisited and expanded throughout the book using a spiral learning approach. The first half of the book shares information about adolescence drawing on neuropsychology, cognitive behavioural therapy and psychotherapy. The second half focuses on specific strategies rooted in concrete and common experiences, drawn on the previously-shared theory.

Dr. Ramsden has put his years of translating psychological concepts to non-psychologists to good use here. The writing style is very informal, accessible, balanced, funny and, to me, highlights how much more EPs could contribute to the field of working directly with parents. As a parent of 2 pre-teens, there was much to reflect on. As a psychologist, I was hoping to see more of an evidence base for the strategies and theories shared. However, I accept that psychologists are not the target audience of this book and that perhaps academic referencing may have reduced the accessibility for a wider audience. With that in mind, I think that the book would have benefited from enhanced visuals and lay out to support key concepts and break up lengthy prose.

In the interest of gaining the perspective of the target market for this book, I sought the view of a parent with no background in psychology. The informal "non-lecturing" writing style was very welcomed, however the amount of content in the first half of the book was felt to be excessive for busy parents. It was suggested that taking one concept at a time and linking these to the suggested strategies might suit parents better.

Overall, Dr. Ramsden is to be applauded for his efforts in translating psychological concepts and making them concrete and accessible to a wider audience. While the market for parenting books is a busy one, it is refreshing and appropriate to have the voice of the EP – a profession

which attempts daily to translate psychological theory for parents and teachers to use. While the psychologist part of my brain noted some omissions and new concepts, I think that is to be expected. If one were to ask a room full of EPs to pick three key psychological concepts all parents should understand, I expect there would be a wonderful variety of views.

Recommended for: Parents who can access written text; EPs planning to work with parents
Style: Accessible, easy to read, humorous
Value: Good value for money

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Girls and Autism. Educational, family and personal perspectives by Carpenter, B., Happe, F., and Egerton, J (eds), Oxon, Routledge, 2019, 186 pp. £23.99, ISBN: 978-0-8153-7725-2 (hbk), ISBN: 978-0-8153-7726-9 (pbk), ISBN: 978-1-351-23442-9 (ebk)

In the past few years, there has been more recognition and research that has highlighted how women and girls have often been overlooked by traditional diagnostic assessment approaches used in autism. They have been found to be an under-diagnosed group, whose needs often go unmet in schools, and whose mental health in the teenage years often rapidly deteriorates Egerton & Carpenter, 2016.

This book was collated by a large collaborative group of very knowledgeable and skilled experts in understanding girls and autism. It came about as a result of a national girls' forum including parents, autistic women and girls, academics and policymakers focusing on the unmet needs of autistic women and girls, particularly linking to education and the school context. It provides a collection of both the latest research findings, as well as first-hand insights, knowledge and strategies and serves as a very useful resource for EPs, parents, professionals and autistic people themselves.

The book includes five well-organised sections which help to summarise an increasingly complex area. Many of the authors have direct and diverse experience with autistic girls and a lot of information is provided about a range of issues with regards to understanding and supporting autistic girls. Insights and a review of the research are provided about many areas including the importance of diagnosticians and others understanding the particular issues involved in the diagnostic and assessment process when working with autistic girls and women. Research has helped to understand the complexities of girls where many of them are skilled in masking and camouflaging their social communication and social interaction skills.

The topics are wide and varied, covering issues that are particularly relevant and significant for Educational Psychologists. The personalised experiences are very interesting. Venessa Bobb, mother of three children, the founder of A2ndvoice, and Branch Officer of the National Autistic Society (NAS) Lambeth Autism Group discusses the difficulties Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic autistic people and their families face, when accessing diagnosis and support. Sarah Wild, Headteacher, provides insight into the views of some of the autistic girls at her school about what they want the world to know. Mental health issues, PDA and neuroscience are also discussed. Wenn Lawson, autistic lecturer, researcher, psychologist,

advocate, writer, poet and trans-guy, completes the book by providing a 'call for action' highlighting the fact that girls become women and hence the issue of sexuality and keeping safe.

I would highly recommend this excellent book which draws together the collaborative efforts of many people who have contributed to the complexities of assessment together with understanding and supporting autistic girls and women. The book provides a useful resource for EPs and the people they work with.

Wenn concludes by stating "This book has provided its readers with all the necessary information to notice, explore and support autistic females in the various ways they need. Do not let them down!"

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Highly Recommended for: parents, the service library, teachers, essential reading for EPs
Practical, theoretical and easy to read
Worth buying for yourself

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BOOK REVIEW

The Handbook of Cognition and Assessment; Frameworks, Methodologies, and Applications, Edited by Andree A. Rupp and Jacqueline P. Leighton, Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester, UK. $195.00 ISBN: 978-1118-95661-8.

Rich, varied, integrative, multidisciplinary, challenging and innovative; these are some of the adjectives that come to mind after reading *The Handbook of Cognition and Assessment*, skillfully edited by Andre Rupp and Jacqueline Leighton. The handbook comprises 23 chapters – most of them, 20–30 pages long – that map modern models and methods of educational assessment.

Irvin Katz begins the foreword to the book by recollecting that in his first year at the ETS, a colleague told him that cognitive psychology is irrelevant to their work (saying something like 'I don't give a hoot about cognitive psychology'). Decades have passed and the psychometric field has changed, permitting Katz to conclude that '... many psychometricians now do give a hoot about cognitive psychology. About friggin' [*sic*] time!' The handbook attests to this fact, and thus fulfills the call, voiced long ago by Cronbach (1957), to unite two traditions in psychology – the experimental and the correlational.

The process of unifying the two traditions has been long and arduous, and has not yet been concluded. It is reflected in the contents of several editions of the Educational Measurement handbooks. Whereas in the second edition (Thorndike, 1971), cognitive psychology was hardly mentioned, in the third (Snow & Lohman, 1989), it was allotted a chapter, indeed, one which '... sought to review enough of cognitive psychology to prompt deeper reading and to whet appetites for new research' (p. 320). In the fourth edition (Mislevy, 2006), a chapter was devoted to a thorough discussion of the relationship between the two disciplines, and it asserted that 'educators are beginning to integrate insights from cognitive psychology and developments in technology into assessment practices' (p. 298).

The term 'cognition' in the title of the handbook refers to the acquisition of knowledge in context. It does not refer to 'elementary cognitive tasks' (Carroll, 1993) or 'primitive information processes' (Newell, Shaw, & Simon, 1958) for problem solving. There is hardly a mention of the building blocks of cognition as outlined in the book by Neisser (1967) – considered by many to be the founding text of cognitive psychology – and there is no systematic discussion of concepts like attention, memory, pattern recognition, visual search, and speed of processing, etc. in their relation to assessment. The handbook does, however, discuss the assessment of higher levels of cognition: extracting meaning from texts, solving problems in context, searching for relevant information and acquiring knowledge. And it does so in the tradition of cognitive science: by integrating several disciplines – computer science, natural language processing, and the learning sciences, by using a variety of methods and by applying modern statistical and data-analytic methods.

As the editors comment in their introduction to the handbook, the rich nature of modern assessment data together with rapid advances in data analysis and the broadening base of psychological and educational knowledge call for several lines of integration: integration of disciplinary traditions, integration of statistical modeling approaches, integration of assessment design and validity considerations, and integration of theory with practice. In this context, they note, it is not possible to create a single book that would be

able to cover all nuances of assessment and cognition. Therefore, they add, they 'have strived ... to provide a reasonably illustrative crosswalk of the overall landscape' of modern educational and psychological assessment. They have definitely succeeded in this. The landscape is captured by a series of views of modern assessment theories and applications in the making. The overall impression is of a dynamic field which is being tilled and explored by scores of multi-disciplinary teams.

The 52 authors involved in the preparation of the chapters – accomplished researchers and assessment practitioners, from testing organizations, universities and government agencies – represent the multi-faceted work being conducted in North America in the last three decades. They tell the story of modern assessment from multiple viewpoints. The reader can learn about models of cognition, theories of learning, construct validation, evidence centered design, Bayesian networks, automated essay scoring, diagnostic classification models, as well as digital assessment environments and educational data-mining; and this is not an exhaustive list. But the common thread is the focus on principled assessment design, whether in the framework of evidence centered design or in the framework of construct validity or argument based validity.

The handbook, which opens with an informative introduction by the editors, is helpfully organized into three sections: Frameworks, Methodologies and Applications. In the introductory chapter the editors present their motivation in assembling the handbook and provide a detailed description/overview of its contents. The following summary is not exhaustive; not all the chapters can be summarized and commented upon. In what follows, I will list the topics and then comment upon a few selected chapters. The selection is somewhat arbitrary; it mainly reflects my personal interests as well as my evaluation of the 'innovation value' of these chapters.

Frameworks

The 'frameworks' section (chapters 2–10) is intended to provide the background for the design of assessment in light of theoretical models of cognition, but it also includes three 'non-cognitive' chapters (see below). Chapters in this section cover theories of learning, principled approaches to assessment design, validation of cognitive models, automatic item generation, and automated scoring. In addition, one chapter covers social models of learning and assessment, another is devoted to a discussion of socio-emotional and self-management variables in learning and assessment, and a third refers to the adaptation of tests to the needs of special populations.

In chapter eight, Patrick Kyllonen summarizes the literature dealing with non- and quasi-cognitive variables that are related to learning and assessment. Though the treatment of non-cognitive variables has a long history in education, it has not been given proper attention in large-scale assessment. He briefly discusses the theoretical basis of the Big-5 model of personality and summarizes at length the empirical results with regard to the relation of the factors to educational achievement, emphasizing the robustness of the model across different societies and cultures. He then goes on to map other variables, related in varying degrees to the Big-5, that affect educational achievement. He points out that some of the variables are of enduring character and others more transient (fatigue, mood etc.), noting that while the Big-5 factors are usually well assessed by rating (by others more than by self-rating), the assessment of some of the other variables is best done by performance tasks. Some of the problems of assessing non-cognitive variables are addressed, and recent developments in this area of assessment (the replacing or augmenting of ratings) are referred to. The chapter is informative and well organized. It reads smoothly and provides

an excellent introduction (and rich reference list) to the topics covered. It can serve as a blue-print for a longer monograph on this important area of research (will somebody pick-up the gauntlet?).

Chapters four and five discuss the development and validation of cognitive models in the context of assessment. Chapter five, by Susan Embretson, summarizes her view on construct validation. She presents an integrated and interactive framework for construct validity (a slightly revised version of her earlier model). It includes the five categories of evidence for establishing validity that are elaborated in the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, as well as four background aspects and three test-design activities. It emphasizes the inter-relations between all components of the model and the feedback loops that are essential for sound test-development. The second part of the chapter is devoted to a concrete example of a full cycle of test development according to the construct validation model which is presented in the first part. The example is well chosen: it is an account of the development, and construct validation, of an automatic item generation model for abstract reasoning tests. Its validation is therefore not of a single test but of a large family of tests.

Chapter four (by Madeleine Keehner, Joanna S. Gorin, Gary Feng & Irvin R. Katz), which, to a large degree, is influenced by (and refers to) the work of Embretson, discusses methods (and the advantages and drawbacks thereof) of gathering evidence for validity of the assessment of cognitive constructs. A distinction is made between offline and online methods of gathering the evidence. Offline methods include the classical (correlational methods, multitrait-multimethod matrices, item difficulty modelling) as well as current psychometric methods which are also discussed in other chapters. The online methods discussed are based on protocols and log-files. The influence of cognitive psychology is illustrated by a short discussion of an experimental study of item features and formats and by a detailed discussion of the use of eye-tracking in studying the cognitive processes that are involved in assessment tasks. It is an adept application of a long-standing method of cognitive psychology, and one which avoids the invasive character of other online methods, such as think aloud protocols.

Methodologies

The 'methodologies' section (chapters 11–16) provides introductions to current approaches and methodologies, including: explanatory item response models, longitudinal models, diagnostic classification models, Bayesian Networks, rule-space and attribute hierarchy methods, and lastly, data mining and learning analytics.

Explanatory Item Response Models (EIRMs) are presented in chapter 11 (written by Paul De Boeck, Sun-Joo Choo and Mark Wilson). The goal of the chapter is to demonstrate how the framework of EIRMs can combine cognitive-based explanations (covariates) with the outcomes of measurement (generally, the item responses). The essence of the method is concisely explained and its application is demonstrated via three mini-studies of the same data-set. The first focuses on the explanation of item difficulties, the second adds the multi-dimensionality of the estimated ability, and the third considers possible confounding factors.

Chapter 14 (by Jose Gonzales-Brenes, John Behrens, Robert Mislevy, Roy Levy and Kristen DiCerbo) is an excellent introduction to Bayesian Networks (BN). It includes the theoretical background, Bayesian logic, the history of BN and the application of BN in developing assessment systems. The application of BN is discussed in the framework of evidence centered design. The authors introduce BN in a 'reader-friendly' fashion by means of a simplified example. They then move on to discuss extensions of the simple model,

various ways of representing BN, and the methods that are used in order to estimate the structural parameters and to understand and refine the assessment models. The authors note that while the cost of learning and applying BN is relatively high, it is 'small compared to the incremental value these models often provide in practical application and theoretical conceptualization'.

Educational Data Mining (EDM) and Learning Analytics are discussed in the chapter by Ryan Baker, Taylor Martin and Lisa Rossi. Data-mining is an over-arching term referring to diverse methods that are aimed at revealing hidden patterns and trends in large data sets. Though data-mining methods have been used in business, marketing, medicine and bioinformatics for decades, their application/use in the educational context is relatively recent. In contrast to principled design methods, EDM is mainly exploratory, but as the authors comment, there is increasing evidence that EDM can be useful even in a carefully designed assessment context in the iterative process of assessment development for purposes of fine-tuning and validation. The various methods of data-mining are too numerous to be covered by one chapter. Therefore, the authors (wisely) decided to demonstrate the application of EDM through three case studies of interactive tutoring systems. They note that EDM methods are in essence 'stealth assessment', in the sense that the assessment is invisible to the learner. Thus, their use is limited mainly to formative and low-stakes assessment. The methods cannot be used in a high-stakes environment where the assessment criteria have to be transparent to the examinees.

Applications

The third section of the handbook (chapters 17–23) is devoted to the practical application of cognitive models in various assessment arenas. These include: large-scale assessments, educational survey assessment, certification and licensure examinations, The-In-Task Assessment Framework (an extension of the evidence-centered-design framework for designing and collecting meaningful data in complex behavioral assessments), digital environment for assessment of scientific inquiry, gaming behavior and hard-to-measure constructs, and lastly, conversation-based assessment.

In chapter 22 by Valerie Shute and Lubin Wang, the interesting concept of Stealth Assessment (SA) is explored, with a focus on the use of video games. SA is used in formative assessment contexts and, according to the authors, it seriously reduces test anxiety but without sacrificing validity. The use of video games may have a positive impact on the engagement of the learners with the assessment task. The value of the method is illustrated in the assessment of problem-solving skills and of creativity. The authors are using evidence-centered-design methodology. They provide full competency models, and develop evidence models using Bayes net methodology. The two projects are still evolving; though there are preliminary results regarding the validity of the projects, full validation studies for the two projects are still outstanding.

Tanner Jackson and Diego Zapata-Rivera (chapter 23) present their work on conversation-based assessment (CBA) which they subsume under performance based assessment (PBA). It is an evolving/emerging form of assessment in which the student interacts (converses by reading and writing) with two virtual agents. The authors claim that it provides an environment that promotes an exchange of information and elicits student responses that attest to their knowledge and skill. In the first part of the chapter the authors describe PBAs and CBAs in general terms and present a taxonomy of assessment tasks. The second part illustrates a budding CBA project that aims to assess scientific reasoning and explanation skills by means of two tasks. The project is at an

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early stage of development, and the tasks are presented as 'prototypes'. The fragments of the conversation space diagrams which are presented here, set the context of the conversation and provide the main question being asked (together with potential student responses), while also demonstrating the complexity of the tasks. No validity data are available yet, so only time will tell if and what the added value of this approach might be, compared to more traditional methods.

Concluding comments

The handbook's editors note that it was clear to them that it would not be possible to create a single handbook that would cover all nuances of assessment and cognition in a comprehensive manner. What they have strived to do, and have definitely succeeded in doing, is to provide a reasonable view of the overall landscape of the integration of cognition into assessment. True, there are some topics that are mentioned but not covered in the handbook; two come to mind. The first is the cognitive processes involved in the marking/scoring of essays and other performance tasks. The second is the use of temporal indices of performance that are used extensively by cognitive psychologists (e.g. Posner, 1978). As noted above, a common thread in the handbook's chapters is the emphasis on principled design of assessment (PAD) and evidence centered design (ECD), and most of the authors, either explicitly or implicitly, express their hope and belief that these design frameworks will continue to grow and become an integral part of diverse applications, both in summative and formative assessment.

The handbook is an excellent source of survey and introductory chapters that can be used for graduate courses in assessment or in-service training workshops for testing agencies. It is a most useful reference book for researchers, faculty members and practitioners. As noted in the preface, modern assessment methods can also be of value to cognitive psychologists in the context of scientific discovery and proof.

The handbook refers to many hundreds of primary sources; in addition, there is a glossary at the end of the handbook which provides about 250 single-sentence definitions of key concepts. The concepts, ranging from the elementary (reliability, item-discrimination) to the more specific (Wald test, Universal design), are boldfaced throughout the handbook, providing an easy and helpful feature both for the novice and the expert reader.

The handbook is a great addition to the literature on modern educational and psychological assessment. To paraphrase a 400-year old saying of Sir Francis Bacon, some of the chapters in the handbook are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some to be chewed and digested.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Tamar Kennet-Cohen and Anya Mali for their helpful advice and comments.

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Done in bursts, a suggestive & elegant portrait of Japan



Moyna Sen
review

This is the story of Japan. In bursts. Of hope and humour. Of philosophy and playfulness. Of insight and introspection. Of surprises and subtlety. Japan is a world we are only partly familiar with. Pico Iyer's *A Beginner's Guide to Japan: Observations and Provocations* steers us through its myriad mysteries — revealing yet not unravelling, keeping us riveted all along.

Japan is a country we are mostly in awe of. It is a symbol of success, precision, admirable technological progress, of understated elegance and the strength of its currency, the yen. It represents a society which is forever hard to penetrate. An outsider remains an outsider for a number of reasons.

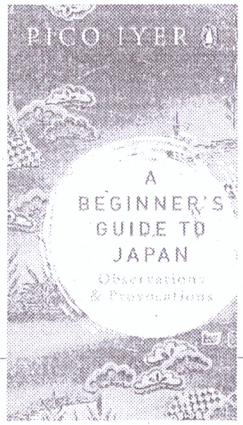
When the Hungarian-born George Mikes (famously pronounced Mikash) wrote his iconic book *How to Be an Alien* (which, incidentally, finds mention in Iyer's book too) way back in 1946, it was an inverted look at England and the English people, with the accompanying quirks, kinks, whims, *et al.* And it was kind of spot on. Which is why he could use lines like "Continental people have sex lives: the English have hot water bottles", and get away without a scratch. Pico Iyer in 2019 sticks to the rules. And yet he cannot help alluding to Mikes' book to say: "If, as Mikes says, 'in England everything is the other way around,' Japan manages to be the wrong way around from England, without ever becoming Hungary." Iyer draws parallelism with England in certain other places too: "In England, Japan's Western cousin, I learned that the ultimate sign of intimacy is not all you can say to a friend, but all you don't need to say."

In fact, Pico Iyer hardly comments. He observes. And serves his observations on a platter. For all to see. And understand. And ruminate. And consequently, adjust their views on Japan.

A Beginner's Guide to Japan in most parts is written in short bursts. Keeping the thoughts disengaged. Independent. And yet linked by an invisible thread. It is almost structured like the Japanese haiku poem. It is not so much as keeping to the haiku meter technically – but largely keeping to the haiku spirit as it is supposed to be.

Iyer's book is personal, yet not intrusive. The Japanese are known to cherish their privacy. And he succinctly quotes Shakespeare's King Lear by way of explanation: 'Have more than thou showest,' as the Fool advises Lear, 'speak less than thou knowest'. Understated is elegant. When Iyer talks of Tanizaki's essay "In Praise of Shadows" on Japanese aesthetics, he refers to how the essayist extols the beauty and suggestiveness of all you can't see, because that gives the imagination, the inner world, more to work with. And that is what the book strives to offer too — ample fodder for thought!

The author etches out Japan with skilful strokes of poignant phrases. He tells the story of the country, the people, their emotions without the conventional storyline. And you don't need a story to be told either when all he says is: "No word," wrote Japan's Nobel Prize-winning novelist Yasunari Kawabata, "can say as much as silence". And there's immense beauty in the lines: "Departing a Japanese garden, you hope to carry some of its pruned stillness out into the streets; the only thing you need leave behind is yourself."



A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO JAPAN: OBSERVATIONS AND PROVOCATIONS
By Pico Iyer
Penguin Viking,
pp 228, ₹499

Iyer chooses his words carefully, respecting and caring about the country he calls his own for the past 32 years. But that is also because he does not wish to present a picture contradicting reality, which is likely to amount to a travesty of sorts. He loves the clean air, looks up to the country which "by every measure [is] at least six times safer than the United States", a place and people in constant motion, the fact that it is increasingly opening up to the world with Miss Japan 2016 being a part-Indian called Priyanka, that Japan today thinks that Tradition is not merely Preservation, the deep-seated Japanese philosophy that "What you have is all you need". We are treated to endearing snippets of Japanese daily life ("Lacking space has naturally made the Japanese masters of making space — in a crowded rush-hour train, in a poem or a painting"), that Japan is the land of bento box, that the Japanese are excellent guests at a hotel outside their country though they are likely to follow it up with maximum complaint letters, how a convenience store looks like every other, how putting on a designer suit to go to the ATM is quite normal, how the Japanese are as adept at not looking as they are at not speaking. Eccentricities abound in the tidbits as does humour. And this is interspersed with personal anecdotes of the author's Japanese wife and daughter, which at once make the book so very identifiable.

Pico Iyer has an enviable style, and a consummate command over the language. He weaves his anecdotes in and out of predictable spaces and makes them delectable, keeping the wonder element intact. Not an easy thing to do.

Iyer signs off with a letter that touches upon the ravages of World War II and the scars of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which the country still has not managed to let go of, a pain too strong to bury.

The book is a must-read, for all the right reasons, with a promise of an experience to cherish.

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The Central Asian states were not transformed, as Eastern Europe was, by the forces of globalization and interactions with western states and international organizations.' As a result, the 'globalized transition' in Central Asia, 'unlike in Eastern Europe, has failed to produce states and polities that conform to the liberal-ideal type of marketised democracies.' Although the premise is correct, this proposition comes across as a little far-fetched given that with the exception of the Baltics, the success of reforms in other Soviet successor states (western flank of the former Soviet Union) remains questionable. Nevertheless, Dictators without Borders makes for an interesting and engaging read as it deals at length with the often-overlooked region. With deep insights and details, the book serves as a valuable primer for the study of Central Asia.

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DARK SHADOWS: Inside the Secret World of Kazakhstan by Joanna Lillis. I.B. Tauris, London and New York, 2019.

FOR a country that is almost the size of Europe, little is known about Kazakhstan. Joanna Lillis shines a light on the history and people of the nation in her book *Dark Shadows: Inside the Secret World of Kazakhstan*. The book is extensive in its scope, moving across the nation from the Aral Sea in the southwest to the nuclear testing grounds of Semipalatinsk in the northeastern part of Kazakhstan and from the formation of the Kazakh Khanate in 1465 to present day Kazakhstan. An ambitious undertaking, Dark Shadows covers the key issues that have shaped, and continue to shape, the Kazakhs.

Lillis divides the book into three sections. The first, 'The Making of a Potentate', analyses the rise of authoritarianism in Kazakhstan under its first President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who was previously the first secretary of Kazakhstan's Community Party before the disintegration of the USSR. As the author notes, there is a whole generation of Kazakhs who have grown up never knowing another President but Nazarbayev (he stepped down in March 2019). In a sense, understanding Nazarbayev's rise and his strong grip on the country's politics is key to understanding contemporary Kazakhstan itself. However, the history of post-independent Kazakhstan is not limited to Nazarbayev's story.

Tracing the nation's slide into an authoritarian state, the author also recounts a litany of actors (and organizations) that fight against the government for the freedom of speech and the freedom to protest. Reading about those who pushed-back against Nazarbayev can both inspire readers and leave them in despair. When oil workers went on a strike protesting inadequate compensation in the town of Zhanaozen in December 2011, the violent crackdown on the protestors by the riot police landed many in the hospital, and some in the town's morgue. For authoritarian Kazakh leaders who witnessed the Rose Revolution in Georgia in 2003 and Ukraine's Orange Revolution in 2005, followed by the Arab Spring, dissent is only a step away from a revolution and hence any opposition must be crushed. However, despite the heavy-handed tactics of the government, there exist people like Gulzhan Kamitovna, a journalist who ran one of the most outspoken publications in Kazakhstan, and Yevgeniy Zhovtis, one of Kazakhstan's most prominent human rights campaigners. In Gulzhan and Yevgeniy's stories, the readers get a glimpse of the indomitable spirit of the Kazakh people.

The second section in Dark Shadows, 'Identity Crisis', explores the history 'that turned Kazakhstan into a melting pot of peoples.' Given the author's background as a journalist, not a historian, the chapters in this section focus as much on the lived experiences of the people as on crucial historical milestones. For instance, the anti-Soviet uprising in the winter of 1986, considered to be the harbinger of Kazakh independence, is told through the tale of the 21 year old Kayrat Ryskulbekov who was sentenced to death for his role in fomenting the rebellion.

While each chapter in this section begins with a historical episode, the author links the past to the present in a seamless manner. For instance, in chapter 10, 'Kingdom of the Kazakhs', the author narrates the history of Kazakhstan's nationhood, which finds its basis in the foundation of the Kazakh Khanate in 1465. As Lillis navigates this centuries-old history, she connects it to the imperatives that underpin present-day Kazakhstan's celebrations of statehood. In 2015, when Kazakhstan celebrated the 550th anniversary of the Kazakh Khanate, it was as much about celebrating the nation state as it was about countering Vladamir Putin, the President of Russia, who had stated that Kazakhstan had no history. While the two nations have shared a close relationship through history, reviving the tale of the Kazakh Khanate was a useful exercise as Kazakhs watched Putin annex parts of Ukraine. Just as the history of the Kazakh Khanate is linked to Kazakhstan's defiance against an expansionist Russia in 2015, the author connects other historical incidents to present-day grievances in the second section.

The concluding section of the book is 'Stories from the Steppe' where Lillis aims to highlight the stories of Kazakhs who are left coping with the lingering fallout of ill-planned Soviet industrial and agricultural experiments. Some of the issues addressed in 'Stories from the Steppe' can indeed be traced back to Soviet errors, such as the repercussions of Soviet-era nuclear weapons testing for contemporary Kazakhstan. However, the same cannot be said of some of the other issues that the author has chosen to explore. For instance, in chapter 22, 'The Curse of Corruption', the author looks at how corruption at hospitals in Kazakhstan infected at least 150 children with HIV in 2006. While this is an important moment in the nation's history, the corruption woes that beleaguer Kazakhstan are not traced to the Soviet Union. Save for this minor quibble, each chapter in this section presents the reader with a fascinating snapshot of what Kazakhstan has had to, and continues to, grapple with.

Sketching out and analyzing the history of an entire nation and its people is no easy task. Nevertheless, Joanna Lillis does a masterful job, taking the reader through the history and landscape of Kazakhstan. Due to its comparatively modest aims, the first section is where the author's ability to narrate and inform the reader is most heightened. Though the author explores a number of issues that affect Kazakhstan, her narrative style ensures that the book is easily accessible, even for those who are not familiar with the nation. For a nation that houses a significant proportion of the world's natural resources and sits at the heart of Central Asia, Kazakhstan has the potential to play a greater role on the global stage. Joanna Lillis' Dark Shadows is a great starting point to for those seeking to better comprehend the extraordinary nation and its people.

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AFRICA IN WORLD AFFAIRS: Politics of Imperialism, the Cold War and Globalisation by Rajen Harshe. Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon, 2019.

EVEN high quality Indian scholarship on Africa is rarely suffused with admiration, appreciation and yes, affection for that continent and its peoples. This is one such text. Here the vision of a changing Africa is filtered through the prism of imperialism in its different avatars – direct colonial rule, indirect domination (European neocolonialism) and American imperialism from the Cold War to today's era of globalization. Imperialism is defined as an 'asymmetrical relationship of interdependence between materially advanced and backward societies.' The obvious culprits are Britain, France, Portugal (the main colonizers) and the US. The USSR was an ambiguous 'empire' exercising political-military control over Eastern Europe, but where the balance of economic benefits favoured the latter. Cold War USSR played a contradictory role in Africa – supporting national liberation struggles and manipulating reluctant governments for resources on the cheap and geopolitical favours. Post-Cold War, Russia has been more preoccupied with controlling its 'near abroad' than with interventions in Africa.

The seven chapters flanked by an Introduction and Conclusion constitute the heart of this book. Africa is so huge that a selective eye is unavoidable. But fortunately more attention is given to relatively neglected Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). There is a delightful chapter on African thought and thinkers. The author's long-time familiarity with France no doubt is why Francophone Africa is given separate chapter treatment. The US as an imperialist power also gets separate chapter treatment as well as each of the three countries of South Africa, China, India, all often accused, with some justification says the author, of exhibiting sub-imperialist characteristics. The variant trajectories, past and present, of Portugal, Britain and France are insightfully presented.

Portugal, without the history of internal democratic struggles of the other two, made better use of slave and forced labour and was more repressive. It was the first to arrive as a non-capitalist mercantile power, and last to leave Africa. Britain (a stronger capitalist-industrial power) and France (a weaker one) started scrambling for territories in the late 19th century. Britain ruled more indirectly through local notables and chieftains, and with few exceptions independence was achieved with a peaceful transfer of power. France too saw mostly peaceful transitions (Algeria being a major exception) but ruled more directly while seeing its colonies as extensions of the metropolitan mainland. It was more willing to give citizenship to a section of 'Frenchified' African elites and this closer cultural-political connect meant that later Paris could exercise a relatively stronger neocolonial hold over former colonies. Portugal, however, faced armed national liberal movements that ultimately proved successful. Curiously unmentioned, however, is the aftermath – a section of army officers ironically radicalized by its 'enemy's' struggles, triggered the 1974 fall of the Caetano dictatorship with the country coming closer to

Asian Age ; 13/12/19 ; Pg 15

Who will take on the Big Tech behemoths?

Steven Poole

review

With Britain having gone through its third general election in four years, the halcyon days of Cleggmania in the 2010 campaign seem like an impossibly innocent time. Particularly since Sir Nick Clegg, once the shining, soft-haired hope of sensible centrists, now works as a PR man for Facebook. His job is to explain to the unwashed masses why Facebook's refusal to do anything about false political adverts is actually good for democracy.

Few people believe that any more, but Clegg's sorry purchase as a useful idiot for the techno-disinformation complex is a vivid illustration of the way that, as this excellent book forensically demonstrates, the big Silicon Valley companies have succeeded in regulatory capture of the US branches of government that ought to oversee them, as well as more generally in 'cognitive capture' of the public conversation about the changes they are forcing upon the world.

Google is the single biggest political lobbyist in the US, but also sprays money at the academics who study internet law and culture, and who — as though coincidentally — come up with theories friendly to Google. Google and its corporate comrades have also, Rana Foroohar shows, succeeded in weakening patent-protection laws, which is good for them — because their business depends on copying the ideas of new startups — but bad for everyone else. Many experts quoted here say the result has been to stifle innovation, not only in the computer industry but in fields such as biotech as well.

Indeed, though bookshop shelves are groaning with excitable trade books about how the pace of change in modern life is unprecedented, very little has changed technologically in more than a decade. Smartphones are still basically the same devices as the first iPhone in 2007, and Google, Facebook, Apple and Amazon are still the entrenched incumbents, while newer tech 'unicorns' are falling by the wayside: witness the abandoned IPO this summer of the office-rental company WeWork.

The dominance of these few companies, Foroohar shows in her engaging narrative, has been bought with utter ruthlessness and a deep understanding of both the 'network effect' (whereby the more users a service attracts, the more attractive it becomes to even more users), and the psychology of addiction, employing behavioural-science research to keep our mouths clamped to the troll firehose.

DON'T BE EVIL: THE CASE AGAINST BIG TECH

By Rana Foroohar
Allen Lane,
pp 337, £20

As a global business columnist for the FT, Foroohar is well placed to deepen her account with amusing personal stories and tasty gossip. She was once interviewed for a communications job at Google, which — marvellously — turned out to involve following one of the founders around and turning his thoughts into documents that could be communicated to the rest of the company. And she cites many sources, both named and anonymous, with stories about being screwed over by Big Tech, or about witnessing its leaders' majestically entitled tech-bro behaviour. (Google's co-founder Sergey Brin, when challenged about sleeping with his female engineers, responded: 'Why shouldn't I? They're my employees.') 'Don't be evil', of course, used to be the company motto of Google — until it realised that evil, in the form of relentless surveillance and targeted adverts, makes more money.

Foroohar has been around long enough to remember the first dot-com bust in 2000, and she makes a fascinating case here that the next global financial crisis — we are, after all, due another one now, more than a decade after 2008 — will be caused by Big Tech itself. Importantly, she points out that the celebrated 'cash piles' the companies are sitting on (Apple's is $200 billion) are actually held in the form of bonds, so the tiny tech oligopoly has tremendous power to move the markets — or crash them, if things start to go south.

Who, then, shall stand up to these behemoths? In this story, the only entity on the planet with both the power and the will to do so is the European Union, which for that reason is becoming more attractive to new start-ups in tech and science generally. Foroohar ends her book with some sensible regulatory suggestions, such as taxing tech revenues at source (rather than allowing profits to be repatriated to havens), and perhaps instituting a global 'digital tax'.

In the meantime, Big Tech's appetite for evil is so impressive that several more scandals have broken since this book went to press. Google has been secretly amassing the detailed health records of millions of Americans, which might especially alarm users of Fitbit fitness trackers, since Google has also announced its intention to buy that company. Meanwhile, it was recently discovered that Facebook has been accused of watching users through their own smartphone cameras while they browse the website — and if you think that was a bug or an accident, then I have some old shares in Pets.com that you might want to invest in.

By arrangement with the Spectator

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Books

BELT AND ROAD: A Chinese World Order by Bruno Maçães. Penguin Viking, New York, 2019.

STARTING as a blueprint for railway lines running through the Central Asian states that bridge Asia and Europe, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has billowed into a grand strategy for China. President Xi Jinping apparently regards it as his most salient initiative and, in time, legacy. In the three years since its annunciation, the BRI has issued a profusion of jamborees and joint statements, memoranda of understanding and credit lines, project proposals and policy papers. All this has been tiring to track. Bruno Maçães's book is therefore handy as well as timely.

An erstwhile minister in Portugal, Maçães now lives in Beijing. The decision to decamp from Lisbon to China seems to mirror his interest in 'Eurasia' – the subject of another book that he wrote a couple of years ago. He has since been active on the international policy and high punditry circuits. This also explains the breathless and often vacuous quality of this book. What might work in an 18 minute TED-style talk invariably becomes tedious when stretched out to 180 pages or more. Notwithstanding the thin gruel on offer, the book is useful as an up to date statement of the BRI as China conceives of it. But it tells us little about whether or why their best laid plans might work or not.

The Belt and Road, Maçães writes, should be visualized as 'nine arrows crisscrossing Eurasia in all directions.' It comprises six economic corridors on land and three sea routes. Eurasian trade in goods, he notes, is now touching USD 2 trillion a year – more than double the volume of transatlantic trade and considerably more than transpacific trade. The constructed – not to say fictitious – quality of these figures of 'Eurasian' trade are matched by his claims about their potential in the future. 'This is all the more remarkable', he claims, 'as this is the axis of the world economy where physical and legal restrictions are most significant and therefore where the potential for growth is highest.' The notion that ridding this huge swathe of 'physical and legal restrictions' – never spelt out in detail – would automatically lead to higher growth in the whole area is only credible if one is observing the 'axis of the world economy' from Mars. But grand strategists can't be distracted by details.

What about the design itself? According to Maçães, connectivity projects are at the centre of the BRI. 'The geographic space being transformed must be connected before it can start to grow areas of economic activity; industrial parks along infrastructure routes are slowly integrated to establish regional value chains and eventually support fully developed cities – culturally creative, internationally connected and technologically advanced.' Connectivity, he helpfully adds, is not just or even mainly about roads or railways. What the Chinese are aiming at is nothing short of a 'community of shared destiny in cyberspace.' Elsewhere he writes that the best image of the BRI is 'the cities being built up from scratch. These are what will change the physical and human landscape of the planet, creating new ways of life, new ideas, new adventures.' The book is strewn with such profundities.

Maçães argues that China's plans for the BRI are powered by economic and geopolitical imperatives. Indeed, in the wake of the global financial crisis of

2008, Beijing undertook the largest ever Keynesian stimulus plan. As public investment soared, China was soon staring at staggering excess capacity in several key industries – even as global demand remained soft. This led to a quest for markets and production facilities abroad. There was a larger economic – or 'geo-economic' – rationale at work. At the time, the United States was trying to conclude mega regional trade deals in Asia-Pacific and Europe, so cutting China out of the dynamic economic regions. These fell by the wayside with the advent of Donald Trump, but the latter's trade war with China has reinforced the importance for Beijing of integrating 'Eurasia', or at least some chunks of it, under its leadership.

The BRI, Maçães claims, is nothing shy of a 'Chinese plan to build a new world order replacing the US-led international system.' It brings together several novel and significant developments: 'China's growing international clout, its need to reshape the international economic system in its image and the growing reactions and responses to the project.' Maçães is evasive about whether this design will come to pass. Instead, he outlines four scenarios: China gradually integrates into the liberal world order; China supplants the United States as the centre of global power, leaving either the rest of the architecture intact or recasting it thoroughly; China and the United States coexist. These scenarios, however, sit uneasily with Maçães's reading of the BRI. In the ultimate analysis, it is metaphysical. 'The Belt and Road is by design', he writes, 'a project meant to encompass the whole world and the totality of human life. No other organized project or idea can rival it in this respect.' No wonder he is reticent about its earthly prospects.

India has, of course, refused to join the BRI citing concerns about its sovereignty as well as transparency and sustainability of the projects. Maçães observes the BRI could constrain India's economic prospects. 'How will the Indian economy be able to move up into higher-value segments of global chains if it turns around and sees many of its fast-growing neighbours already incorporated into a China-led economic network? An enforced return to India's period of economic autarchy haunts its future development.' The question is an important one, but it cannot be answered if we assume – as Maçães does – that the BRI subsumes everything. India's economic future hinges on many more choices than the decision to opt out of the Belt and Road.

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THE RETURN OF MARCO POLO'S WORLD: War, Strategy, and American Interests in the Twenty-First Century by Robert D. Kaplan. Random House, New York, 2018.

THE reading of Robert D. Kaplan's *The Return of Marco Polo's World* is an undertaking in two parts. A collection of the author's previously published essays, the first task involves reading the older writings in the context of the overarching landscape presented in the sweeping original, opening essay: we are witnessing the rise and return of a fluid, chaotic supercontinent, Eurasia, that is at once anchored by non-western imperial legacies and threatened by internal stresses within weakening states across this landmass. Kaplan positions the United States against this backdrop. The second task is an open-ended interfacing of Kaplan's argumentation against ongoing geopolitical and geo-economic developments.

Two key contradictory effects sum up Kaplan's latest undertaking of strategic thought, which serves as an intervention on Eurasia that is comparatively less linear than those offered by his contemporaries. First, globalization and technology – increasing interactions across the Indian Ocean, refugee flows reunifying the Mediterranean Basin, development of infrastructure connectivity such as under China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and the communication revolution – are both binding together and fragmenting this super-region. Even as these factors dilute borders, they are hardening geopolitical divides, both among and within states, by enabling the spread and intensification of differences and conflict. On the horizon, Kaplan sees cosmopolitanism crumbling in the face of ethnic pressures, rebellions against artificially constructed delimitations fostering multiple sovereignties, new forms of authoritarianism materializing in the face of a loss of central authority, and permeable regional conflicts that at their worst become 'the clash of artificially reconstructed civilizations.' In short, 'globalization and the communications revolution have reinforced, rather than negated, geopolitics.'

It is in this context that the author advances the weakening of the (Westphalian) state even as the empire strikes back. Herein lies the second contradictory effect. Imperial traditions are informing the geopolitical strategies of 'faded empires' that are Turkey, Iran, Russia, and China; critically, the latter two form the lynchpins of this 'Eurasian conflict system.' But while such legacies inform the construction of this supercontinent, they are also what propel the contin

ued fracturing of these states. 'In the vast area between a cratering Levant and an internally troubled China, no state is improving its capacity to govern effectively. They are all either weakening or headed nowhere good' (p. 28). China, for instance, is called 'a crucible'. Internal stresses (particularly economic and ethnic tensions or those arising from authoritarianism), fuelled by globalization and technology, will weaken centralized control of these states even as they become increasingly nationalistic and aggressive beyond their borders. Fragility and chaos will therefore prevail.

The resultant map of Eurasia is reminiscent of medieval times. Kaplan uses the travels of an iconic explorer from the Middle Ages as a narrative framework to map the future contours of geopolitical flashpoints across Eurasia: Kurdistan, Central Asia, the Black Sea, Pakistan, and the Indian Ocean. The Silk Road on which Marco Polo traversed has today been revived as the BRI, thus bringing us full circle. What then is the US role in this 'singular battle space' that spans from Central Europe and the Adriatic to China, 'a world in which territory still matters'? Kaplan locates his answer in Marco Polo's return by sea: 'Sea power is the compensatory answer… in the face of an infernally complex and intractable situation on land' (p. 39). But this is by no means a mere matter of squaring Mahan with MacKinder. Kaplan refers to weightier concepts that continue to agitate US foreign policy thinking: national interest, great power responsibility, and principles of engagement. The way forward for the US, in Kaplan's estimation, is one paved by caution and restraint.

It is here that Kaplan's older essays, entries that stand on their individual merit, collectively contextualize Kaplan's positioning of American power against the emerging 'neo-medieval map' of Eurasia. Broadly classified under the categories 'Strategy', 'War and its Costs', 'Thinkers' and 'Reflections', the essays form an amalgamation of history, geography and international relations juxtaposed against real events, lived experiences and defining personalities in American foreign policy. They probe what the US stands for, what has defined its external engagement and how it must behave in a period of relative, but not absolute, decline. Interests are pitted against values; morality against limitations; individuals against forces of fate. Tellings of American misadventures, from Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan to Syria, reflect on the costs of intervention as well as the burden of land warfare and small wars. A vigorous defence of the actions/major works of three stalwarts who subscribe(d) to various shades of realism – Henry Kissinger, Samuel Huntington and John Mearsheimer – puts into relief the underlying potent forces of culture and geography, and how they translate into interpretations of responsible American power. It bears mentioning that even as Kaplan gives fresh lease to Huntington's clash of civilizations thesis, on the question of the US-China face-off he leaves the reader with a question rather than an assessment: 'Once violent hostilities begin, how do you *end* a war with Russia or China?'

These provocations on America's response to a changing international order – in which Eurasia, Asia (and China) are taking centre stage – make compelling reading against contemporary developments. To name a few: The Trump presidency, China's 'new normal', the rise of 'middle powers', the resurgence of authoritarianism, and the emerging Indo-Pacific construct. Consider Kaplan's narrative on connectivity. It engenders both coherence and claustrophobia – even as roads and railways depreciate time and space, they are carriers of conflict – to the effect that it will leave 'a much more ambiguous legacy.' This can be juxtaposed against the competing connectivity visions on offer, particularly across the broader Indian Ocean region – the Eurasian rimland – that Kaplan deems pivotal to US strategic response in the 21st century.

As a whole, the collection is vigorous in style; rich in vision, observation and grasp of history. This is no neat summation of ideas, but a sprawling collection that nonetheless does not overextend. Even for those familiar with the prolific author's writings, it is at least worth reading for its original, opening essay, penned in late 2016, or better yet with other publications that offer alternate frameworks and perspectives, such as Graham Allison's *Destined for War*, Parag Khanna's *The Future is Asian*, and Maçães' *The Dawn of Eurasia*.

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DICTATORS WITHOUT BORDERS: Power and Money in Central Asia by Alexander Cooley and John Heathershaw. Yale University Press, New Haven, 2017.

IN *Dictators without Borders* Alexander Cooley and John Heathershaw challenge the prevailing notion of the Central Asian region being perceived as an isolated territory. The authors argue that Central Asia is, in fact, deeply interconnected with the rest of the world within the framework of a vast financial and legal outsourcing network comprising of offshore bank accounts, foreign

2008, Beijing undertook the largest ever Keynesian stimulus plan. As public investment soared, China was soon staring at staggering excess capacity in several key industries – even as global demand remained soft. This led to a quest for markets and production facilities abroad. There was a larger economic – or 'geo-economic' – rationale at work. At the time, the United States was trying to conclude mega regional trade deals in Asia-Pacific and Europe, so cutting China out of the dynamic economic regions. These fell by the wayside with the advent of Donald Trump, but the latter's trade war with China has reinforced the importance for Beijing of integrating 'Eurasia', or at least some chunks of it, under its leadership

The BRI, Maçães claims, is nothing shy of a 'Chinese plan to build a new world order replacing the US-led international system.' It brings together several novel and significant developments: 'China's growing international clout, its need to reshape the international economic system in its image and the growing reactions and responses to the project.' Maçães is evasive about whether this design will come to pass. Instead, he outlines four scenarios: China gradually integrates into the liberal world order; China supplants the United States as the centre of global power, leaving either the rest of the architecture intact or recasting it thoroughly; China and the United States coexist. These scenarios, however, sit uneasily with Maçães's reading of the BRI. In the ultimate analysis, it is metaphysical. 'The Belt and Road is by design', he writes, 'a project meant to encompass the whole world and the totality of human life. No other organized project or idea can rival it in this respect.' No wonder he is reticent about its earthly prospects.

India has, of course, refused to join the BRI citing concerns about its sovereignty as well as transparency and sustainability of the projects. Maçães observes the BRI could constrain India's economic prospects. 'How will the Indian economy be able to move up into higher-value segments of global chains if it turns around and sees many of its fast-growing neighbours already incorporated into a China-led economic network? An enforced return to India's period of economic autarchy haunts its future development.' The question is an important one, but it cannot be answered if we assume – as Maçães does – that the BRI subsumes everything. India's economic future hinges on many more choices than the decision to opt out of the Belt and Road.

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THE RETURN OF MARCO POLO'S WORLD: War, Strategy, and American Interests in the Twenty-First Century by Robert D. Kaplan. Random House, New York, 2018.

THE reading of Robert D. Kaplan's *The Return of Marco Polo's World* is an undertaking in two parts. A collection of the author's previously published essays, the first task involves reading the older writings in the context of the overarching landscape presented in the sweeping original, opening essay: we are witnessing the rise and return of a fluid, chaotic supercontinent, Eurasia, that is at once anchored by non-western imperial legacies and threatened by internal stresses within weakening states across this landmass. Kaplan positions the United States against this backdrop. The second task is an open-ended interfacing of Kaplan's argumentation against ongoing geopolitical and geo-economic developments.

Two key contradictory effects sum up Kaplan's latest undertaking of strategic thought, which serves as an intervention on Eurasia that is comparatively less linear than those offered by his contemporaries. First, globalization and technology – increasing interactions across the Indian Ocean, refugee flows reunifying the Mediterranean Basin, development of infrastructure connectivity such as under China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and the communication revolution – are both binding together and fragmenting this super-region. Even as these factors dilute borders, they are hardening geopolitical divides, both among and within states, by enabling the spread and intensification o differences and conflict. On the horizon, Kaplan see cosmopolitanism crumbling in the face of ethnic pres sures, rebellions against artificially constructed deli mitations fostering multiple sovereignties, new form of authoritarianism materializing in the face of a loss c central authority, and permeable regional conflicts tha at their worst become 'the clash of artificially recon structed civilizations.' In short, 'globalization and th communications revolution have reinforced, rathe than negated, geopolitics.'

It is in this context that the author advances th weakening of the (Westphalian) state even as th empire strikes back. Herein lies the second contradi tory effect. Imperial traditions are informing the ge political strategies of 'faded empires' that are Turke Iran, Russia, and China; critically, the latter two for the lynchpins of this 'Eurasian conflict system.' B while such legacies inform the construction of th supercontinent, they are also what propel the conti

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BOOK REVIEW

Revisiting EFL Assessment: Critical Perspectives. Edited by Rahma Al-Mahrooqi, Christine Coombe, Faisal Al-Maamari, and Vijay Thakur. Basel, Switzerland: Springer, 2017, 350 pp., paperback, $139.99.

Assessing student performance is a rather delicate and complicated process because it is embedded within a sociocultural context in which several intervening and overlapping variables are at play (McNamara, 2000). Assessment involves a number of tasks and activities teachers assign to learners to identify their learning proficiency or achievement to direct and affect the teaching-learning process (Cheng, Rogers, & Wang, 2007). This rather substantial volume highlights recent trends in student assessment, with a shift of focus from product-oriented summative to process-oriented formative assessment.

The book consists of five parts. Part 1 (consisting of Chapters 2 and 3) deals with language teacher education and the way professional development programs can familiarize EFL teachers with key concepts, such as assessment for learning, teacher professionalism, ethical assessment, and the democratization of assessment. Part 2 (comprising Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8) discusses important issues, such as washback, alternative assessments, and problem-based/outcomes-based assessment. Part 3 (including Chapters 9, 10, and 11) presents skill-area assessment, which includes various assessment systems ranging from the well-known international IELTS to local tests that may be less familiar. Part 4 (containing Chapters 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17) offers examples of alternative assessments (AA), their challenges, and opportunities associated with learners' engagement in AA's design and evaluation. In the final part (consisting of Chapters 18, and 19), the linkage between assessment and technological developments is discussed from cognitive and sociocultural perspectives.

Chapter 1 presents an introductory section on EFL assessment in general and provides a brief synopsis and description of the included chapters in the volume in particular so that the intended audience can readily gain a general overview and perspective of the upcoming information in brief.

The second chapter investigates the way ESL/EFL teachers' assessment perspectives and practices are impacted by their assessment literacy. To this end, a survey was administered to 45 EFL/ESL teachers from various schools across the globe. The findings showed that the majority of teachers had almost no training in language assessment and were mostly exposed to assessment instructional materials during their MA studies. In sum, teachers' conceptual knowledge of assessment surpassed their practical knowledge. As a consequence, the teachers lacked the real-world experience to engage their students in the assessment process.

The relationship between assessment literacy in alternative assessment and the ethics of teacher assessment practices are addressed in Chapter 3. This discussion is couched within an exploration of Kurdish EFL teachers' assessment literacy, their overall perspectives on alternative assessment, and the way these affect their assessment practices.

In Chapter 4 the most common perceptions of washback effects in language assessment and education are looked upon from three different vantage points: (a) a historical outlook that traces the progress of research into the washback effect both in general pedagogy and language education; (b) a look at findings from empirically based research to bridge the divide between theory and practice; and (c) a perspective on the areas and directions for future washback studies.

Chapter 5 investigates the required principles and practices for successful outcomes assessment in EFL programs. As part of this examination, the distributed leadership model for EFL program leaders is recommended as a way to boost the likelihood of success and the sustainability of their outcomes assessment plan.

An action research-based, outcomes-based assessment in an English language program in Oman is examined in Chapter 6. The researchers also explore whether assessment complies with and adheres to the teaching/learning outcomes of a course and the implementation of alternative assessments. Teachers and learners' understanding concerning the learning outcomes achievement, conventional assessments, and alternative assessments are discussed in detail.

Chapter 7 features the application of problem-based learning to EFL assessment. Cooperative learning and critical thinking are promoted through the PBL approach. The PBL approach also highlights assessment tools that target specific teaching styles and competencies. Practitioners in the field of language assessment and teaching are provided with unique, creative strategies and effective assessment tools to foster teamwork and EFL academic attainment.

Chapter 8 explores students' and teachers' understanding of the multivoice notion of assessment, which regards assessment not only as a diagnostic instrument but also as a stimulus for content development. To investigate teachers' perceptions of assessment, prior exposure to assessment in the context of language instruction was taken into account. Results of open-ended questions revealed that the points of view of teachers with previous exposure to assessment were consistent with the notion of 'assessment for learning', whereas the points of view of teachers with no prior exposure to assessment were indicative of the fact that motivation and assessment were similarly viewed.

The assessment of both speaking and listening skills is addressed in the ninth chapter. The English-speaking and -listening proficiency levels of a group of Arabic-speaking undergraduate Omani students from the Dhofar region were determined. Moreover, techniques in the evaluation of listening and speaking skills were presented. The methods and criteria involved in assessment were explored to discern how well the standards were attained among all the participants. Appropriateness adequacy, grammatical accuracy, intelligibility, fluency, relevance of content (coherence), and gestures were among the criteria used in assessing spoken language.

In Chapter 10 the appropriateness of IELTS as a measure of Emirati students' language proficiency is explored. It is argued that the IELTS exam lacks validity and reliability for use in deciding whether Arab language learners are sufficiently prepared to embark on their tertiary-level studies in English. The researchers recommend developing better and more reliable assessment tools, such as alternative assessments.

The process used to develop a test of word recognition called Q Lex for EFL learners is expanded in Chapter 11. The test hides words in nonsense letter chains in a way that causes the recognition speed to be decreased. As the recognition velocity is reduced, a more precise measurement can be achieved by personal computers. Language learners are assessed according to the reaction time benchmarks of native speakers. The researchers discuss the development and validation process for this test and highlight its basic measurement principles. The chapter closes with an experiment using Q_Lex to measure the word recognition of language learners at differing levels of language proficiency.

Chapter 12 takes a pedagogical view of the growth and advancement of alternative assessments. Specifically, the authors examine the recent direction of alternative assessments within special education programs, ESL, and/or EFL classrooms. The authors conclude that this form of assessment best suits ESL/EFL contexts for language learners with or without speech impairment.

Chapter 13 reports a study in which 120 junior high school male learners designed tests based on two chapters they had covered earlier from an English book. The student-designed items were carefully examined for format, skills, and subskills. Both teachers and their students were then interviewed. The findings indicated that designing test items was quite beneficial for language learners because it provided them with an opportunity to review the content of the two chapters at length. However, the results also showed that the student-designed tests displayed similar patterns and needed more variety, because students did not pay sufficient attention to some key components of the two chapters.

The application of portfolio assessment as a type of alternative writing assessment at tertiary levels is discussed in the 14th chapter. Despite the associated challenges with portfolio assessment, it

proved to be a major success and wholly transformed the English for Academic Purposes Department at the University of Technology and Business (UTB) as it underwent a paradigm shift from a testing culture to an assessment culture (Gipps, 1994). The researchers also point out some of the changes happening in the micro context of UTB, where portfolio assessment is being carried out.

Chapter 15 discusses the utilization of portfolios as a type of continuous assessment. The justifications for the application of portfolios are presented, followed by an explanation of the way they are implemented at Sabancı University School of Languages (SL) in Turkey. The existing practices and procedures for the implementation of learning portfolios are then expanded. Finally, the authors propose future objectives in light of the obtained feedback.

Chapter 16 covers assessment for learning, accounting for important factors for students' learning. Assessment entails more than just the quantification of characteristics of people or things according to explicit rules and procedures (Bachman, 1990). Appropriate assessment practices can have a direct bearing on the teaching and learning process and positively influence it. A small-scale research project based on the Reggio philosophy is reported. The researchers describe the Reggio approach to early childhood education and its different dimensions when applied and tailored to the Pakistani context, with a specific focus on portfolios and documentation.

An exploratory action-based study is discussed in Chapter 17. Students were encouraged to conduct a self-evaluation at two points in time. The applied procedures made students better aware of and informed about various dimensions of learning and evaluation. The experiment also helped teachers to address classroom dynamics and learning potentials. Consequently, the researchers concluded that learning and assessment can be intermingled through student self-evaluation and socially mediated testing.

Dynamic assessment (DA) is explored in Chapter 18. Over the course of a semester, 12 Omani EFL learners emailed their assignments to their teacher, who then provided feedback using a word processor's review function. Students' ability to include the teacher's explicit and implicit feedback was assessed. To explore the emerging directions associated with DA, researchers conducted a focus group with the learners. The findings revealed that mediated electronic forms of DA were more beneficial to learning than prescripted prompts.

The final chapter examines teacher and student perceptions of e-assessment within a private higher education institution (HEI) in the United Arab Emirates. Questionnaires and interviews were used to delve into the participants' perceptions of virtual learning environments and e-assessment methods. The findings indicated that e-assessments were advantageous to most participants. However, the authors remained unwilling to fully favor a shift to e-assessments as the sole method of summative assessment. The study implies that the reliability and validity of other assessments can be augmented via e-assessments and can therefore be considered an advantage over traditional methods.

The book enjoys several strengths in terms of content coverage and organization. First, it aims to promote teacher literacy of student assessment and addresses ways teachers can use their assessment practices in an EFL context. Second, not only are various assessment types, such as alternative assessment, dynamic assessment, self-directed assessment, continuous assessment, and outcomes-based assessment discussed but also different assessment methods targeted at skills, such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Moreover, an attempt is made to predict what lies ahead for alternative assessment and dynamic assessment. Another potential strength of the book is the way new teaching methodologies, such as communicative language teaching and problem-based learning, are reflected in assessment practices. The theory-practice divide is well bridged by reporting on assessment studies in different EFL contexts. Finally, a number of pictures, questionnaires, and test and task samples have been included to further elucidate the key concepts presented in the book.

Despite these strengths, the book suffers from a few limitations as well. First, it limits itself to assessment practices in EFL contexts, which might undermine the generalizability of the findings. Second, the authors point out that the reliability of different types of alternative assessment, including portfolios, can be easily questioned because of the great variations inherent in their construction and interpretation. However, few viable solutions have been proposed to properly

tackle the issue. Third, the move away from an examination and testing culture to an assessment culture raised in the volume needs further exemplification, clarification, and elaboration so that this paradigm shift can be put in concrete and operational terms. Fourth, the chapters in the volume are rather loosely connected. Last but not necessarily the least, a glossary of key terms would have been helpful for the intended audience to readily review the recurrent themes of the book.

With its 19 chapters, this book examines crucial assessment issues and their relationship with teaching and learning in EFL contexts. EFL teachers, practitioners, researchers, and assessment specialists can greatly benefit from the innovative ideas presented by the contributors. In sum, the volume vividly presents a description of how various assessment types are linked to theory and how their implications contribute to practice.

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BOOK REVIEW

The Sociocultural Activity of High Stakes Standardised Language Testing: TOEIC Washback in a South Korean Context, by Dawn Karen Booth, Cham, Switzerland, Springer International, 2017, 256 pp., £79.00 (hardcover), ISBN: 978-3-319-70446-3

As the 12th volume in the *English Language Education* series, *The Sociocultural Activity of High Stakes Standardised Language Testing: TOEIC Washback in a South Korean Context* probes the impact of the TOEIC, a high-stakes language test in South Korea. Given that a great deal of research effort has been committed to the washback effect on teachers and different aspects of teaching in the past decades (Cheng, Sun, & Ma, 2015), the book reports a qualitative study of 13 Korean test-takers. Framed within sociocultural theory and based on qualitative findings, it is a timely publication that turns the research focus to the effect of washback on learning and learners, and unpacks the complexity of washback within a broad sociocultural context.

The book begins with a brief introduction of its main features. After a general description of the social context of South Korea and a summary of the insufficiency of previous research on washback, Chapter 1 reveals the theoretical, practical and methodological significance of investigating the washback of the TOEIC from a sociocultural perspective with learners at its core.

Chapter 2 presents the unique historical, cultural and educational context of Korea. It begins with an account of the history of Korea, the evolution of its education system, and the current highly competitive testing culture. The chapter then moves on to a brief introduction of EFL education in Korea and ends with a discussion of the impact of standardised EFL tests on test-takers in all levels of its educational system.

Chapter 3 centres on the TOEIC. After a review of the origin of the test as well as its evolution in test format and content, the bulk of this chapter is devoted to the investigation of the construct validity of the TOEIC based on Messick's (1996) framework. The author critiques the lack of evidence of substantial test validity and calls for more research on how TOEIC scores have been interpreted and used in either business or tertiary contexts as well as what implications this high-stakes test may have for different stakeholders.

Chapter 4 focuses on the conceptualisation of washback in the field of language assessment. It traces the research on washback to the 1980s and reviews how some leading scholars have contributed to the construction and expansion of this concept. Then, based on the discussion of the conceptual difference between washback and impact, the six important dimensions of washback, and the relationship of washback with test validity, Booth presents a working definition of washback as "the influence that a test, situated within a wide community of practice, exerts on teaching and learning" (p. 48). A detailed review of important empirical washback studies on learning and learners is then presented. The chapter ends with a detailed interpretation of a newer model of washback proposed by Shih (2007), which highlights the influence of both internal learner variables and external sociocultural factors on the washback effect of a test.

The theoretical and operational frameworks within which to investigate washback of the TOEIC on learners are presented in Chapter 5. The author firstly reviews the cognitive and social traditions in second language acquisition and explains her rationale for drawing on sociocultural theory to examine the complexity involved in washback. Then she provides an in-depth discussion of the three basic themes of Sociocultural Theory: Mediation, the zone of proximal development (ZPD), and learner agency, and how these can be used to understand aspects of washback. The second part of Chapter 5 elaborates on Breen's (2001) four-layer model, which gives considerable prominence to

how learners' personal attributes, together with the learning context they are situated in, affect their language learning process and outcomes. The last part presents Activity Theory, a conceptual framework originating from Russian psychology to understand human activities. It offers a detailed account of the theoretical development and its five main principles, followed by a discussion of how this theory might triangulate with washback theories. Four research questions are raised accordingly at the end of the chapter.

The following three chapters (Chapters 6, 7, and 8) report the findings of a longitudinal case study of 13 learners. Chapter 6 is a presentation of the actions English majors and other majors take for the TOEIC test preparation. The findings reveal great group differences in terms of the amount of time they spent on different actions, the types of actions they take, and their foci on the language content. Chapters 7 and 8 follow the test activities of three students with majors other than English and two English-major students respectively, focusing on their goals, actions, operations and perceived outcomes in preparing for the TOEIC. Each of the chapters ends with a general discussion of the washback perceived by individual students and a brief comparison of multiple cases.

Chapter 9 links the results of the case studies with previous empirical research and washback theories, with the purpose of identifying the main individual factors that influence the different stages of student test activities. This chapter firstly summarises the key learner variables that impact test stakes and individual test motives. It then continues to analyse the influences behind students' actions towards their preparing for the TOEIC and the key variables mediating washback of the TOEIC on the learning content, strategy use, as well as the rate and order of student learning. This is followed by an effort to identify learner factors that contribute to differing perceptions of washback on the depth of learning as well as learner attitudes. The major influencing factors include students' major/specialisation, pervious TOEIC experience and scores, past English learning experience, time limit, and peer influence.

The next chapter, in contrast, taking a macro perspective, examines washback of the TOEIC within a wider social context. Based on Engström's (1999) activity system, the author investigates systematically the complexity of washback of the TOEIC, stressing the inter-relationships among the TOEIC test, test-makers, a range of stakeholders, and test-takers. With a detailed discussion of how the commercial, educational, political, and cultural sectors, among others, separately or together, affect and are affected by the decision of test-makers, the construct of the test, and test activities of test-takers, this chapter presents a comprehensive understanding of how these elements jointly contribute to the stakes and impact of the TOEIC.

Drawing on the discussion in the previous two chapters, the author proposes a situated model of washback, incorporating both learner factors and societal influences in the last chapter, with an emphasis on how the factors at the macro and micro levels, intertwining with one another, mediate the effect of washback on student learning processes and products. The chapter finishes with a discussion of the practical implications of this new model for test-makers, different groups of stakeholders, teachers, and test-takers, and offers suggestions for future research.

The author expands on the conventional conceptualisation of washback, which stresses the directional impacts of a certain test on learning and teaching, in three ways. First, the role of test-takers in understanding the washback effect is emphasised. Through collecting first-hand experiences of 13 students preparing for the TOEIC, Booth reveals how test-takers' identities, attitudes, and values, among other things, motivate their test preparation activities and influence the stakes of the test as well as student learning outcomes. Second, by employing Sociocultural Theory, she demonstrates how the wider social, cultural, political, and governmental contexts in which the learners and the test are situated, contribute to and are

impacted by the stakes of the test, and their unavoidable mediation of the washback effect on student learning. Third, Booth successfully highlights the complexity of washback, especially in relation to the interwoven relationships among test-takers and the test, stakeholders, and different communities that use the test. She has successfully formulated an argument that washback is a socially-situated phenomenon, which defies those who regard testing simply as cognitive endeavors, and such positioning "moves our focus beyond the test as the central catalyst on washback" (p. 3).

Another useful and important aspect of this book is that it provides a number of effective frameworks for other researchers in the field. For instance, there is a wealth of information presented in Chapters 5, 7, 8, 9, and 11, demonstrating how Activity Theory is used as an operational unit of analysis of the qualitative data, offering a good example of how this theory can be applied by other researchers to analyse human activities. In Chapter 6, Booth profiles the different actions 13 test-takers took in their preparation for the TOEIC based on their self-reported practice. These actions are categorised into four types, which provides a practical framework for classroom teachers or test-preparation facilitators, whose work is directly related to learners' test preparation actions.

Taken as a whole, this book provides a reference for future research in similar social contexts. South Korea is where the study was conducted, and the country is characterised by its test-oriented culture and Confucian heritage. Therefore, this study may be viewed as a case in point for researchers who are interested in washback effects on teaching and learning in other Asian countries that have similar testing cultures and historical traditions.

While the book has many strengths, it also has a number of shortcomings. First, the author has adopted a qualitative approach to understanding washback of the TOEIC by examining only 13 test-takers from one university in South Korea. Therefore, readers need to be mindful that the washback model generated needs to be interpreted with caution and the research findings cannot be generalised to the entire group of TOEIC test-takers. Second, the data were mainly collected through student interviews and journals, which were used as evidence of their test preparation activities. This is a point that Booth could have made clearer, relating to the fact that the self-report data are subjective and potentially biased. Third, some chapters appear to be less well-structured than others. Such a weakness is discernible when the links of these chapters to the central ideas are put to scrutiny. For example, Chapter 7 devotes too much space to an extensive discussion on the reliability and credibility of qualitative methodology, which is somewhat digressive, because most readers probably do not really expect to get this information from a monograph such as this one, whose main objective is not to provide qualitative methodology training to its readers. This chapter could have been more concise and focused, as are other chapters.

Despite these shortcomings, this book is a valuable addition to the existing literature and may help advance our understanding of washback from a sociocultural perspective due to its emphasis on how the effect of washback on learning can be mediated by both learner and societal factors. Through reading this book, teachers and test-takers may gain a valuable opportunity to reflect on the role of learner agency, the importance of appropriate test goals, and effective learning strategies in achieving desired learning outcomes when preparing for examinations (see Zhang, Thomas, & Qin, 2019). This book may also help other stakeholders, such as education policy-makers and business owners, to better understand their use of TOEIC scores. As a whole, researchers and language educators with an interest in language assessment and testing will be quick to find the value of this book in understanding individual test activities and the washback effects of high-stakes standardised language tests.

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BOOK REVIEW

Vocabulary Assessment to Support Instruction: Building Rich Word-Learning Experiences. By M, G. McKeown, P, D. Deane, J, A. Scott, R, Krovetz, and R. R. Lawless (Eds.). New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 2017, xvii, 254 pp., $31.29 (paperback). ISBN: 978-1-4625-3079-3 (e-book).

Vocabulary Assessment to Support Instruction: Building Rich Word Learning Experiences addresses more meaningful vocabulary assessment, learning, and interventions as new ideas underpinning the need to enhance literacy development. The core of this idea bourgeons into well-informed discussions in the volume, culminating in the following issues: the relationship between vocabulary and other entities, such as reading comprehension, writing, and critical thinking; the reconceptualization of the construct of vocabulary; the adaptation of vocabulary assessment to specific circumstances; and the use of technology in vocabulary assessments. The book is composed of eight chapters, which shed light on the key research areas to refine our understanding of the field of vocabulary assessment and teaching.

Glancing into the book, one recognizes that the volume has been successful in corroborating the determinant role of vocabulary knowledge in language achievement and general verbal and argumentation skills through reconceptualizing the term "vocabulary" and criticizing "the default common sense understandings of vocabulary that most people bring with them to teaching" (p. 28). The volume highlights the idea that vocabulary knowledge not only empowers learners' reading and writing skills but also enriches their critical thinking skills through promoting their metacognitive and metalinguistic skills.

From a general standpoint, the book suggests new avenues for vocabulary assessment supporting innovative instructions that would lead to organic and natural vocabulary development. Compared to several relevant books that have appeared in recent years, notably Schmitt (2010) and Meara and Miralpeix (2016), the volume is distinct in its content and scope. In fact, it is an introductory textbook that provides a summary of several vocabulary studies. In contrast to *Tools for Researching Vocabulary* written by Meara and Miralpeix (2016), which is technically specified to a set of computer programs (e.g., V_Words, V_ lists, D_lists, P_ Lex, etc.) designed to guide vocabulary experts to more appealing research avenues, Chapter 7 of the volume provides a more general vision of some technological developments. In this regard, intelligent tutors, such as automated passage selection and automated item generation, have been introduced with the hope of encouraging more nuanced approaches to vocabulary assessment and instruction.

The unique feature that makes the volume different from similar studies mentioned above is that it attempts to provide an interdisciplinary approach toward vocabulary assessment. This objective is fulfilled through amalgamating approaches from three broad disciplines—educational research and measurement, linguistics, and computational linguistics—to benefit from a consensus view of vocabulary assessment. The aforementioned disciplines have rarely been collaborated coherently in recent studies.

Chapter 1 expatiates upon the significance of teaching and assessing vocabulary regarding the critical impact vocabulary development may have on learners' reading comprehension, writing quality, and critical thinking. As its focal point, the chapter highlights the fact that the conventional default understanding of the term "vocabulary" does not give the field of word learning and assessment the attention it really deserves.

Chapter 2 turns to a reconceptualization of the vocabulary construct and puts forward new perspectives for vocabulary acquisition, considering not only individual words but also formulaic language. The chapter diversifies into various topics encompassing three generative patterns of

morphology, syntax, and semantics with the addition of some discussions evaluating the role of metacognitive features of word knowledge. As a coda to the discussion, the chapter concludes with a criticism on the role dictionaries may have in vocabulary acquisition.

In Chapter 3, drawing on the limitations and lack of sensitivity of conventional assessments to measure instructional gains, the authors attempt to provide some information about the current state of vocabulary assessment, the objectives pursued, and the constructs underlying conventional vocabulary assessments to inspire new trajectories beyond the horizons of the traditional vocabulary assessments.

Chapter 4 concisely addresses the features of enhanced assessment through analyzing different word types, item types, and modalities. The authors have discussed priorities in word selection and justified the necessity of including formulaic language, patterns of morphology, and polysemy in the field of vocabulary assessment.

Chapter 5 is devoted to some samples resembling new assessment item types and formats used in assessing different facets of vocabulary knowledge. In other words, the authors discuss the use of word-learning skills, including partial word knowledge and the ability to use word knowledge appropriately in complicated language tasks. As the bottom line, this chapter technically pinpoints "assessing word learning from the context of presented texts through deduction which may lead to a better understanding of the target words rather than texts" (p. 76).

Chapter 6 provides a repertoire of effective classroom instructions that act as a key to learners' success in achieving the ultimate goal of this book, namely, "to become a nation of word learners" (p. 1). Effective vocabulary instruction has been discussed in three major characteristics: establishing word-conscious classroom, providing focused vocabulary instruction, and building metalinguistic awareness of generative patterns. Beyond instructional characteristics, the chapter draws attention to the characteristics of learners through discussing variant forms of English and second-language learners. The final section of the chapter points out the need to align instruction and assessment.

The potential of technology as an effective add-on in developing adaptive and scalable vocabulary assessments is lucidly discussed in dynamic assessments and tutoring systems in Chapter 7. The discussion begins by introducing particular tutoring systems for reading and vocabulary and continues with the description of how they work. The chapter then clarifies some of the technological innovations functioning as the infrastructure of the design of intelligent tutors, such as automated passage selection and automated item generation.

Chapter 8 presents an annotated bibliography of resources that may be useful for teachers, publishers, policy makers, and researchers who are interested in effective vocabulary instruction and assessment. This encompasses a list of online resources, sites (equipped with tools for different vocabulary practices), language blogs, word games and puzzles, reference sites, and an annotated bibliography of published children's literature used to develop word awareness.

Despite its merits, the book has certain constraints. Regarding the content of the book, a number of issues in the field of vocabulary assessment have not been included that deserve further attention. In Chapter 1 it is mentioned that vocabulary knowledge is considered to be "critical not only in mastery of the language you speak, but also to your ability to comprehend text, to learn from text, to express your thoughts in writing in coherent and convincing ways, and to engage in critical thinking" (p. 2). The book provides comprehensive information about the relationship between vocabulary and some other variables, such as reading comprehension, writing quality, and critical thinking. However, the role of vocabulary in learners' speaking and listening skills has not been dealt with in this section. The addition of a new section discussing the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and the other skills could be helpful in better understanding the significant role that vocabulary knowledge plays in language learning.

To develop rich forms of vocabulary assessment, "it may be useful to conceptualize vocabulary depth as vocabulary richness—the idea that as vocabulary knowledge develops, multiple forms of knowledge about words are woven together to form an integrated whole" (pp. 75–76). Perhaps, our understanding of how vocabulary development progresses is shallow. In other words, vocabulary

acquisition theory has not sufficiently developed to lead to the formation of a valid developmental scale. Therefore, devising a valid scale seems to be rather speculative for now(Schmitt, 2010). Accordingly, a more detailed analysis of the characteristics and shortcomings of conventional vocabulary assessment, particularly the problems associated with scalable word assessment, such as *Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS)* designed by Wesche and Paribakht (1996) and Schmitt and Zimmerman scale (2002), seems to be fruitful. Besides, a more comparative and critical discussion of different approaches, including developmental and dimensions (components) approaches tapping into learners' depth of vocabulary knowledge may be helpful; the aforementioned analyses may accentuate the distinctions between conventional and novel assessments more noticeably and, consequently, could carve out a new place for a finer-grained understanding of the priorities, values, and the constraints associated with novel assessments.

In recent years, concerns have been voiced about age-appropriate methodologies and assessments. As a consequence, research in the field of early language learning and assessment has grown considerably (Nikolov, 2016). Although undivided attention to younger language learning and assessment seems to be beyond the patience of the volume, the addition of a separate section specialized to more in-depth discussions on young language learners' vocabulary assessment could make the book more inclusive.

The majority of discussions and examples in the book are bound to the studies conducted in the United States. Perhaps, there is no value judgment in this issue. However, the addition of studies from the other learning environments would lead to the "development of a nation of word learners" in a more comprehensive and generalizable manner (p. 1).

In sum, the authors have done their best to live up to the readers' expectations in an attempt to break the mold by establishing new ways of assessing vocabulary and reducing the existing limitations; however, in its broad perspective, the volume denotes the idea that there is still scope for further fine-tuning the fields of vocabulary assessment and instruction because there is a lot of new ground being broken in the fields (e.g., assessing depth of word knowledge) that may lead to growth in both areas of vocabulary assessment and instruction.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Assessing Chinese learners of English: language constructs, consequences and conundrums, edited by Guoxing Yu and Yan Jin, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, 310 pp., $100 (hardcover), ISBN 978-1-349-55397-6

Despite the long history and fine traditions in using testing and examinations for selection purposes in China, modern theory and practice in foreign language testing did not emerge and thrive until the late 1970s, following the resumption of the National Matriculation Test, known in China as *Gaokao*. The subsequent embrace of the economic reforms and the open-door policy prompted the phenomenal rise of English language teaching, learning, and assessment in China. Today, China has numerous English language tests developed and implemented at national, municipal, and school levels with tens of millions of test-takers every year. Meanwhile, performance on many of these English tests is regarded as 'the key to success' (Cheng, 2008, p. 15), because the results are often used to make high-stakes decisions, such as university admission, employment, and career advancement opportunities (e.g., Fan & Jin, 2013).

Notwithstanding the prominent roles that English language tests play in Chinese society, only a comparatively small body of research is currently available to support their valid uses. Therefore, this volume makes a timely and welcome contribution to deepening the understanding of assessing Chinese learners of English. The two editors bring together varied perspectives from both seasoned researchers and recent PhD graduates on a wide range of crucial issues in relation to the assessment of Chinese learners of English, including but not limited to the constructs targeted by the English assessments, the characteristics of Chinese learners of English, recent assessment innovations and policy changes, and the impacts of English testing on teaching and learning.

There are several commendable qualities to this volume. First, the studies reported in this volume cover a wide range of English language assessments that are currently being used to assess Chinese learners of English, including both large-scale standardised tests (e.g. College English Test-Spoken English Test or CET SET, General English Proficiency Test or GEPT) and school-based and classroom assessments (e.g. the School-Based Assessment or SBA in Hong Kong). Though standardised testing remains one of the foci of this volume, as is the case with other books on the assessment of Chinese learners (e.g. Cheng & Curtis, 2010), several chapters in this volume (e.g. Chapters 9 and 10) are dedicated to formative assessment in the English classroom, suggesting a significant assessment paradigm change in this heavily examination-orientated context. This change is in alignment with the ongoing movement on the global educational landscape of using assessment to support learning (e.g. Gardner & Gardner, 2012). Another distinctive feature with this volume is that it approaches English language assessments from a wide variety of perspectives. Some studies, for example, interrogate the construct validity of English assessments (e.g. Chapters 3 and 4); more studies, however, attempt to understand the characteristics of Chinese learners of English in language learning and assessment (e.g. Chapters 5, 6 and 7), and seek to explore the perceptions of stakeholders to assessment practices and innovations (e.g. Chapters 8, 9 and 10). These studies have explicitly indicated the role of social, cultural, and educational factors in shaping language assessment practices, suggesting that language testing is and always has been a social practice (McNamara & Roever, 2006).

As explained in the first introductory chapter, the objectives of this volume include understanding the language constructs, the assessment methods, Chinese learners' preparation for and performance on English language tests, and the consequences of assessing Chinese learners

of English. The chapters in this volume are organised in four parts and arranged with a view to reflecting the fundamental questions in language assessment, i.e. who, what, how and why to assess. In Chapter 2, Hamp-Lyons provides a fascinating first-hand narrative of the SBA in Hong Kong, regarding its aims and structure, the challenges facing its implementation, as well as the measures that have been adopted to confront these challenges. She concludes that two elements are crucial to the degree of success of the SBA in Hong Kong: a rigorous professional development programme provided to teachers and a carefully developed and validated set of assessment criteria and standards.

The second part of the volume, Chapters 3–7, deals with Chinese learners' performance on English language tests. In Chapter 3, Lam reports a validation study on Group Interaction tasks in the SBA in Hong Kong. His research reveals that though students' performance exhibits the superficial features of authentic interactions, their pre-task planning activities suggest the contrived and pre-scripted nature of such interactions. In the next chapter, Jin and Zhang examine and compare the use of communication strategies in the paired discussion task on the face-to-face interview format and the computer-based CET-SET wherein two test-takers are randomly paired and discuss a given topic through headphones. They observe a high degree of similarity in the quantity and variety of communication strategies used in the two formats, hence lending support to the validity of the computer-based CET-SET.

Chapters 5 and 6 are devoted to features of vocabulary use of Chinese learners of English on spoken English tests. In Chapter 5, Xu reports on a corpus-based study to compare Chinese learners' basic vocabulary in face-to-face interactions with that used by native speakers of English. Through comparing vocabulary use in the College Learners' Spoken English Corpus in China (COLSEC), developed based on the CET-SET, and the British National Corpus (BNC), this study concludes that Chinese EFL learners, in comparison with native speakers, tend to underuse some lexical items such as interaction words and interjection in discourse markers, but tend to overuse conjunction and hesitation. In the next chapter, Wang and Chen investigate the features of formulaic sequences used by Chinese English learners on the story-telling task in Spoken English Test for English Majors – Band 4 (STEM-4). They find that though students can understand the meanings and functions of formulaic sequences they have heard in the story, they tend not to be able to reproduce those sequences verbatim in their own speech; instead, they tend to paraphrase those sequences in their own language with equivalent meaning and function. The findings support the use of story-retelling in assessing learners' ability in comprehension and selection of important information, as well as their ability to use the target language to construct meaningful texts orally.

Rather than focusing on spoken English tests, Tang and Treffers-Daller in Chapter 7 examine the incidental vocabulary acquisition by Chinese learners of English whose English proficiency is estimated at A2 level on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) in an attempt to test the Involvement Load Hypothesis (ILH) proposed by Laufer and Hulstijn (2001). The ILH is based on the idea that incidental vocabulary can be promoted by involving learners in different post-reading tasks which require learners to engage with the words in the text in a variety of ways. Tang and Treffers-Daller find that students learn more words in reading tasks with a higher involvement load than in tasks with a lower involvement load, thus lending support to the ILH. The findings demonstrate the effectiveness of learning vocabulary through reading with enhancement activities. Given the lack of awareness in China of the potential of incidental vocabulary learning, the study has clear pedagogical implications for L2 teaching and learning.

The third part comprises five chapters, centring around the perceptions of major stakeholder groups to language assessment practices and innovations. In response to the paucity of research into user perceptions of automated scoring systems, Xi, Schmidgall and Wang in Chapter 8 conduct a survey of the perceptions of prospective TOEFL iBT test-takers from China to SpeechRater v1.0, an automated scoring system deployed for the TOEFL Practice Online (TPO) test. The

findings identify a satisfactory level of acceptance of using it for low-stakes purposes; however, respondents are in favour of the view that automated scoring should be used in combination with human scoring when the test is used for high-stakes purposes. Chapters 9 and 10 are focused on classroom assessment. In Chapter 9, Qian examines students' views on project-based group assessment (PBGA) in a university in Hong Kong. It is found that compared with first-year students, senior-year students have more positive views on PBGA, though both groups express concerns over its fairness. In the next chapter, Chen and May investigate Chinese university students' reactions to the implementation of formative assessment in College English teaching through a case study. Their research indicates that a number of sociocultural factors influence students' responses to the change of assessment policy.

In Chapter 11, Zheng reports on a study into Chinese students' motivation in learning English and the factors that affect their performance on the CET-4. The study concludes that the students have a variety of motivations, both internal and external, to learn English. Zhang, in the final chapter in this part, compares native and non-native English teachers' perceptions of Standard English and other varieties of English. She finds that native speaker teachers are more open-minded about the use of different varieties of English than their non-native speaking counterparts who prefer Standard English. The findings have implications for English language assessment as teachers' attitudes towards Standard English may result in different assessment criteria that they apply to evaluate students' performance. This study is particularly meaningful in the context where large-scale language testing programmes tend to expand their rater pools by employing non-native speakers (e.g., Winke, Gass, & Myford, 2013).

The last part consists of two chapters, addressing the issue of impacts and consequences of language tests. The study reported by Lin looks at how the implementation of the graduation requirement in Taiwan universities has affected students and the English curriculum. She finds that the influence of the GEPT is much reinforced by the implementation of this requirement and the perceived importance of this test in Taiwan society. The final chapter by Gu and Saville presents two studies on the impacts of Cambridge English examinations on English language teaching and learning in China. They find that test-takers have positive attitudes to the tests under study, and are highly motivated to take the tests; the negative impacts they identify include test anxiety and a marked 'test-oriented' approach in their test preparation.

Through weaving together a number of studies, this volume has succeeded in portraying a multifaceted, thought-provoking picture of assessing Chinese learners of English, for different purposes and in diverse contexts. The studies reported in this volume not only provide insight into the validity of some English language assessments that are currently being used to assess Chinese learners of English, but shed light on the dynamics between language assessment practices and the broader social, cultural and educational context.

This book is essential reading for everyone who wants to gain insight into the assessment of Chinese learners of English. Educational assessment practitioners and researchers will find it useful for them to extend their understanding of the characteristics of Chinese learners of English, the validity of English language assessments, and recent assessment innovations. Language educators will find useful ideas which they can readily apply to classroom teaching and assessment. Graduate students will find it a valuable source for their research. All in all, it is a welcome addition to the literature on assessing Chinese learners of English.

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Book Reviews

HEARING AND READING

Hearing Things: The Work of Sound in Literature. By ANGELA LEIGHTON. Harvard University Press, 2018; £25.95 ($35).

Reader, do you vocalise as you read? Do you hear the words? Sound them out? Or are you so used to eye-reading that the ear recedes in the slide of words into symbolic representation? To the great theorist of orality, Walter Ong, reading 'means converting it to sound, aloud or in the imagination'; auditory memory is always at work (*Orality and Literacy*, 1982). His own sentence speaks in sonics: *sound, aloud*. 'Take breath and read it with the ears', Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote in 1879 to Robert Bridges. If 'taking breath' is 'inspiration', it exhales in voicing – or reading voices, as Garrett Stewart worked it out for us thirty years ago in *Reading Voices* – and hasn't stopped since.

Hearing things? The phrase hears itself in *ingthings*. The phrase also vibrates with an ambiguity that William Empson calls double grammar (*Seven Types of Ambiguity*): 'hearing things' might indicate rumours in the ear, portentous murmurs, emerging news, or substantive presence (a thing) that may be communicating, or just sounding off. Or, by an Empsonian double-play, the phrase might denote a thing with capacity to hear, a receptor of sounds in a circuit of communication that may or may not include human ears. The title of Angela Leighton's latest, admirable, book is evocative, for sure, and I'll have more to say about this line of allure.

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For now, I want to situate it with a prequel, a startling moment from E. E. Francillon's Gothic-toned novel, *A Real Queen* (1883), which taps into sounding, at the limit of where sensible accounting blurs into spectral intuition, to enrich the fancy of 'seeing things' with 'hearing things':

> '... Please don't shut yourself up to-day; I don't like to go about the house alone. *We* don't believe in ghosts, of course – not in real ones: but I've been fancying myself seeing things ever since breakfast, and hearing things too: and I don't like it at all'.
>
> 'Hearing things! What things?'
>
> 'Strange voices, and things like those. I wouldn't go back through the lumber room and along the passage, alone, for the world. It seemed as if people were talking in your castle – not out loud, nor whispering, but between. I thought you never *would* open the door!'
>
> Rosamond's heart was sinking deeper and deeper – she had forgotten that stone walls have voices, and that Sophy had ears as well as eyes. 'Voices?' she asked in a faint voice, that harmonised well with the touch of panic in her sister's humour. 'What did they say?'
>
> 'That was the worst of it', said Sophy. 'I couldn't make out a single word. Do you think the house *is* haunted? I should lose my senses if I was to sit all alone in a dark, empty room, like you. I *must* come in, till you're ready to go. I feel as if that horrible wretch they're trying to find was coming down the passage after me. Do come into the garden, Rosamond – it's sunshine there'. (I.VII)

Wise Sophy deftly deflects a ghost as a 'real' thing with sceptical common sense: 'We don't believe in ghosts'. But in the phenomenology, 'seeing things' can be reinforced by 'hearing things'. Rosamond's focus on Sophy's *eyes* nicely sets up her asking in a harmonised voice. Two figurings in this scene, one perceptual and one conjectural, matter to Leighton's territory. There's the threshold of a door (her chapter 2), a barrier to certain intelligence, even with certainty of something there. Stone walls do not a prison make, it turns out; stone walls have voices that penetrate. And the summoned by Leig her essential gramm

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What is 'the work of sound in literature'? she asks. It's often *as if*. 'Your *If* is the only peacemaker: much virtue in *If*', advises Touchstone in *As You Like it*. Leighton senses *as if* as the necessary angel. The syntax appears well over a hundred times in the chapters' 272 pages, sometimes with the subjunctive, sometimes neglecting this, on the way to an upgrade of declaratives, with allies of *indeed, in fact, of course, certainly, thus*, and *for*. I wish that Leighton had pulled this favoured syntax forward for comment. Of potential help is Hans Vaihinger's *Philosophy of 'As If'* (1911). In the gambit of conjecture, the simile-cue for cognition, *as* (he argues) adds an *if* that, while conceding 'something unreal or impossible', advances an 'apperceptive construct'; an 'impossible case' gets 'posited for the moment as possible or real' (even, I'd say, *as if* possible or real'). Juridically, the difference between hearing things in the noisy day and in the quiet night, in the roar of the city or in the quiet of the mountains, in garden sunshine or in a dark room, matters. An illusion of hearing cannot make a claim to testimonial evidence, as Vaihinger's contemporary Hans Gross put the case in *Criminal Psychology* (1911), soon excerpted in J. H. Wigmore's textbook, *The Principles of Judicial Proof* (1913).

Writing as a literary interpreter and not a systematic philosopher, Leighton is keenly engaged with how critics, theorists, and philosophers of phonics have regarded aurality and literacy. Words on a page, she proposes, produce 'a ghostly activity, a calling or conjuring up of speech literally unspoken, but heard in the infinite layers of remembered usage, actual and literary'. This is a boundary, or borderland, for imagination. In such an auditorium, silence matters, too, as syncopation of sound, a punctuated binary to the verbal or phonic. I thought of how Shelley ends *Mont Blanc*: 'And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea, / If to the human mind's imaginings / Silence and solitude were vacancy?' Human *imaginings* is the final chime of the opening line's '*everlasting* universe of *things*', for which the mind may be only a contingent receptor. Paradoxically, Shelley implies, it is a human mind that imagines this, too, with an

argument: would a sublimity of silence and solitude obtain, unless a human mind, this poet's mind, were contemplating its own nullity? It's more than a rhetorical question.

I am also mindful of how tuned is Keats, master of heard melodies and those unheard, to what sounds in the ear, more endeared. He images his absorbing brother Tom's spell of comfort, on a birthday evening, his eyes 'fixed, as in poetic sleep, / Upon the lore so voluble and deep' in a book at hand; *voluble*: 'fluent of words', says Johnson's *Dictionary*. Likely in Keats's thoughts, even as allusion, is one of Wordsworth's 'Personal Talk' sonnets. This poet finds in books 'Matter wherein right voluble am I / To which I listen with a ready ear'. This poet is the voluble one; in Keats's scene, the book is the voluble actor, speaking to a ready ear. As both poets know, *voluble* winds its etymology with *volume*, the one a turning of the tongue, the other a rolled page. Keats brings *voluble* into his poetry only once more, to convey a pained suppression of speech, elaborated by a twin to *as if*. This is Madeline's foreplay with an expected dream-lover:

> No utter'd syllable, or, woe betide!
> But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
> Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
> As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
> Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.
>
> (*Eve of St. Agnes*)

The poetry pulses *her heart, her heart* for us to hear. The verb *hear* is no *utter'd syllable*, but registers visually for the eye and ear, like the readable rhyme of *Paining I in vain* – neither spoken nor whispered, but between, heart-heard.

To return to Leighton's *Hearing Things*. It's not that 'The sound must seem an echo to the sense' (Pope's *Essay on Criticism*). Her argument, mining a still rich lode, is that sound *is* sense, sensation in presence. At its most basic evocation, this is onomatopoeia: the signifier is the signified. Leighton has a care for this, but her keenest interest is the motor of sound with a promise of information that beckons the ear.

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Hearing Things continues an experiment in book form that Leighton began in *On Form: Poetry, Aestheticism and the Legacy of a Word* (2007). The project is not a master-narrative so much as a conceptual field for an accretive interrelating of essays', several explorations on various paths, assembled from work over the past decade or so: articles, lectures, conference papers, meditations on her reading. Nine chapters, ranging compactly from twenty to thirty pages, work through these engagements, treating an impressive range of poetry, fiction, letters, and critical essays. Though related to reading as hearing, these stand (true to their origins) just as ably on their own, as an anthology for pleasurable browsing. Many chapters will open new territory to most readers: W. S. Graham's letters, Walter de la Mare (happily recovered for new attention), Edward Thomas, Les Murray, Alice Oswald. There are new angles on poets we likely do know, illuminated by Leighton's fine attention: if Tennyson and Hopkins seem inevitable, there are surprising visits with Christina Rossetti, Woolf, Frost, Yeats, Bishop. The framework is a theory-minded introduction – 'Sound's Work.' (I'm tempted to hear a contraction as well as a possessive) – a first chapter, 'Listening Thresholds', and a philosophical closing chapter, symmetrically syntaxed as 'Poetry's Knowing'. Though theory-savvy, these bookends are threaded with exemplary readings, and show what generous, generative company Leighton is.

She is exceptionally qualified as a scholar, an academic critic, a writer for audiences beyond academe, and, not least, as an admired poet. Her latest collection is *Spills* (2016), preceded by *The Messages* (2012) and *Sea Level* (2011). Her critical ventures are *On Form*, preceded by pioneering work in women's literature in the British nineteenth century – her edition (with Margaret Reynolds) of *Victorian Women Poets* (1995), her monograph on the conflicts of passion and profession visited on some of these poets, *Writing Against the Heart* (1992), and the probing *Elizabeth Barrett Browning* (1986). That Leighton can manage a lucid and literate account of the critical, historical, theoretical, interpretative issues that focus academic discussion is one of the collegial resources of *Hearing Things*, evident in her first monograph, *Shelley and the Sublime* (1984). That she

writes as a poet who mea ures every line, weighs every word, gives her critical work a grace, craft, and texture that I've enjoyed in others with such double careers: John Hollander and Susan Stewart, for instance.

Chapter 1, 'Listening Thresholds' (gerund, again), probes borders that are at once a limit and an opening (a frustration and an invitation) – but also with the sense that such borders may themselves be agents of listening. Leighton offers an arresting reading of Christina Rossetti's 'A Green Cornfield' as a space of listening for a bird, the speaker, the poet, and ultimately the reader – all this a very fine preview for Stevens's 'The Snow Man', that famed seer of 'nothing', but here, to Leighton's ear, a listener in the snow, at cross-purposes with the eye. And then a lovely example, via 'Some One', of why we might want to return to the poetry of Walter de la Mare, whose best-known collection, after all, is *The Listeners* (1912), and who turns out to be a champion of Leighton's care for 'the ghost presence ... signaled by things heard rather than seen', and of how a text (prose, too, as in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*) may become a 'listening space itself'.

Tennyson, whose love of the sound may be rivalled in the nineteenth century only by Hopkins, focuses chapter 2, 'Tennyson's Hum': the murmur of things heard, but indecipherable or otherworldly. The heart of the chapter is an extended reading of *The Lover's Tale* (1832) – not the usual stop at, say, 'Break, break, break', 'Tears, Idle Tears', or 'The Lotos-Eaters' – but what we expect by now from *Hearing Things*: the poet whose hums, early and late, 'evoke sounds over and above those of articulacy and communication', acoustics that insinuate a different order of knowing (Leighton's last chapter already afoot). A companion chapter (3), 'Humming Tennyson', sounds out Tennyson in the imaginations of Rossetti and Woolf (who also listens to Rossetti), two poets who find themselves (in both the casual and the revelatory sense) in listening, walking and writing to the hum of another, as poetic memory, listened to 'like a lovely continuing temptation of sound', with a 'ghostly rebound of a chime or echo'. For both poets, writing itself proves a mode of listening,

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Yeats is next (chapter 4): surprisi gly the poet of horses, in the rhythm of percussive hooves, as d as history, with a sense of ominous portent in the present – 'the calls and recalls of sound' (oddly, the precedent of Wo dsworth's 'Strange fits of passion' is not on her radar here). T is course wends through several sites and, inevitably, to 'U der Ben Bulben', where horsemen are bid pass by, but not wit out capture in the poetry, for our listening. Chapter 5 is a joyo us experiment in reading (again) de la Mare, Frost, and the mutual friend Edward Thomas, joined in echoes, recalls, ar the figures of phantom listening, doubly unreal yet present a a ghost. The call of the peacock, 'Coo-ee' (de la Mare's 'Peac ck Pie'), proves companionable inspiration for de la Mare nd Thomas, the data of hearing blended into poetic recalling. On this trio, this chapter progresses by zigzags, but in the angle abide real treats. It's not everyone who can give a new hearin to Frost's 'Stopping by Woods'; Leighton does, especially i the Empsonics of what 'stopping by' might mean, and what o make of the diminishing, repeated last lines, 'And miles to g before I sleep'.

Chapter 6 is another essay on de l Mare, this time a story, *The Green Room*, a listening and w ndering if there is 'a listener behind that door', a space where words ('arch') return like revenants, humming with understor s that subvert habitual ways of knowing, and keeping us li tening to listening. This bridges smartly to chapter 7, where Leighton convenes three poets – Frost (again), Bishop (agai), and Jorie Graham – around the apparition of the word *be uty*, no less opaque than addictive, 'knocking at the door of its own meaning, in question rather than in confirmation'. Leighto n intriguingly joins this sensation to the lure of the word *some ing* – famously in Frost: 'something there is that does not lov a wall'; *For once, then Something* – as a sound, a rhythm o thinking, a thing to be heard more than resolved into definitio n.

Chapter 8 takes up W. S. Graham' art of the letter (epistolary) as an attenuated communicatio projected at a listener. As a stand-alone essay it's engaging, ut it struck me, on the general line of 'a text destined for th ear of the reader', as a

stretch of necessity for this book. So, too, chapter 9, on how Les Murray's poetry teases 'incarnation' as the trope of language in the ear, to find a straining of religious import with the sheer, queer noises in the air. As a chapter in *Hearing Things*, it tends to redundancy, even though I can see that Leighton wants to set up chapter 10, on rhythm as a pre-verbal (or radically non-verbal) baseline of hearing things. There is a lively turn to clocks and poems, now metronomic, now rhythmic, in the work of poetry as aural apprehension.

Leighton's closing chapter (11), a sort of summa, considers what poetry knows, and how it knows, in the aspect of what she calls a 'non-philosophe'. Poetry works, she argues, as continuous process, tentative, unfinished – an activity of thinking rather than a result or resolution of thinking. Hard to disagree, but I'm left wondering how Leighton's master-trope, hearing things, is the necessary force in this adventure, which seems more general and miscellaneous.

The subject of Leighton's interest is attractive. I appreciate her desire to 'call for' attention that seems to her 'often overlooked' (a good pun, this) or even to have fallen away; but her advertisement doesn't fully recognise the lively bibliography of interlocutors on sound-work, at least three decades of pretty sharp attention to the cause, beginning, dazzlingly, with Garrett Stewart's *Reading Voices* (1990), a fascinating, revelatory tracing of the 'churn of wording beneath and between the chain of words'. Though his acutely attentive work is occasionally noted and complimented for being smart enough to 'catch' something, its influence (with several sequels) is too lightly noticed, assuming the results of his close listening, even his witty formulations, as givens (worth repeating). Peter McDonald's *Sound Intentions* (2012), with fine readings of poets about whom Leighton cares too, might have compelled fuller engagement. And Donald Wesling's wonderfully sounded *The Chances of Rhyme* (1980) is completely absent.

No one can take on everything without becoming muscle-bound. Yet *Hearing Things* also can't help but recall kin-titles. Most conspicuous for me because Stanley Cavell appears in the last chapter of *Hearing Things* as a theorist of hearing and listening for whom visual metaphors take over, is Timothy

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Emily Dickinson's Poe
CRISTANNE MILLER. The
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Gould's *Hearing Things: Voice and Method in the Writing of Stanley Cavell* (1998). Gould's interest is the performative (rather than purely analytical) philosopher, with 'the emergence of voice as a theme for philosophy and as an aspect of a philosophical method' in a field whose discipline 'has made itself barren of selves and selfhood' – so perhaps not relevant beyond the title to Leighton's field of interest. There is also Leigh Eric Schmidt's *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion, and the American Enlightenment* (2000), about the force of auditory immediacy in faith, in relay with sceptical, scientific doubt. That Harvard University Press was the publisher of this makes it odd that its advisers and Leighton missed the duplication and didn't think to desynonymise (Coleridge's term) here line of interest. Perhaps this is another way of saying that the notion of 'hearing things' is rich and irresistible – always in the air, and in this case beautifully caught and audited, with Leighton's considerable skill, for our reading and reflection.

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doi:10.1093/escrit/egy031

DICKINSON'S VOICE

Emily Dickinson's Poems: As She Preserved Them. Edited by CRISTANNE MILLER. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016; $39.95.

Without doubt the most existential of challenges to face Dickinson scholars is the absence of a stable edition. There is no absence of *editions*: Todd and Higginson, Johnson and Franklin, the Dickinson Archive and now Miller all present a poet characterised by variant timings and pace. For Dickinson's works, left only in manuscript – hardwritten in ambiguous fashion – have caused long-lasting tensions for literary critics and editors. Where to draw the line, when Dickinson draws no line, between a new stanza and a new poem? How to decide between dash and comma, full stop and blot?

Essays in Criticism, Vol. LXIX, No. 1, January 2019

Book Reviews

THE SACREDNESS OF WORDS

Faith in Poetry: Verse Style as a Mode of Religious Belief. By MICHAEL D. HURLEY. Bloomsbury, 2018; $94.

As Mark Edmundson has wryly pointed out, while there are any number of Marxist readings of William Blake, we have yet to see a Blakean reading of Marx. Michael Hurley, on the other hand, is more concerned about the paucity of Blakean readings of Blake himself. In *Faith in Poetry* he seeks to provide an alternative to theory-driven, 'suspicious' readings of Blake, Alfred Tennyson, Christina G. Rossetti, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and T. S. Eliot by giving precedence to what they had to say about their own work. Throughout, he emphasises each poet's attention to prosody, and raises, but fails to answer, a fundamental question about the nature of religious poetry.

Hurley clearly subscribes to C. S. Lewis's dictum in *A Preface to Paradise Lost* that 'the first qualification for judging any piece of workmanship from a corkscrew to a cathedral is to know *what* it is: what it was intended to do, and how it was meant to be used ... as long as you think the corkscrew was meant for opening tins or the cathedral for entertaining tourists you can say nothing to the purpose about them'. Hence his Blakean reading of Blake, which seeks to examine the poet's 'method on its own terms rather than according to its apparent fit with other recognized methods'. In a similar way, Hurley insists that 'to get a surer grip on Tennyson's word music, it is necessary to inspect his strategies close up'. After listing a bewildering variety of possible readings of Rossetti's 'Goblin Market' – sexual, feminist, political, consumerist, even vampiric – he notes that 'no consensus has emerged, which might just be the

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most compelling clue to the poem: that it is not meant to be read as interpretable allegory at all', before going on to remind us that Hopkins's 'breath-stress poetics' dictates that his work should be read with one's ears as well as with one's eyes, 'experienced as incarnational and processive, given body and life in the act of reading'. By the final chapter, Hurley's cautionary tale of Donald Davie's retraction of a decades-old reading of Eliot's 'The Dry Salvages', in which Davie condemned his former self for being 'too sophisticated' and for being distracted by his own critical ingenuity from the poem on which he was putting it to use, comes as no surprise.

As opposed to engaging in a hermeneutic of suspicion, which, in his estimation, will 'likely end up telling us rather more about our own kinds of faith than those of the poets we are reading', Hurley practises a more generous form of criticism, in which he attempts to read poems 'on their own terms', strongly suggesting throughout that the poets who produced them will be able to tell us more about these terms than any other authority. While his method is both morally and intellectually appealing in the way it seeks to grant credit where credit is due, it still raises an important question that he leaves largely unexplored: is a poet's reading of his or her own poem definitive?

The answer to this question is, in fact, 'No'. While Hurley does occasionally admit that poets may be mistaken or misleading about their poetry (in some cases, at least, 'we cannot simply take Blake at his word'), his book as a whole over-emphasises the conscious power that poets have over words. This error of proportion may have something to do with the fact that all of the poets in the book are 'consummate verse stylists', even if in a cussed way: for example, Eliot's 'gimlet-eyed attention as a writer' in *The Waste Land* is expressed in 'fiddly tweaks' attempting to 'distress if not sever the poem's prosodical and narrative lines'. Moreover, such tweaks, whether careful in producing artful dishevelment or the most musically flowing lines, are not performed for their own sake: Hurley's poets unanimously make claims to the authenticity and sincerity of their poetry. Blake is not shy about calling himself 'inspired' as opposed to one of the 'blockheads' who merely 'Copy one

another'; a few generations later, Rossetti is similarly interested in setting herself on the side of those who truly have something to say, and is 'very resolute in setting a line of demarcation between a person who is a poet and another person who is a versifier'. Neither Blake nor Rossetti nor any of the other poets discussed here subscribes to the belief that a careful attention to craft is incompatible with a sincere desire to express deeply felt and held convictions; rather, as Hurley explains in his discussion of Hopkins's poetics, 'the "matter and meaning" can no more exist without shape than the shape can without it. Poetry succeeds through this mutually supportive combination'. In Hurley's reading, like Odysseus, the poets in his book 'speak with art', but their 'intent is honest'.

However, such a view is, to put it charitably, pretty optimistic about the power of human beings vis-à-vis language. No less a poet than Dante mourned his inability to communicate his deepest emotions and highest ecstasy in *terza rima*: how sure can we be that Tennyson or Hopkins has produced verses that truly convey grief, joy, and his most far-reaching vision? And, even if we do grant that they or the other poets discussed here have been successful in marrying their art to their intent, might it not be the case that sometimes words mean more than the writer knew they meant? The criticism here is not so much that Hurley's method has its limitations. It's more that he doesn't admit or even glance at what those limitations might be, and this in a book where he sharply criticises methods he chooses not to employ: it may occur to his reader that the same gimlet eye might have been applied, at least in passing, to his own work.

Rigour again becomes a concern when we turn to a question central to his enterprise: what is religious poetry, after all? Hurley could have chosen to answer this question with reference to Eliot's distinction in 'Religion and Literature' between 'a poet who is treating of the whole subject matter of poetry in a religious spirit' and 'a poet who is dealing with a confined part of this subject matter', or to the mature Hopkins's gloomy certainty that his calling as a priest and his talent as a poet could not but come into conflict. Instead, Hurley sets himself a more negative task and shows what religious poetry is *not*,

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demonstrating at different times that religious poetry does not have to be devotional (Blake's is markedly lacking in this respect), and that it does not need to be wholly celebratory or confessional: the work of three of the poets at least – that of Tennyson, Hopkins, and Eliot – is suffused with real and often painful doubt. For those who need to learn such a lesson, Hurley also shows – especially in the case of Rossetti – that religious poetry is not necessarily a series of euphemisms for either sexual fulfilment or frustration.

Hurley is much less clear about what religious poetry *is*. A generous reading of his work here could be that he is (unconsciously) following the lead of ancient Confucian thinkers, who, as the late Wm. Theodore de Bary put it, wanted 'not so much to analyze and define concepts precisely as to expand them, make them suggestive of the widest range possible of meaning'. However, this reading fails when one realises that Hurley does in fact define religious poetry in an exclusive way that then seems to exclude some of the very poets he has chosen to identify as religious, explaining that 'all Blake's poetry must be deemed religious, insofar as all of it is kindled by a sense of social justice, right living and a correct estimation of humanity, as well as man's relation to God'. He then fails to apply this definition in a sustained or attentive way to any of the other poetry in the book; to the contrary, social justice does not emerge as a central or even peripheral theme in his discussion of any of his other poets.

Furthermore, there seems to be some confusion as to what *kind* of faith is involved in religious poetry. Hurley claims, firstly, that 'poets profess their faith in poetry by trusting it to say and do things that could not otherwise be said or done', and secondly that Christian poets compound their creative burden by making 'their art accountable to the immanent stringencies of the artisan, but also the transcendent truths of their God'. It is not at all clear that Tennyson meets the second criterion; by Hurley's own account, Tennyson's 'theological investment is thin, repairing to verse as an end in itself, for its meliorating metres, rather than for its capacity to mediate higher, spiritual "satisfactions"'. Hurley is on his strongest ground when he links all five of his poets together as 'avow[ing] different kinds

of Christian faith in different ways'. Perhaps staying focused on this one thread, instead of trying to weave a more elaborate web, would have led to a more coherently organised discussion; as things stand, it's not at all clear what Hurley thinks religious poetry is, even if we can be sure what he thinks it doesn't have to do or be.

Nonetheless, it is indubitably the case that his poets are Christian, and poetically engaging with their faith in their different ways. And it is here that we come to the great value of Hurley's book: it sheds light on an enormous wealth of religious experience, practice, thought, and emotion, with three highly valuable, and not mutually exclusive, possible outcomes for the reader. First, in the words of William Empson, great literature and art can give us sympathetic access to systems of belief that are not our own: at a time when fewer and fewer people in the West are professing affiliation with Christianity, the poets in Hurley's book can convey an idea of why someone with both sense and sensibility might align himself with Christian teachings. Second, and more tantalisingly, given the breadth of style and substance Hurley covers, even secularised readers might find some of their own hitherto unexpressed thoughts or feelings articulated in the poems he chooses to incorporate. Third, and more tantalisingly still, some readers may find their horizons expanded as a result of engaging with the verses included here. This possibility becomes explicit in Hurley's citation of Rowan Williams's claim that, when we play and experiment with language, as either writers or readers, 'we may not only find out unexpected ways of saying what we wish to "say", we may find out thoughts and feelings we never knew we wished to think or feel in the first place'. In other words, assuming a humbler and less sceptical attitude towards both the metaphysics and aesthetics of great poetry might actually teach us something new.

The intensely personal and yet polished nature of the work of all five of the poets here shows what human beings are capable of when they avow their different kinds of faith in their different kinds of ways. As Dante told us long ago, *vostr'arte a Dio quasi è nipote*: art is the grandchild of God. The poets in

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Boston University

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Boston University CATHERINE HUDAK KLANCER

doi:10.1093/escrit/cgz005

HOME IS SO SAD

Philip Larkin: Letters Home 1936 1977. Edited by JAMES BOOTH. Faber & Faber, 2018; £40.

Philip Larkin wrote some 4,000 letters and cards to his Mother ('Mop', 'My very dear old creature'), his father ('Pop'), and his sister Catherine ('Kitty'). James Booth has selected 607. On the whole they reveal a warmly affectionate family relationship:

> Dear Mop and Pop,
>
> ... Your letter was very nice, and not at all a dry one! I'm so glad Pop has got the 'E. T.' Lawrence book – it was a gap in our library – Pop's I mean. I have bought a book for him, which he may not enjoy, for Xmas. By this time Kitty will doubtless have arrived; tell her I stupidly sent a letter to Cedar Road, but doubtless it will follow her home. Is Auntie Nellie coming? (18 December 1943)

Sometimes, but rarely, it blossoms into more than that:

> My dear Mop,
>
> It was so kind of you to write as soon as you got back; I must also write to you and say how I liked seeing you. I don't think it was very nice of me not to have a present or even a card for you, so I can only reiterate that I wish you all you deserve in 1944. Which is quite a lot. For sheer, unselfish, unremitting, uncomplaining labour of love, I've never known anyone like you, and I do hope some day soon you will be rewarded. I think of you a lot, and love your letter and emaciated creatures. (13 January 1944)

10/12/2019

द्रौपदी के नजरिये से युद्ध की प्रस्तुति

पुस्तक : द्रौपदी की महाभारत
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अनुवाद : आशुतोष गर्ग
प्रकाशन : मंजुल



जिन मानदंडों पर महाभारत युद्ध लड़ा गया था, उनकी उपमा आज भी दी जाती है। इसलिए महाभारत ग्रंथ की प्रासंगिकता आज भी है। महाभारत की एक प्रमुख पात्र द्रौपदी भी हैं, जिनके बारे में यदा-कदा यह कह दिया जाता है कि महाभारत की सूत्रधार वे ही थीं। लेखिका चित्रा बनर्जी दिवाकरुणी ने अपनी किताब 'द पैलेस ऑफ इलूजन' में द्रौपदी के अंतर्मन को प्रस्तुत करते हुए महाभारत को अलग तरह से व्याख्यायित किया है। हिंदी में इसका अनुवाद 'द्रौपदी की महाभारत' के रूप में अनूदित है, जो जागरण बेस्टसेलर भी है।

ईर्ष्या, स्वार्थ, महत्वाकांक्षा की पूर्ति के लिए दो भाइयों के बीच भयंकर युद्ध लड़ा गया, जिसमें पुरुषार्थ के साथ-साथ कुटिल योजना, छल, अपमान, द्वेष आदि जैसे नकारात्मक भावों का भी पूरा सहयोग लिया गया। पांचाल नरेश द्रुपद की पुत्री हैं द्रौपदी, जो बाद में पांच पांडवों की पत्नी पांचाली बनती हैं। द्रुपद ने द्रौपदी को वरदान स्वरूप पाया था। किताब में द्रौपदी के बचपन, भाई व सखा कृष्ण के साथ उसका भावनात्मक रिश्ता, किन परिस्थितियों में पांचों पांडवों से विवाह हुआ, किन अंतर्द्वंद्वों और भावों आदि से वह जूझ रही थीं, को एक स्त्री के नजरिये से पेश किया गया है। द्रौपदी और कुंती के बीच हुआ संवाद भी द्रौपदी के नजरिये को पेश करता है। सरल व रोचक शैली में लिखी गई किताब पाठक को अंत तक बांधे रखने में सफल है। अनुवाद भी बढ़िया है।

हिंदुस्तान

-66-

विविधतापूर्ण अतीत की असाधारण बौद्धिक यात्रा

प्रसिद्ध विचारक सुनील खिलनानी ने एक समय जी.बी.सी. रेडियो-4 के लिए भारत के पचास महत्वपूर्ण ऐतिहासिक व्यक्तित्वों पर एक संवाद शृंखला तैयार की थी, जिसे संकलित करते हुए 'अवतरण: भारत के पचास ऐतिहासिक व्यक्तित्व' पुस्तक का संयोजन किया गया है। मूलतः यह किताब ओजी में 'इनकारनेशन' नाम से कुछ वर्ष पूर्व प्रकाशित हो चुकी है। नीलम भट्ट द्वारा किए गए हिंदी अनुवाद के माध्यम से खिलनानी के विचारोत्तेजक रूप को हिंदी पाठकों के सामने लाने का सफल प्रयास किया गया है।

'अवतरण' विद्वतापूर्ण ढंग से भारत की विविधता और अनूठेपन को समेटे हुए इस देश की सांस्कृतिक बनावट पर अपना ध्यान केंद्रित करती है, जिसमें पिछले ढाई हजार सालों के इतिहास की यात्रा की गई है। इस यात्रा में धार्मिक विचारकों, स्वतंत्रता संग्राम सेनानियों, कवियों, राजे-महाराजाओं, चित्रकारों, गणितज्ञों, समाज सुधारकों, क्रांतिकारियों समेत पूंजीपतियों तक के जीवन का जायजा लिया गया है। एक सांस्कृतिक बहुरूपी छवि-निर्माण करने की कोशिश, जिसमें भारत समग्रता में बेहद प्रभावशाली ढंग से अपनी भूमिका के साथ मौजूद है। खिलनानी इस तर्क की ओर भी इशारा करते हैं कि किताब में मौजूद किरदारों पर जो गहन विचार-विमर्श संभव हुआ है, वे पिछली सहस्राब्दी से बौद्धिक विनिमय के अग्र नायक रहे आए हैं। साथ ही, वे सब ऐसे देश में हुए, जहां विश्व के चार महान धर्मों हिंदू, बौद्ध, ईसाई और इस्लाम ने अलग-अलग समय पर बड़े क्षेत्रों पर शासन किया था।

भारत की वैश्विक सांस्कृतिक नीति में कैसी जगह होनी चाहिए, इन पचास व्यक्तित्वों के माध्यम से सुनील खिलनानी इस प्रश्न का जवाब हासिल करने की कोशिश करते हैं। 'अवतरण' की भूमिका में लेखक का विचार है कि भारत के मिथकों, अनगिनत कहानियों और नैतिक महाकाव्यों के बावजूद भारतीय इतिहास एक ऐसा क्षेत्र रहा है, जिसमें व्यक्तित्व मौजूद नहीं है। इस तर्क के हवाले से यह किताब एक दिलचस्प पाठ बन जाती है कि आप इन पचास प्रेरक जीवनियों के बहाने यह परख सकें कि इनमें कौन से अन्य चरित्र और हो सकते हैं, जिनके नायकत्व को यहां मूल्यांकित किया जा सके। किताब पढ़ते हुए बीसवीं शताब्दी की तमाम महान उपस्थितियों में कुछ बड़े नाम छूटते से लगते हैं, जिनका होना शायद भारत के सांस्कृतिक इतिहास को समृद्ध ही बनाता। साहित्यकारों के संदर्भ में खिलनानी पूर्वज परंपरा में बसव, अमीर खुसरो, कबीर और मीराबाई के बाद सीधे टैगोर, इकबाल और मंटो तक आते हैं। यह जिज्ञासा मन में उठती है कि क्या इस अवधारणा में प्रेमचंद या निराला का कोई स्थान बन सकता था? इसी तरह संगीत की दुनिया में एकमात्र सुब्बुलक्ष्मी जी का जीवन चरित्र उकेरा गया है, जो सम्मानजनक है, बावजूद इसके हजारों सालों की परंपरा में रचे गए इस पाठ में यह बात अखरती है कि तानसेन, त्यागराजा या बहुत बाद के कुछ बड़े गायक, कलावंत उस्ताद इस सूची में आने से क्यों वंचित रहे हैं?

इन कमियों से इतर, खिलनानी बेहद सूक्ष्मता के साथ अपनी इस श्रृंखला को उन नायकों के संदर्भ में विकसित करते हैं, जिनके चलते भारत को अपनी सांस्कृतिक व सामाजिक छवि की सपरस आवाज को बुलंद करने का एक सार्वकालिक मौका हासिल है। वे गौतम बुद्ध, महावीर, मीराबाई, बसवन्ना, कौटिल्य, आर्यभट्ट या आदिगुरु शंकराचार्य के बारे में लिखते हुए सचेत ढंग से इस बात के प्रति प्रतिबद्ध हैं कि बृहद स्तर पर सामाजिक, राजनीतिक बदलावों के संदर्भ में इन हस्तियों की ऐतिहासिकता क्या रही है? यही हाल शासकों के संदर्भ में भी उल्लेखनीय है, जब वे अशोक, अकबर, शिवाजी, दाराशिकोह, कृष्णदेव राय और रानी लक्ष्मीबाई के समग्र अवदान को भारतीय इतिहास की जटिलता के तौर पर देखते हैं। सत्ता के शीर्ष चरित्रों का समकालीन अर्थों में आकलन करते हुए उन्होंने महात्मा गांधी, जिन्ना, आंबेडकर, सुभाषचंद्र बोस और शेख अब्दुल्ला से संबंधित अध्यायों को अत्यंत तर्कपूर्ण ढंग से लिखा है। यह सारे निबंध एक ऐसे बौद्धिक द्वारा लिखे गए हैं, जिनकी प्रासंगिकता बरसों बाद तक बनी रहने वाली है।

'अवतरण' के सबसे सुंदर अध्याय वे हैं, जिन व्यक्तित्वों पर बेहद कम बात होती है। ऐसे में खिलनानी बेहतरीन ढंग से कुछ नायाब रचते हुए सामने आते हैं, जब वे पिछली शताब्दी के सबसे बड़े फोटोग्राफर और कोलोनियल इंडिया में आभिजात्य के प्रतीक लाला दीनदयाल का जीवन लिखते हैं। इसी श्रेणी में भारतीय लघु चित्रकला शैली के विलक्षण चित्रकार नैनसुख और फिल्मकार राज कपूर की जीवनियां सामने आती हैं। अमृता शेरगिल, सुब्बुलक्ष्मी, सत्यजित रे, विलियम जोंस, विश्वेश्वरैया, इकबाल, श्रीनिवास रामानुजन, गुरुनानक और राजराज चोल की कहानियां 'अवतरण' को पढ़ने के लिए प्रेरित करती हैं।

यह किताब भारत और उसके अतीत की यात्रा करते हुए पचास असाधारण जीवनियों के माध्यम से भारत की कहानी को सांस्कृतिक और सामाजिक रूप से सुनाने का यत्न है, जिसे लेखक स्वयं भारत के अतीत और उसके भविष्य को लेकर एक अलग तरह की बातचीत का खुला आमंत्रण कहते हैं। नैतिक रूप से अपने नायकों पर एकाग्र, तार्किक ढंग से भारतीय सभ्यता के संदर्भ को विविधतापूर्ण ढंग से देखने की कोशिश और खुद को स्वतंत्र करने वाली एक असाधारण बौद्धिक यात्रा की तरह 'अवतरण' को पढ़ा जाना चाहिए।

आप भी कुछ कहना चाहते हैं...
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अवतरण: भारत के पचास ऐतिहासिक व्यक्तित्व
सुनील खिलनानी
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पहला संस्करण, 2019
मंजुल पब्लिशिंग हाउस, भोपाल
मूल्य: 499 रुपए



गांधी जी पर ऐतिहासिक रीडर

पेंगुइन रैंडम हाउस कंपनी और हिंद पॉकेट बुक्स ने साढ़े में कुछ पुरानी और उत्कृष्ट किताबों का पुनर्प्रकाशन शुरू किया है, जो बीसवीं शताब्दी के छठे और सातवें दशक में घर-घर घरेलू पाठकीय योजना के अंतर्गत पढ़ी जाती थीं। यशपाल जैन द्वारा महात्मा गांधी के जीवन और समग्र अवदान पर 'साबरमती का संत' 1970 में प्रकाशित हुई थी। प्रसन्नता का विषय है कि 2019 में यह किताब बिना किसी काट-छांट के दोबारा से प्रकाशित की गई है।

दो खंडों में विभक्त यह संचयन, जिसे 'जीवनी' का प्रारूप दिया गया है, महात्मा गांधी के जीवन, कार्य, संस्मरण, प्रेरक प्रसंगों और उपलब्धियों की विशद जानकारी देने वाली रीडर है, जिसे बड़ी सुगमता से सरल भाषा में लिखा गया है। गांधी जी के जीवन और कृतित्व को एक छोटे से कलेवर में यदि समग्र रूप से संक्षिप्ति और रोचकता के साथ पढ़ना हो, तो 'साबरमती का संत' एक आदर्श पुस्तक के मानदंड पर खरी उतरती है। यह आपकी लाइब्रेरी में जरूर होनी चाहिए।

(चंदीक मिश्र)

साबरमती का संत
यशपाल जैन
जीवनी, 2019
हिंद पॉकेट बुक्स, पेंगुइन रैंडम हाउस इंडिया प्रा. लि., गुड़गांव
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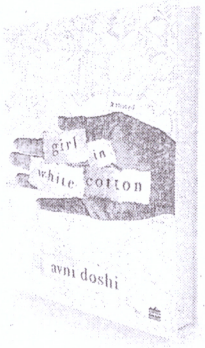
Asian Age ; 1/12/19 ; Pg-9

At last, it's time to unpack the difficult mother



Devapriya Roy

review



GIRL IN WHITE COTTON

By Avni Doshi

Fourth Estate India, ₹599

In my middle-school years, I found a book called *Tamarind Mem* in our school library, which I soon got quite obsessed with. The writer, Anita Rau Badami, was unfamiliar to me at the time, and so was the icy Calgary from where her protagonist Kamini remembered — misremembered, really, if we are to be accurate about the slippery slopes of memory – her growing-up years with Saroja, her "sour-tongued mother", in railway towns across India, where her father was posted. (There might have been a sibling – but I am forgetting the details.) Saroja had been given the name "Tamarind Mem" by a mysterious man who entered their lives in one of the railway towns, and who, Kamini later understands, had become Saroja's lover.

This novel unleashed in me a fascination for a specific kind of mother-daughter novel, one that inverted the heretofore familiar formula of the wild/ difficult daughter locked in a complex relationship with her mother, in her attempt to live a life beyond the familiar frames of reference, the kind of daughter who exerts as much of a compelling centrifugal force in the family as in the narrative. Up until then, in the books I had read, the daughter was the doer, the mother, the witness. But *Tamarind Mem*, deliberately overturning this, was fresh, different, almost scary. For so long I had identified with the difficult daughter myself, transposing the contents to my own Calcutta childhood and youth,

If you are partial to the pleasures of the literary novel, then, without a doubt, Avni Doshi's debut, with its exquisite prose and formal brilliance — the ending was one of the finest I have encountered in a long time — is for you. It will dazzle you with its many quiet bounties...

yearning constantly to break out of their mould and outgrow my own mother – and, therefore, *Tamarind Mem*, where it is the mother who wants to break the mould, cast a curious if baffling charm upon me.

I was reminded of all this – the genre, the obsession, the need to recast memory and even scores with our mothers – when I read Avni Doshi's powerful novel, *Girl in White Cotton*, published earlier this year. (It is interesting that the inverted mother-daughter/doer-witness relationship is also explored in another book that is the toast of literary circles now, Madhuri Vijay's *The Far Field*.) Written in the voice of the grown-up daughter, the artist Antara, *Girl in White Cotton* employs spare, elegant prose to not only detail the present but also conjure up the complicated and acute terrain of the past, to contain its treacherous stories, stories that are as difficult to recollect as they are to forget.

(Except, Tara is forgetting.)

I would be lying if I said my mother's misery has never given me pleasure.

I suffered at her hands as a child, and any pain she subsequently endured appeared to me to be a kind of redemption – a rebalancing of the universe, where the rational order of cause and effect aligned.

But now, I can't even the tally between us.

The reason is simple: my mother is forgetting, and there is nothing I can do about it. There is no way to make her remember the things she has done in the past, no way to baste her in guilt. I used to bring up instances of cruelty, casually, over tea, and watch her face curve into a frown. Now, she mostly can't recall what I'm talking about; her eyes are distant with perpetual cheer. Anyone witnessing this will touch my hand and whisper: Enough now. She doesn't remember, poor thing.

The sympathy she elicits in others gives rise to something acrid in me.

In the past, Tara had walked out of her marriage (to an unexciting man with an overbearing mother) and joined a cult, daughter in tow. While she became the cult leader's favourite, beginning to live with him as his partner, Antara grew up in the ashram, cared for by the eccentric ashramites, chief among them the American hippie Kali Mata, who had moved to India many years ago, in the groupthink days of free love and spirituality.

Afterwards, when a new favourite replaces her, Tara leaves the cult, and her attempt to return to her previous life, to her original family — Antara's Nana, Nani and the estranged father – leaves a visceral impact on the child. Eventually, Tara moves out again, and mother and daughter cobble a life together, built on the agonizing highs and lows of their acute bond. Into that tinderbox arrives another man, a photographer.

Structured so deftly that the movements from the present to the past are seamless and controlled with quiet precision, *Girl in the White Cotton*, however, is its most sophisticated in its forays into the present – Antara's life, with her husband and his overbearing NRI mother, her fraught relationship with Tara – who is now showing the early signs of dementia – and to her artistic life.

If you are partial to the pleasures of the literary novel, then, without a doubt, Avni Doshi's debut, with its exquisite prose and formal brilliance – the ending was one of the finest I have encountered in a long time – is for you. It will dazzle you with its many quiet bounties, each sentence as polished as it is tight, its bleakness deeply evocative of the daily lives of artists, whether or not they have the complex maternal ties of Antara, its the exploration of the silences, the cruelties and the tendernesses that mark our most intimate relationships, sustained, and its familiar darkness, borrowed from the deepest reserves of our own truths.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Philosophy of physics: quantum theory, by T. Maudlin, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2019, 256 pp., £20.00 (hardback), ISBN 9780691183527. Scope: monograph. Level: postgraduate.

God, Einstein famously asserted, does not play dice! It is the random aspect of quantum physics that has proved to be the theory's most contentious element, and which has provoked many proposals for elaborated or reinterpreted versions of the standard theory that would either give a rationale for the randomness, or do away with it. Tim Maudlin's book is an account of three of the most popular attempts to deal with this issue. As a philosopher, he is keen to present the discussion in a clear and thoughtful way that is both critical and insightful.

According to the first two of these models, standard quantum mechanics is a kind of 'effective theory' that needs augmentation, and the first approach discussed is that of 'spontaneous wave-function collapse', specifically the model of Ghirardi, Rimini and Weber. The reader will find here an informative and illuminating account of this theory, which can itself be further interpreted in more than one way. There appear to be no show-stoppers in this kind of approach, which does not attempt to *explain* the randomness of quantum events – perhaps randomness must always defy a full explanation – but does provide a quantitative description for their occurrence in measurement-like processes. The challenge is to formulate a model that will describe accurately all known quantum processes while still giving hope for an experimental test, which of course means that there should be some kind of feature where the amended theory differs from the old in its predictions. Clearly these two opposing requirements are difficult to fulfil together, and this problem exists in all attempts to go beyond the standard version of the theory.

The second class of theories considered by Maudlin consists of 'pilot wave' theories, associated particularly with the names of de Broglie and Bohm. Here a quantum-like wave-function provides the standard features and behaviour of quantum theory, but there also exists a point-like 'particle' that moves around within it, following a well-defined trajectory and arriving at one measurement location or another in a deterministic way. The measurement probabilities will be as normal, provided that the initial distribution of the particles in the pilot waves is appropriate.

Thus, the randomness is effectively transferred from the measurement process to the initial state of the particle in the pilot wave. This aspect is not fully discussed by Maudlin, but it would seem to be important, and details really need to be supplied about how quantum objects are initially physically generated or created in an appropriate manner. Ignoring the details of this problem, Maudlin is persuaded that pilot-wave theories are capable of providing a satisfactory account of the observed quantum physics. He even describes the approach as 'simple' (p. 171), a statement which seems palpably dubious given the complexities that he has ably described in the earlier parts of this chapter!

The third approach discussed here is the 'many-worlds' interpretation of quantum mechanics, in which there is no randomness at all, but a wave-function that continually branches in a fully defined way as it encounters new measurement apparatus. This, it is claimed, generates a repeated branching of the universe itself. Maudlin discusses in detail some recent attempts by Wallace to deal with probabilities in this kind of theory. It is a crucially weak area, for after all, if there are no random events, how can probabilities be brought in? This seems to me a valuable discussion, but it would also have been good to discuss a little some of the earlier developments of the theory. In Everett's original presentation, conscious observers indeed multiplied but branches of the universe did not; it was DeWitt who decided that the branching of the universe was going to be necessary. The issue is important, because Everett was able to propagate his wave-function without trouble – setting aside matters concerning probability and consciousness – whereas the approach of DeWitt (who is not mentioned in this volume) involves in the end just the same problem as in standard quantum mechanics, namely to provide a rationale for the 'quantum event'. In standard quantum mechanics it is a random event, while in the many-worlds theory it is a universe-splitting event. Only one outcome emerges in the standard theory, whereas they *all* emerge in the amended theory, but something still 'happens', and a fuller account of this is to be desired. It is this question, of course, that spontaneous-collapse theories seek to address.

Finally, Maudlin gives a brief chapter on relativistic quantum field theory. His chief concern is to ask whether relativity introduces any serious problems for the theories discussed earlier. This chapter does not really discuss quantum field theory in any depth, despite the fact that it is the one underlying quantum theory that there is common agreement about, because this would demand much more space than is available. He is, he grants, barely scratching the surface of this subtle and difficult topic.

Overall, I would say that this volume constitutes an informative and helpful contribution to an important ongoing debate. It is also reasonably priced. It can be confidently recommended to all who are interested in the philosophy of quantum mechanics, bearing in mind a few limitations that have been mentioned. It is not the last word on the

subject, but its author would certainly not be wanting to claim that.

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The impact of binary stars on stellar evolution, edited by G. Beccari and H. M. J. Boffin, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019, 333 pp., £120.00 (hardback), ISBN: 9781108428583. Scope: reference. Level: early career researcher, specialist.

For decades, stellar formation theory only concentrates on the tale of single-star evolution, i.e. all stars are imagined to have been in the lonely hearts club, alone and never with a companion, therefore grow old all by their lonesome. But this idea is erroneous. Nearly all massive stars and about a fifth of the low-mass ones are in a binary relationship. Further, there exist stars like the blue stragglers (BS) that cannot be formed unless in binaries.

This collection of reviews is from a workshop of the same title held at the ESO headquarters in July 2017. Everything is still up-to-the-minute given that nothing much has changed since a similar workshop in Bettmeralp in September 1991. True-to-life simulation of binary formation remains a challenge. One thing very evident is the Universe just does not work without binary stars. A number of phenomena and stellar objects are clearly results of binary interactions that rewriting of textbooks is inevitable. (This could be the first one.) Hydrogen-deficient core-collapse supernovae, for example, are products of binary O-type mergers. The luminous blue variable (LBV) stars do not quite fit the single-star evolution story either. The conventional narrative of one O-type turning into LBV is a bit passé. Again, merging binary O-types becoming LBV is more like it. LBV also might just be BS.

Discussions and analyses are varied and wide here, ranging from symbiotic stars to planetary nebulae to gravitational waves. (Indeed, gravitational wave is about binary stars, the fact that some may forget in the excitement of proving Einstein relativity.) Although the readership is meant to be just as varied and wide, it goes without saying that the readers must have a good grasp of the standard stellar evolution theory already and can follow the reasoning without too much of an outside help.

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PT symmetry in quantum and classical physics, by Carl M. Bender, London, World Scientific, 2018, 468 pp., $58 (paperback), ISBN: 9781786346681. Scope: textbook. Level: postgraduate, researcher, teacher.

The field of PT (parity-time) symmetry was originated by Carl M. Bender in 1998 with a paper in which he demonstrated that Hamiltonians that are PT-symmetric but not Hermitian can describe actual physical systems, that is to say have real eigenvalues. This result gave rise to a tremendous number of papers and research that extended the results to many areas of quantum and classical physics, including optics. It is good that now the subject is discussed in a single volume presenting all the main aspects of the subject in a clear and self-consistent way, by the initiator of the field and by many of the authors who have contributed to the growth of the field.

After a preface in which Bender recollects how he discovered the properties of PT invariant Hamiltonians, the book is divided into two parts. In the first part, by Bender and Daniel W. Hook, there is an introduction to PT-symmetry, explaining what it is. Next, in the following chapter the mathematics needed to define and solve the eigenvalue problems associated with PT-symmetric Hamiltonians is presented, and these techniques were applied to a wide variety of examples. Three separated chapters on the properties of PT-symmetry in quantum mechanics, in classical mechanics, and in quantum field theory close this first part.

The main point is that in the range of values of the parameters of the system (typically one parameter) for which PT-symmetry is realised, the system has real eigenvalues; outside this domain the PT-symmetry is broken, and the system changes completely its behaviour. One may speak of a phase transition between the unbroken PT-symmetry and the broken symmetry, and this behaviour has many important and practical applications.

In the second part of the book, a number of advanced topics are treated by different authors. This is the larger part of the text. Patrick E. Dorey, Clare Dunning and Roberto Tateo contribute with a chapter on the proof of reality for some simple examples, considering Hamiltonians of the type $H = p^2 + x(ix)^{\varepsilon}$, where ε is a parameter, which are clearly not Hermitians but are PT-symmetric for $\varepsilon > 0$. The following chapter by Geza Levai is on exactly solvable PT-symmetric models. Then Sergii Kuzhel treats Krein-space theory and PT quantum mechanics, giving an elementary presentation of the Krein-space theory which is apt to describe the norms of the PT-symmetric Hamiltonians.

In chapter 9, Andreas Fring explains PT-symmetric deformations of nonlinear integrable systems. Finally, in the last chapter, H. F. Jones discusses PT-symmetry in optics presenting a short summary of a number of systems that have been considered.

At the beginning of the volume, after the preface, a biographic sketch of the authors contributing to the volume is presented.

The first seven chapters are dedicated to the exploration of the physics of nature. Here, we were brought to the seas, the rivers and lakes, and upon the skies, sun and moon. We were introduced to the basic physical equations of forces and pressure, to explain the myriad of observations like the formation of river beds, sound and light travelling in water, and the colour of the skies and seas, including the moon-glades.

In Saturday night physics, we learnt about how the violin generates sounds through the sliding bow, which was explained via aerodynamic friction forces acting on the air molecules. We were then introduced to the concept of resonant frequencies via the clinking of wine glasses. The story segues from high society to the common people, where the physics of surface tension and droplet formation was discussed in the context of children blowing soap bubbles, along with the workings of lava lamps found commonly in households. We moved on to examine the physics of mass media, how the microphone works and how information is transmitted via electric power lines in the form of electromagnetic waves. Finally, we look at the movements of society, be it the physics of atomic arrangement in leaving footprints on the sand, driving through snowdrfits, and the experience of ear pressure when taking the trans-europe express through a long tunnel.

The extensive travels and residence in Italy has inspired Varlamov in expanding a full section dedicated to the Physics in the kitchen. Here we learn about the microwave, the pizza oven, hotpot cooking from China, and the secrets of making 'al-dente' pasta by controlling their cooking time. We were also taught about differentiating between fresh and rotten eggs, the physics of boiling water, and the art of making good coffee via Darcy's physical law of filtration. The section ends with a lengthy discussion on wine, on various topics ranging from the formation of wine film boundaries, how champagne form bubbles and foam, and going into analysis of data on heart attack preventive properties of alcohol.

The final section took us into the minds of the giants in physics – Einstein, Bohr, Schrödinger, de Broglie, and others – who brought us to the era of quantum physics. From here onwards, the authors revealed to us the strange world of the infinitesimally small. The clash of worldviews was unresolved till today, between deterministic physicists like Einstein, who believed God does not play dice, and probabilistic physicists like Maxwell, who once proclaimed that our world is based on calculation of probabilities. From here, we are introduced to abstract notions like the uncertainty principle, probability waves, superfluidity and superconductivity. Nonetheless, it is certain and real that technologies and devices which were built upon these abstract concepts exist, for example, magnetic resonance imaging which is ubiquitous in most hospitals, and also the quantum computer, which promises extraordinary computational power and is already in the prototype stage.

This book is fun to read and serves its purpose well in attracting the readers' interest and appreciation in physics of our everyday lives. As an educator, I find it to be a good text for an expository course for first year physics students, or even exploratory elective courses for students in other majors.

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An introduction to quantum physics: a first course for physicists, chemists, materials scientists, and engineers, by Stefanos Trachanas, translated and edited by Manolis Antonoyiannakis and Leonidas Tsetseris, Weinheim, Germany, Wiley-VCH Verlag, 2018, 568 pp., £75.00 (paperback), ISBN 978527412471. Scope: textbook. Level: undergraduate.

The intriguing nature of quantum mechanics coupled with its pervasive and growing impact on modern technology has generated a large number of intermediate level textbooks for undergraduates. Often, the subject is categorised as being inherently non-intuitive and consequently, textbook authors frequently adopt a strong calculational approach – the main emphasis being placed on developing the skill set to solve a variety of standard problems. This English version of a popular Greek textbook by Stefanos Trachanas, recently translated and edited by Manolis Antonoyiannakis and Leonidas Tsetseris, takes a very different approach emphasising physical reasoning. Readers are encouraged to develop a 'quantum intuition', based on recurrent applications of the key ideas of quantum physics: the particle-wave duality, that confinement leads to discrete energy levels and the uncertainty principle associated with non-commuting variables.

The book is divided into three sections. The first develops the core concepts of a quantum wave, provides a heuristic justification of the Schrödinger equation and emphasises the consequences of non-commuting variables. A second section is devoted to a streamlined discussion of several classic problems in an intermediate quantum mechanics course, potential wells and barriers, the harmonic oscillator, angular momentum, the hydrogen atom, spin and the Pauli Exclusion Principle. A lengthy final section explores the quantum description of matter in much greater detail that would be typically treated in an undergraduate quantum mechanics course for physicists but might be found in a first quantum course for chemists or material scientists. Multi-electron atoms, the elementary chemical bonds,

and the notions of hybridisation and delocalisation with a focus on carbon compounds are covered in the first three chapters. This leads naturally to a first-order description of crystalline materials, energy bands, crystal momentum, and the concept of Fermi levels. A wide-ranging final chapter provides an introduction to the interaction of radiation with matter, Fermi's golden rule, lasers and an elementary description of polarised photons. The text is enhanced by close to 200 line drawn figures to help the reader visualise key concepts.

Throughout the book, the reader is often urged to make use of dimensional analysis and carry out order of magnitude estimates, an effective means to direct the reader's attention to key relationships. To aid in this endeavour, Professor Trachanas has somewhat controversially opted for the elegance and simplicity of the electrostatic cgs system of units, going against the increasing trend to uniformly present undergraduate physics using SI units. While some may dislike this choice, the encouragement to develop a taste for making quick meaningful 'back of the envelope' calculations is arguably just as important to a working physicist as is mathematic prowess.

Often, even the mathematics is physically motivated. One prominent example is the extended solution to the hydrogen atom as the main paradigm of a central potential. The solution of the radial component of the associated Schrödinger equation is the best-motivated discussion that I have encountered on a topic that students often have difficulty following. The treatment of the hydrogen atom ends with the observation that in general ground states are non-degenerate and reflect the overall symmetry of the physical problem, a valuable insight not often encountered in textbooks at this level.

While most of the core topics are treated with care, rigour and insight, many will notice the absence of some topics that are traditionally included in an intermediate quantum mechanics course for physicists. Missing from the printed text is the use of Dirac notation, an algebraic treatment of angular momentum and operator methods in general, a systematic development of perturbation theory, quantum scattering in three dimensions or an introduction to the key ideas of entanglement and quantum information. A clear choice was made to appeal to a broader audience by favouring applications of quantum theory in chemistry and materials science while sacrificing more formal topics that some will view as essential to build a strong theoretical foundation.

An especially contemporary enhancement to the text is the extensive support provided on an accompanying website where readers can test their understanding by responding to multiple choice quizzes (one for each chapter) or access material on an impressive number of additional topics. These tutorial sections are primarily presented in the form of challenge questions followed by solutions. This in part mitigates the omission of some of the topics previously listed. These include tutorials on probability currents, Erhenfest's theorem, creation and annihilation operators applied to the harmonic oscillator, conservation of angular momentum in central potentials and second-order non-degenerate time-independent perturbation theory. A striking omission is the inclusion of topics associated with the fast developing and increasingly important field of quantum information, but perhaps these will be added to the website in the future.

In summary, this fresh alternative to the standard intermediate quantum textbooks distinguishes itself from a crowded field by focusing on core quantum concepts to develop physical intuition and explain a wide range of physical phenomena concentrating on aspects associated with the structure of matter. Repeated challenges to carryout order of magnitude estimates and a well-executed accompanying website are other positive aspects that differentiate *An Introduction to Quantum Physics* from the many other textbooks on offer.

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Principles of quantum computation and information: a comprehensive textbook, by G. Benenti, G. Casati, D. Rossini and G. Strini, Hackensack, NJ, World Scientific, 2018, 704 pp., $158.00 (hardback), ISBN 9789813237223. Scope: textbook. Level: advanced undergraduate, postgraduate, early career researcher.

The book is a useful compendium of most significant topics in quantum information and computation. The material in the textbook is accessible to both upper-level undergraduate and graduate students with a background in physics, mathematics and computer science. A broad range of aspects of quantum computation and information are covered at various levels of understanding and interest, with the main goal of presenting a freshman textbook focussing on fundamental principles and concepts for university students, some background knowledge in quantum information as well as many advanced subjects for researchers in the field, together with applications to diverse spin-off topics, such as theoretical condensed matter and quantum many-body systems. Indeed, the book is readable by any undergraduate or graduate student in physics, mathematics, computer science, chemistry, or engineering.

The authors cover all necessary basic knowledge and background in the first two chapters, containing a simple introduction to classical computation and quantum mechanics, from Turing machines, the circuit model,

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The authors cover all necessary basic knowledge and background in the first two chapters, containing a simple introduction to classical computation and quantum mechanics, from Turing machines, the circuit model,

computational complexity, reversible computation, energy dissipation, work extraction and Landauer's principle, to quantum mechanics fundamentals, from EPR paradox and Bell's inequalities, to density matrix, Schmidt decomposition and purification. The next chapters present the basic principles of quantum computation and communications as well as introductory notes in quantum information and computation, at undergraduate and graduate level.

The second part of the book contains advanced topics and important aspects in quantum computation and information such as entanglement measures, quantum discord, Kraus and Bloch-Fano representations, the GKLS master equation, non-Markovian quantum dynamics, quantum to classical transition, quantum measurements, quantum trajectories, quantum data compression, accessible information, quantum channels, quantum error correction, stabilizer coding, decoherence-free subspaces, dynamical decoupling, the Zeno effect, fault-tolerant quantum computation, the basic principles of cavity quantum electrodynamics, trapped ions and solid-state qubits, quantum simulators, area-law scaling of entanglement, DMRG and basic tensor-network structures. Note that the authors dedicate extensive chapters with special focus on subjects like quantum algorithms (Deutsch's algorithm, quantum search, quantum Fourier transform, quantum phase estimation, Shor's algorithm, universal quantum simulation), quantum communication, entanglement and non-classical correlations, quantum protocols or decoherence. The researcher will find invaluable specific material on the emergence of quantum correlations, matrix product states, their graphical representation and time evolution.

The authors also include several exercises supplemented by solutions as well as an appendix containing elements of linear algebra useful to the reader. As quantum computation and information is a rapidly developing field, the second edition of the book, which was released almost eleven years after the first one, contains several updates and additional material such as entanglement quantifiers, quantum discord, non-Markovian dynamics, quantum simulators, and specifically new results in quantum information in condensed matter and strongly correlated quantum many-body systems.

Nevertheless, the book has a simple, attractive, easy to grasp and systematic treatment, with the final goal to be used as a substantial wide-ranging primer and single comprehensive material for quantum computation and information without the need for consulting supplementary texts.

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Memorial volume on Abdus Salam's 90th birthday, by L. Brink, M. Duff and K. K. Phua, Hackensack, NJ, World Scientific, 2017, 544 pp., $128.00 (hardback), ISBN 9789813144866. Scope: review, reference, monograph, guide. Level: advanced undergraduate, postgraduate, early career researcher, researcher, scientist.

One of the leading and most prolific physicists in his field, Abdus Salam was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1979 (shared with Sheldon Lee Glashow and Steven Weinberg) for his contributions to the theory of the unified weak nuclear force and electromagnetic interaction between elementary particles, which form an integral part of the Standard Model. It represented a shift of paradigm obligatory to resolve particle physics with model leptons as quarks (in the fourth colour state) in predicting intermediate vector bosons (elementary particles which mediate the weak nuclear force). Salam believed that 'scientific thought is the joint heritage of all mankind' and that the developing world should also be able to play an active part in scientific discovery and contribution. He founded the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Trieste, Italy in 1964 and instituted the famous 'associateships' to help researchers from developing countries.

The present book, 'Memorial Volume on Abdus Salam's 90th Birthday', contains a selection of invited talks at a meeting held at the Institute of Advanced Studies, Nanyang Technological University (NTU), in Singapore in January 2016, which discusses many aspects of Salam's great passion for science and achievements. Speakers included four Noble Laureates (Gerard 't Hooft, David Gross, Carlo Rubbia and Tony Leggett), Salam's collaborators and students, and many distinguished scientists, which combined to give a wide-ranging and enormously valuable look at Salam's diverse personality. The thirty essays in this book build on the pioneering effort of Abdus Salam in developing the theory of electroweak unification in particle physics, and also presents Salam's time at the Imperial College (where he founded the Theoretical Physics Group, one of the world's state-of-the-art centres of excellence in particle physics), the long journey to the Higgs Boson, the foundation and role of ICTP in developing world, and his boundless and dynamic role in the intellectual and scientific development of his homeland Pakistan. One of the most interesting discussions is on 'the force and gravity of events'. The extension of electroweak model of leptons leads to an intriguing prediction about weak mixing angle and distinct properties of left- and right-handed leptons. This work also provides a framework to unify gravity with other forces of nature in handling 'when-where-what'. Experimental evidence of the Standard Model to automatically produce finite number of generation of elementary particles require more rigours experimental acrobatics. A point worth mentioning here is the lack of participation of distinguished physicists from Salam's homeland Pakistan, such as

The concluding section of the book is 'Stories from the Steppe' where Lillis aims to highlight the stories of Kazakhs who are left coping with the lingering fallout of ill-planned Soviet industrial and agricultural experiments. Some of the issues addressed in 'Stories from the Steppe' can indeed be traced back to Soviet errors, such as the repercussions of Soviet-era nuclear weapons testing for contemporary Kazakhstan. However, the same cannot be said of some of the other issues that the author has chosen to explore. For instance, in chapter 22, 'The Curse of Corruption', the author looks at how corruption at hospitals in Kazakhstan infected at least 150 children with HIV in 2006. While this is an important moment in the nation's history, the corruption woes that beleaguer Kazakhstan are not traced to the Soviet Union. Save for this minor quibble, each chapter in this section presents the reader with a fascinating snapshot of what Kazakhstan has had to, and continues to, grapple with.

Sketching out and analyzing the history of an entire nation and its people is no easy task. Nevertheless, Joanna Lillis does a masterful job, taking the reader through the history and landscape of Kazakhstan. Due to its comparatively modest aims, the first section is where the author's ability to narrate and inform the reader is most heightened. Though the author explores a number of issues that affect Kazakhstan, her narrative style ensures that the book is easily accessible, even for those who are not familiar with the nation. For a nation that houses a significant proportion of the world's natural resources and sits at the heart of Central Asia, Kazakhstan has the potential to play a greater role on the global stage. Joanna Lillis' Dark Shadows is a great starting point to for those seeking to better comprehend the extraordinary nation and its people.

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AFRICA IN WORLD AFFAIRS: Politics of Imperialism, the Cold War and Globalisation by Rajen Harshe. Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon, 2019.

EVEN high quality Indian scholarship on Africa is rarely suffused with admiration, appreciation and yes, affection for that continent and its peoples. This is one such text. Here the vision of a changing Africa is filtered through the prism of imperialism in its different avatars – direct colonial rule, indirect domination (European neocolonialism) and American imperialism from the Cold War to today's era of globalization. Imperialism is defined as an 'asymmetrical relationship of interdependence between materially advanced and backward societies.' The obvious culprits are Britain, France, Portugal (the main colonizers) and the US. The USSR was an ambiguous 'empire' exercising political-military control over Eastern Europe, but where the balance of economic benefits favoured the latter. Cold War USSR played a contradictory role in Africa – supporting national liberation struggles and manipulating reluctant governments for resources on the cheap and geopolitical favours. Post-Cold War, Russia has been more preoccupied with controlling its 'near abroad' than with interventions in Africa.

The seven chapters flanked by an Introduction and Conclusion constitute the heart of this book. Africa is so huge that a selective eye is unavoidable. But fortunately more attention is given to relatively neglected Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). There is a delightful chapter on African thought and thinkers. The author's long-time familiarity with France no doubt is why Francophone Africa is given separate chapter treatment. The US as an imperialist power also gets separate chapter treatment as well as each of the three countries of South Africa, China, India, all often accused, with some justification says the author, of exhibiting sub-imperialist characteristics. The variant trajectories, past and present, of Portugal, Britain and France are insightfully presented.

Portugal, without the history of internal democratic struggles of the other two, made better use of slave and forced labour and was more repressive. It was the first to arrive as a non-capitalist mercantile power, and last to leave Africa. Britain (a stronger capitalist-industrial power) and France (a weaker one) started scrambling for territories in the late 19th century. Britain ruled more indirectly through local notables and chieftains, and with few exceptions independence was achieved with a peaceful transfer of power. France too saw mostly peaceful transitions (Algeria being a major exception) but ruled more directly while seeing its colonies as extensions of the metropolitan mainland. It was more willing to give citizenship to a section of 'Frenchified' African elites and this closer cultural-political connect meant that later Paris could exercise a relatively stronger neocolonial hold over former colonies. Portugal, however, faced armed national liberal movements that ultimately proved successful. Curiously unmentioned, however, is the aftermath – a section of army officers ironically radicalized by its 'enemy's' struggles, triggered the 1974 fall of the Caetano dictatorship with the country coming closer to

carrying out a socialist transformation than anywhere else in Europe.

Colonialism also meant psycho-cultural violence leading to cultural-intellectual resistance against Eurocentric values and political precepts. There arose Pan-Africanism, African socialism and African-ness more generally, as embodied in the work of Du Bois, Garvey, Padmore, Nkrumah, Nyerere and the negritude poets Cesaire and Senghor. Fanon was somewhat of an outlier seeing negritude and the 'black nationalism' it aligned with as a defensive mechanism, in itself unable to point a collectively transformative way forward. Race, however, had entered IR thinking and practice. Pan-Africanism secured institutional embodiment with the Organization of African States (1963) and its successor Africa Union (2002). From the beginning there were tensions – a radical wing aiming for formation of a United States of Africa (Nkrumah) or at least prior regional groupings (Nyerere); and a moderate wing (mostly Francophone states) insisting on the primacy of national sovereignty.

The OAU and AU followed a moderate path rarely succeeding in resolving inter-state strife partly because newly created state boundaries were obedient to the administrative legacy of colonial rule. African socialism receded to nullity but interestingly *Ubuntu*, an African concept elevating the role of community ('I am because we are') presumably characterizing lived reality in the continent, has enjoyed a revival in today's postcolonial discourse aiming to promote a greater 'epistemic cosmopolitanism' in the social sciences so as to frame the pursuit of a more egalitarian and humane world order.

The chapter on South Africa indicts apartheid and its western supporters; the remarkable struggle of the ANC and Mandela duly registered. The relatively peaceful fall of apartheid, the author says, was made possible by the combination of resistance from below and a growing awareness by white South African elites and their western counterparts that preserving capitalism was more important than retaining institutionalized racism. This is an important insight but missing is any rumination about whether the fall of communism and its ideological-political threat may not have been an even greater spur to this dismantling. The ANC in power soon abandoned its socialistic Freedom Charter for the path of neoliberal economic development benefitting a rising black elite controlling a government more willing to expand its reach in southern Africa while serving as a gateway for foreign investors to do the same.

China and India are relatively new players with China way ahead. In 2016, China became the continent's biggest trading partner – raw materials going one way, manufactures, aid and large-scale investments, the other. Chinese investors are mainly state enterprises with private ones in tow, whereas from India private transnationals lead the way though New Delhi now regularizes India-Africa summits and is more forthcoming in providing concessional credit, grants and student scholarships. Nonalignment and its shared sentiments are over. Both New Delhi and Beijing are politically pragmatic, care little about human rights issues, and see economics as the route to securing political-diplomatic support from African governments. To his immense credit the author insists on looking at matters from the African side which is why he is also disturbed by the asymmetry in these respective relationships.

This leaves us with the US. The author's verdict is harsh but fair. The US was and is an imperialist power beginning to take SSA seriously in the '60s because of the Cold War, but continuing to intervene thereafter for similar reasons – facilitating corporate greed for key minerals and maintaining geo-strategic dominance, now with China in mind. In 2008 a military command structure AFRICOM was set up to secure strategic vantage points, namely the Horn of Africa, sea lanes around the Cape and the Indo-Pacific. Where the author, critical though he is, gives a longer rope to the US is on the 'Global War on Terror' (GWOT). This in my view is basically a fraudulent posture enabling the use of much greater state terror and violence in the name of fighting equally reprehensible but much weaker non-state forms of terror and violence.

Today, US imperialism's hardware comprises of ongoing nuclear and military preparations, geographically extended military-related bases, expanded alliance structures directed primarily against China and Russia. GWOT has now replaced the main Cold War ideological banner (software) for generating consent at home and abroad – 'anti-communism in the name of democracy.' Terrorism is a genuine problem but this cannot excuse the deliberately distorted, dishonest and hypocritical discourse around GWOT for the purposes of justifying unwarranted US and allied interventions while whitewashing their own brutalities. All said and done, this is a remarkable text which should be compulsory reading for students in the field and for the interested layperson.

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BOOK AND SOFTWARE REVIEWS

Interviews in qualitative research, by Nigel King, Christine Horrocks and Joanna Brooks, London, Sage, 2019, 347 pp., £27.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-1-4462-7497-2

This is a remarkably comprehensive book which covers what you would need to think about when planning research using interviews. It is the second edition of this work originally published in 2010 by the first two authors, King, Professor of Applied Psychology at Huddersfield University and Horrocks, Professor of Applied Social Psychology at Manchester Metropolitan University. It has been updated to include a third author, Brooks a qualitative health psychologist at the University of Manchester. Two new chapters have been added: one on using visual methods and another on using discursive research.

The authors state that their aim is to " ... provide a text that is of practical use to qualitative researchers at any stage of their career who are employing interview methods." (p. x)

The book covers a huge range of types of interviewing techniques, research design and ways to analyse the data collected. Ethical and philosophical issues are covered as are very practical ones.

The authors illustrate their work with "real world" examples from their own research and from others. There is a particularly fascinating chapter on reflexivity and qualitative interviewing (pp. 173–191) illustrating the need to look " inward" as well as " outward" to explore the intersection between our existing knowledge, experience, our roles in research and the world around us.

Although the authors do not set out to offer specific research design around interviews with children and young people, this is an area which could usefully be added, perhaps in a possible third edition. The use of Personal Construct Psychology is referred to and the use of repertory grids but there is no mention of Tom Ravenette's work with children and young people, for example, which would have enhanced the chapter on Interviews in Phenomenological Research (Ravenette, 1999).

Overall, this is a book which meets the aims set out by the authors very well indeed. This is the kind of information that I wish had been available when studying for my doctorate way back. This publication has the stature of being a go to compendium of research on interviews like Colin Robsons' book, "Real World Research" (2015) is on applied research design and analysis.

If you are planning research and using interviews in your research it will be essential reading.

Recommended for: researchers and those carrying out real world research, EPs studying for doctorates and other degrees

Style: practical and theoretical but accessible. Excellent for dipping into whilst planning research using interviews

Value: good value for the amount of information, background reading and for the breadth of information. A useful reference book for those carrying out research.

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EDUCATIONAL ACTION RESEARCH
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July–Sept.

BOOK REVIEW

Active learning. Social justice education and participatory action research, by Dana E. Wright, Abingdon, Routledge, 2015, 210 pp., ISBN 978-138-82171-2, £40.99 (Paperback); ISBN 9781138821705, £115.00 (Hardback); ISBN 9781315743141, from £20.50 (eBook)

The title on the book's spine 'Active Learning' might be beguiling to the bookshop browser, particularly to English readers looking for practical ideas on how to motivate reluctant learners in the curriculum dominated by content and obsessed with assessment in secondary schools. Such readers will not be disappointed even though the context of the book is young people in urban areas of the West Coast of America. There are many parallels between the scenarios in American schools and the experiences of teachers in English urban schools. Furthermore, there are helpful conclusions and suggestions for practice that readers are invited to test.

For the more specialist readers of critical youth studies or those interested in participatory action research, or in pedagogy and active learning, there is an engaging description and analysis of the author's research findings from the cases in US schools. Both the substantive content about action in improving urban communities, social justice education, and the methodology of participatory action research should be of interest to tutors and students in postgraduate studies in higher education. So what does the book contain?

Space allows only the briefest of summaries, but I hope I give a flavour of the chapters. The introductory chapter gives an overview of the book, laying out the aims and summarising the sections in each chapter. It describes the Central Youth United Participatory Action Research Project, its location and participants, the research commitments, methods and study context.

Chapter two defines 'active learning', describes the features of Participatory Action Research (PAR) projects and potential benefits, and discusses it as a teaching and learning strategy in the Central Youth United project. The next chapter gives us the background to the young people and voluntary organisations involved so we get a feel for the neighbourhood, history and trajectory of the project.

Chapter four explains the pedagogy of practice and the teenagers' motivation for involvement. The following chapter provides an analysis of the PAR learning, decision-making processes, mentoring and support, and accountability. The PAR process, as a teaching approach that increases pupils' voice in their learning, is the unique contribution of the book and I found myself wondering how I might employ these ideas.

Chapter six is about promoting sociopolitical analysis skills; here is real Citizenship Education. The next chapter discusses empowering youth as experts and knowledge producers. As in each chapter, the author grounds her discussion in the concepts of relevant literature.

Chapter seven illustrates some of the various tensions, barriers, dilemmas and challenges in maintaining youth adult partnerships and teenage-led learning projects. This chapter will be of particular interest to readers wishing to apply the book to their professional situation.

Chapter nine lays out some of the implications for reform to school policies and practices, to harness student voice and interests and ways of promoting analytical thinking and

decision-making. The author explores some of the benefits and limitations of PAR as an approach to teaching and learning. This is another key chapter for readers wishing to generalise from these cases to their own situation.

Some reservations

Some of the text is descriptive, with vivid portrayal and mini case study evidence, and easily accessible but chapters such as one, four, and six have some sections that are dense and complex with long sentences, needing discipline and patience for reading, particularly if the reader is unfamiliar with critical youth studies.

Just some minor niggles: there are a few assertions that are unsupported by evidence, and the author speaks of 'recent research' but quotes references which are ten years old. The author's referencing demonstrates extensive evidence of reading widely across disciplines, but on occasions the connection between the argument or explanation and the references quoted is unclear.

Conclusion

I was hugely encouraged by the possibility of relating the project to community needs in British inner cities, but troubled by the issue of transferability from the youth service scene to schools, having worked in both sectors. Managers in schools may see the narrower academic purposes of schools incongruent with the wider, more person-centred, philosophy of the youth service. The two services came much closer together in my career in the 1970s, but seem to have diverged now, and therefore the 'fit' between active learning and action research with the secondary curriculum in 2019 may appear more problematic. There are very real organisational and resourcing issues of allocating curriculum time and resources to experiential learning in a period of austerity, competition, accountability, and narrowing of the curriculum. However, the picture is not entirely bleak. Imaginative teachers and creative school leaders who have the vision could pick up the suggestions in chapter nine and experiment with ways of introducing the educative power of active learning and PAR pedagogy. This might involve extending the school day, seeking extra funding from trusts, developing curriculum development projects with local industry, and building bridges with the local community.

This book provides a welcome addition to writing on the benefits and power of active learning in youth service and schooling, and an impressive account of PAR as pedagogy. Secondly, it is a call to reconsider the relevance of the secondary curriculum for urban youth, and ways of tackling boredom and alienation. There is a strong plea to include teenagers in decisions about the organisation of their learning. For this reviewer, the book introduced me to a whole new literature on critical youth studies. I warmly commend this volume to readers of the Journal.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Schooling, democracy and the quest for wisdom: partnerships and the moral dimensions of teaching, edited by Bullough, R. V., and Rosenberg, J. R., New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 2018, 192 pp., US $99 (hardback), ISBN 978-0-81-359991-5

Those who must be reminded of the notion that public schools are the bastions of a democratic society should read *Schooling, Democracy and the Quest for Wisdom; Partnerships and the Moral Dimensions of Teaching* by Robert V. Bullough and John R. Rosenberg. The authors write an intense narrative about the need for the reestablishment of partnerships among all individuals involved in educational settings. It is an idea that is similar to Garza's (2007) explanation of the need for the concept of 'collective wisdom'. As Garza explains, collective wisdom originates from the collaborative exchange of experiences and knowledge of various educators with the aim of improving schooling. It is a notion that is repeated and analysed throughout Bullough and Rosenberg's book. The last chapter especially aligns with Garza's idea through a discussion of the role of the Associates programme that is based on partnerships among school board members, district and university level administrators. The idea behind this approach is that collaboration and communication among educational staffers at all levels would lead to a better understanding of democracy and its relation to schooling. As a result of these collective practices, the moral dimensions of teaching, the focal point of this book, are more likely to be incorporated in educational settings.

The influence of Dewey (1927) and Goodlad (1994) is also discernible throughout the book. The discussion about partnerships in schools is based on Dewey's idea that democracy begins in conversations . Goodlad's (1994) concept of simultaneous renewal within partnerships, which results in improvements in the educational arena, is also brought to light.

The need for partnerships emerged in the 1980s as an urgent response to the perceived insufficient quality of public education in the United States. Ravitch (1990) explains that studies conducted in the 1980s showed poor student performance in every subject area, so reform of teacher education and the profession became a key item on policymakers' agendas across the country. A report titled *A Nation at Risk* (NCEE, 1983) projected that American education would face catastrophic outcomes because it had been caught in a 'rising tide of mediocracy' (2). As a result of this trend, the United States seemed to be losing its standing economically in comparison to other countries. Bullough and Rosenberg state in the opening chapter, 'The Architecture of Partnership,' that this was the first time that schooling was linked to economic competition. They point out that by the 1990s, professional development schools (PDS) were formed, with the aim of supporting the simultaneous renewal of schooling and engaging teachers in problem-solving issues. As a result of these collaborative efforts, standards for accrediting teachers were released in 2001 by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. Furthermore, the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) was formed in 2004. This was a development that had a significant impact on teachers' education, according to the authors. The metaphor that underpins the title 'The Architecture of Partnership' is used to illustrate the creation of partnerships that were built through relationships established through PDS.

The book's second chapter elaborates on the idea that partnerships provide the contexts and conditions under which education could flourish. A part of the chapter includes an unscripted conversation between Bullough and Rosenberg which unpacks a piece of the partnership story that they experienced and shared. The two authors reveal that the main concepts of the text were identified through personal experiences during a period of two decades of partnerships in a multitude of educational settings. The framework of the 'Four Moral Dimensions of Teaching' presented by Goodlad became the pivotal idea that emerged from these critical inquires and conversations.

The third, fourth, and fifth chapters of the book are mostly focused on the art of effective conversation intertwined with the concept of democracy: 'Like democracy itself, hospitality is the product of the triumph of love over fear' (59). The authors' arrival at the concept of a democratic society as the guiding thread throughout their passionate, and in some instances idealistic, narratives is discussed in these chapters as well. The authors explain that hospitality is a manner of communication that leads to dialogue, which they argue is a *sine qua non* for democracy. In order for one to transition from monologue to dialogue, a hospitable space where differences and cultures can touch and perhaps embrace must be created. The authors point out that manners of democracy can be achieved only if the relationship between the speaker and hearer is equal. Bullough and Rosenberg conclude that partnerships can restore democratic manners that are based on dialogue that recognises the concept of *e pluribus unum* [out of many, one].

Chapter 6 is devoted to the idea of practising pedagogical nurturing based on hospitality between teachers and students, and equal accessibility to education for all children. These concepts represent the second and third dimension of 'The Moral Dimensions of Teaching', while the first dimension is focused on 'enculturating the young in a social and political democracy' (42). Bullough and Rosenberg claim that policymakers dating back to George W. Bush administration have been seduced by the neoliberal legacy. For that reason, they chose to pursue the marketisation of public education by incorporating charter schools and vouchers, thinking that equal access to education can be attained through these practices. With a great deal of disappointment, the authors explain that The National Board Certification has been handed to Pearson Education, a large British corporation. As a result of this decision, ironically, Pearson employees have become evaluators of qualifications for American teachers. Furthermore, the authors argue, a narrowed curriculum which focuses on basic literacy and numeracy is weakening America's economic competitiveness.

In conclusion, the authors argue that the fourth moral dimension is the idea that educators should be the stewards of education. The authors indicate that the concept of stewardship they espouse in this book is consistent with the notions of hospitality, conversation, dialogue, a healthy commons 'specified as generative spacing' in which the new ideas are developed through partnerships (50), shared experiences and virtue of listening. Democratic stewards of education, they argue, should be led by these postulates. Seneca's saying '*Homines dum docent discunt*' meaning men learn while they teach is invoked in support of one of the authors' closing arguments: that education is never a solitary vocation, but a milieu of possibilities. For that reason, the authors state that educators' quest for wisdom is a never-ending process. Readers who are interested in learning about both past and future perspectives on public schooling should certainly look for this intense, fact-based and inspiring book.

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Comparing ethnographies: local studies of education across the Americas, edited by Kathryn Anderson-Levitt and Elsie Rockwell, Washington DC, American Educational Research Association, 2017, 248 pp., £25 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-935302-67-7

This book edited by Elsie Rockwell and Kathryn Anderson-Levitt has many positive things to offer. It consists of five chapters, one commentary and one epilogue. *Comparing Ethnographies* is both stimulating and ambitious. In the introduction the editors explain that the principal aims of the book are: a) to challenge the parochial visions that seep into generalisations and policy imperatives in the field of education; b) to advance discussions of the need of constructing comparative perspectives and, c) to show what can be learned by comparing research across national and linguistic boundaries. All three objectives are entirely fulfiled.

Overall, *Comparing Ethnographies* focuses on the experiences of indigenous peoples, migrants and teachers both in-and-out of school. The book is a constant reminder that knowledge is always contextual and the editors emphasise the need to look for similarities and contrasts within and across contexts.

From the outset, the book challenges two well-established general assumptions. First is the understanding of the term 'the Americas'. Rockwell and Anderson-Levitt explain that English-speaking countries split the continent in North and South America. However, in Latin America, it is known as America, a single continent rather than two. They have carefully chosen the term 'the Americas' to capture the complex historical and cultural diversity as well as the interconnectivity among nations. The second general assumption challenged by *Comparing Ethnographies* is the practice of research in isolation. The book shows that collaboration of scholars as equals can and should take place across borders.

Another valuable aspect is the reminder that comparison itself is a necessary learning tool. We learn through comparisons and the book shows the value of comparing and offers different reasons to compare. According to the editors, comparing makes the familiar forms of schooling strange and not taken-for-granted. They explain that by comparing researchers can understand better the particular situations they are studying. However, I would add that by comparing, educational practitioners can also understand better the particular situations of their own everyday practice, an aspect that is very well evidenced in the book. Rockwell and Anderson-Levitt also show that across the north and the south there are contrasting purposes for comparing. Ethnographers from the north tend to focus on minority groups whereas Latin

American ethnographers tend to focus on the lack of equity across the region. However, as the book shows, despite prevailing structural inequalities, valuable experiences in teachers' work often surface in Latin American ethnographies.

The book is also novel about its own construction, with scholars from different countries co-authoring together in order to address a common theme, taking into account differences in relation to the contexts and they ways educational research is practiced across them. However, how exactly the idea of co-authoring was conceived and how the process of pairing co-authors was undertaken and by whom are aspects that Rockwell and Anderson-Levitt could have explained with more detail.

Rather than a compilation of single and unlinked chapters, the book is a rich mosaic that provides historical understandings about the challenges that education in its broad sense has had in the Americas, from past and recent struggles of inclusion to the current conditions of teachers' work under neoliberalism. In so doing, socio-economic, political and historical factors are well looked-after throughout. Depending on each reader's needs and interests, each chapter will offer different rhythms and insights.

In Chapter Two, Patricia Ames and Ana Maria Gomes take up the task of examining, problematising, historicising and contextualising the often taken-for-granted categories of majorities, minorities, inclusion and exclusion in Peru and Brazil. They see these categories as social constructions and as unfixed attributes. They show the utility of these categories in each context and the problems of exporting them without examining and contextualising them properly. They problematise the terms 'majority' and 'minority' by highlighting the changing status of indigenous populations and the subordination attached to them throughout time. Context and history are crucial elements of this chapter. The authors acknowledge that it is necessary to take into account the history of each country and the positionality of each researcher. They offer a brief historical overview of how both countries have dealt with education for indigenous people and how ethnographies of indigenous education are currently undertaken in both countries. Although there are many similarities between Brazil and Peru such as the approach towards assimilation, violence and people's demand for high-quality education, the authors highlight the challenge of comparing across Latin American nations because of the rich diversity and heterogeneity of conditions within the region.

In Chapter Three, Aurlyn Luykx and Ana Padawer focus on the ways in which global processes and discourses on educational reform impact upon the school experience of indigenous children in the US and Argentina. The authors start by looking at the similarities between both countries in terms of their postcolonial histories and their recent public policies. They also provide an interesting distinction between the adoption of intercultural and multicultural education in each country as well as a rich analysis of the political and economic interplay between the macro structure and the collective responses of marginalised groups. As with Ames and Gomes, they recognise the importance of the sense of place and the significance of the presence of Native teachers amongst indigenous communities.

In Chapter Four Gabriela Novaro and Lesley Bartlett expand the discussion on assimilation and inclusion. Their focus is on the relation between migration and education in the United States and Argentina from the experiences of Mexican and Bolivian migrants respectively. They offer a rich historical account of the development of the ideas of assimilation and inclusion within the academic and teaching discourses, and in so doing, reveal new modes of assimilation.

In Chapter Five, Kathryn Anderson-Levitt and Belmira Oliveira Bueno focus on the notion of teachers' work. The authors explore who takes up the work of teaching and the reasons for choosing their profession in four countries: Mexico, Argentina, Brazil and the United States. As with Luykx and Padawer in Chapter Three, the authors also link their analysis to the ways in

which the macrostructure (e.g. accountability; poverty) affects teachers' work across the region. Another valuable aspect is the discussion of the contextual challenges associated with researching teachers' work, from linguistic differences between Spanish and English to methodological choices. Anderson-Levitt and Bueno show that both linguistic and contextual differences are important because they reveal different ways of thinking, practicing and researching about teaching.

Overall, the book widely celebrates the contributions that ethnography has made as a research discipline, particularly in the field of education. It shows the long evolution of ethnography as a discipline from ethnology to meta-ethnography. It discusses whether ethnography has managed to overcome pitfalls associated to colonialism and Western supremacy. Ames and Gomes show that ethnography makes possible the consideration of multiple practices and identities arising in schools and communities, which allow us to see continuities instead of binaries. For Luykx and Padawer ethnography represents one of the few channels by which knowledge about indigenous societies is transmitted to the larger populations, whereas for Gabriela Novaro and Lesley Bartlett, ethnography documents the successes that quantitative studies would dismiss as outliers. In the Commentary, Marta Sánchez and George Noblit, show that ethnographic studies allow the upholding of difference in the current global era where a single reality – in education and elsewhere – is imposed by international organisations such as the OECD and the World Bank.

In the Epilogue Inés Dussel explains that for her, the book questions the use of categories, which are often considered equally relevant across contexts. For Dussel, the book encourages horizontal dialogue with others and manages to overcome linguistic, cultural and academic limitations across borders. Dussel concurs with Sánchez and Noblit on the fact that the current monolingualism of global learning metrics has silenced alternative perspectives. I agree with Dussel on the need of expanding the project of this book to 'other' Americas. Following her travel metaphor, I hope that the journey that has started with this book will continue.

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Uncertainty in Teacher Education Futures: Scenarios, Politics and STEM, by Sandy Schuck, Peter Aubusson, Kevin Burden & Sue Brindley, Singapore, Springer, 2018, 264pp, £79 (hbk), ISBN 978-981-10-8245-0

When I was first asked to review this book, I was a little hesitant, as STEM is not my area of expertise in either teaching or research. However, when I received my copy, it appealed to me from the very outset, as it is relevant to all teacher educators, not just those with an interest in STEM. Seeing the words 'futures' and 'uncertainty' captured my attention, and it was refreshing to see that I was not going to read something that was telling me what, as a teacher educator, I should do now and in the future (singular). Rather, it invited me to consider multiple *futures* and to embrace the inevitable uncertainty that this brings. As Loughran notes in the foreword, 'the authors offer their ideas and thinking about education for a different future' (p. v). Different from what, I wondered? The future that politicians want us to believe will eventuate? The future that

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children see looming before them (climate catastrophes included)? Or the future that educato can help to create through approaches to education and research that challenge the status quo As I read through the book, I came to see that the main message was the latter.

The authors' main framing arguments are presented in the first three chapters, where the outline the key drivers of teacher education, and the political landscapes, especially in Austral and the United Kingdom, that impact on the work of teachers and teacher educators. Th authors argue that 'teacher educators in public institutions are often excluded from th debates about reform ... [but] they need a seat at the table at which ... directions [for teach education] are being determined' (p. 2). This reminds me of the work of Berry and Forga (2018), who argue that teacher educators are increasingly becoming service providers rath than professional educators. Schuck et al. maintain that the 4 Cs (creativity, communicatio collaboration and critical thinking), rather than the 3Rs, are the key to successful learnir futures. They introduce the concept of *futures research methods*, which include horizon sca ning, driver analysis, Delphi panels, scenario production and backcasting. These methods a unpacked in a variety of ways in the body of the book.

In chapter 2, the authors interrogate what they see as the current 'drivers' of teacher educ tion, which are often forces outside the school system. These drivers include: the purpose or air of education; the notion of professionalism; curriculum and what knowledge is valued; a methods of learning and teaching, in particular evolving digital technologies. While these drive create 'contradictions, tensions and paradoxes' (p. 23), Schuck et al. argue that by identifying a analysing these drivers, teacher educators are in a powerful position to exercise choice, sha existing drivers and 'use new drivers to reclaim an agenda for schooling which speaks not simp to policy or even industry, but to the individual, to education for humanity in all its senses' (p. 2 A big ask, and a huge challenge in an era of increasing control and surveillance of education, bu teacher educators and their colleagues in schools don't take on this task, who will?

As chapter 3 outlines, the politics of education are powerful and all pervasive. Teachers a teacher educators are becoming increasingly deprofessionalised in an era of managerialism, the challenge is almost overwhelming. This is where the current emphasis on STEM educati is highlighted by the authors. They argue that current policy frames education as the way achieving economic success, and that 'the current emphasis in education on the STI curriculum, on quantitative data, on digital technology and on accountability through p formability is both a marker and product of a global ideology which constructs knowledge science, with certainty and truth accessible through the quantitative' (p. 29). This comes w a 'concomitant marginalisation of other forms of knowledge ... downgrad[ing] the humanit and arts as incidental to "real education"' (p.29). Chapter 3 concludes with a call to teac educators to respond to these challenges by reclaiming their professional voice, andl applying the 4Cs to their own practice. The authors remind us that 'the personal is political' – a potent message, but nonetheless a challenge to us all to examine our o contexts and practices, and to seek to work with our colleagues to 'talk back' to the seemin relentless march of deprofessionalisation and managerialism.

In the next 10 chapters, the authors discuss a range of challenges and futures resea methods in their quest to understand what the future of education and teacher educat might be, and how teacher educators might respond. Teacher educators are positioned as ac participants in shaping futures, and as 'transformative intellectuals' (p. 73) who are agent change. Schuck et al. argue that ever-evolving digital technologies change the nature of edi tion – where it happens and who holds the knowledge. Pervasive computing, learning anal and augmented/virtual reality 'demolish old certainties' and lead to 'unprecedented challen (p. 57) facing teachers and teacher educators. Despite the seriousness of these challen Schuck et al. believe that teacher educators have a 'unique opportunity to reconceptualise

reshape the educational landscape' (p. 59). In chapter 10, they maintain that knowledge itself is constantly changing, and that rather than responding to changes in knowledge (and practice) the focus should be on creating new knowledge that will take us into our uncertain futures.

Chapters 6–13 unpack the various futures research methods and how they have been utilised in a range of teacher education contexts. The authors insist that such research shouldn't be undertaken by teacher educators alone – harnessing the expertise of others, such as expert (Delphi) panels, undertaking literature reviews that search beyond empirical academic literature, and including a variety of stakeholders in education, is essential to the process of horizon scanning (identifying trends and issues) and backcasting (beginning with the end in mind, then looking forward to ways in which this future might be realised). Many of these ideas will be familiar to teacher educators, in one form or another, but they have perhaps not viewed these practices as research methods.

In the final chapter, Schuck et al. draw on stories to make the point that thinking about education and the future is not a recent phenomenon. We have always wondered what the future(s) will hold but the essential problem is that 'we are seeking to understand and gather evidence about something that is unknown and uncertain . . .' (p. 253). Despite this challenge, teacher educators need to utilise a range of futures research methods that help them to provide teachers of the future with the knowledge, skills and capacities that they will need throughout their careers, however long these may be. Just like the stories presented at the beginning of chapter 14, the future can be imagined, and these imaginings can contribute to our understanding and thinking about uncertain futures. The authors convincingly argue that as teacher educators, we must challenge the status quo if we are to have an active role in shaping our collective futures. We must not be afraid to embrace possibilities created by ever-changing technology, and 'to break out of our current limited thinking about education' (p. 259). As I said at the beginning of this review, the word 'uncertainty' in the title appealed to me, as it suggested searching for possibilities rather than finding the 'right' answers. Schuck et al. state that a successful teacher education programme produces graduates who doubt things rather than graduates who become overly confident. They point out that doubters are aware of the complexity of the work of teachers, and about their own uncertain futures.

This book is a very interesting read for anyone who is frustrated by the current state of education, and who is looking for new ways to view their own teaching and that of their pre-service teachers. We can never know what the future holds, as it is never here. The futures research methods that are outlined in the book provide some important insights into how we can approach these unknown (and unknowable) futures with some sense of imagined possibilities. While STEM is an important part of the education landscape, it is not a panacea for our challenges. It needs to be seen in conjunction with other areas of knowledge that are equally as valid. Together, these will equip teacher educators and their students with the tools to embrace our uncertain futures as well-educated and forward-thinking professionals.

Reference

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