

Book Reviews

Darryl Li, *The Universal Enemy: Jihad, Empire, and the Challenge of Solidarity*. Stanford University Press, pp. 364, 2020.

Who has the right to speak in the name of the *universal* is the framing question Darryl Li, a social anthropologist and a human rights attorney, asks in this timely and methodologically innovative, multi-sited ethnography on Islamic jihad, transnational solidarity, humanitarian interventions and the USA-led war on terror. By juxtaposing a group of foreign fighters who went to fight in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the Bosnian War (1992–1995) in solidarity with Bosnian Muslims, with other forms of international interventions and movements that Bosnia has hosted, Li questions the logic and rules by which universalisms operate. He proposes that one fruitful way of engaging in the analysis of jihad is to approach it as a form of universalism as well. Challenging the established norm that universalisms are owned by sovereign nation-states, he argues that these can be anthropologically investigated as practices of solidarity among people who self-organize to pursue a cause to which they feel personally faithful. Thus, the jihadi soldier engagement in armed violence in solidarity is compared to the ‘citizen-soldier as the paradigm for legitimate violence’ (p. 4). What ensues is a cartography of the practices of universalisms, and of the resemblance of jihad to those other forms of sovereign state-run universalisms.

The book offers an engaging and theoretically challenging read. It comprises two parts and seven chapters, and informative, extensive notes where much historical and legal background is contained. The first part is an ethnography of the Bosnian jihad; the other three chapters are devoted to the Non-Alignment Movement, Peacekeeping, and the Global War on Terror, all of which converge and meet in Bosnia. It is through the life stories and transnational trajectories of the jihadi soldiers, as the bearers of direct experiences with these universalisms, that the work of the ethnographic thick description unfolds. With careful consideration of the existing theoretical foundations and scholarly debates on jihad, the author laments that not enough attention and rigour has been invested in providing an understanding of why certain narratives of jihad still appeal to many Muslims. This underpins a critique of the insufficiency of Edward Said’s influential intervention on de-essentializing Islam, which highlights, unlike Samuel Huntington’s clash of civilizations, that Islam is not a monolith. However, Li notes that this is not enough to do justice to the complexity of the particularisms by which certain Islamic groups seem to operate.

A notable intervention he makes is the splitting and essentialization along race in the field among the jihadi and Bosnian soldiers. What starts as a battle in solidarity begins to split through the good/bad Muslim dichotomy and that of Arab/European Muslim. Bosnians are uneasy about the overly conservative religious orientations of their Arab brothers. There is a clash between the Arab and the Bosnian understanding and practice of Islam, and one of the jihadi leaders writes a booklet entitled 'Notions that Must be Corrected' in Bosnian Islam. There is a feeling that the jihadis are proselytizing, but we do not find out on whose behalf. These disagreements in Islamic orthopraxy have come to play an important role in postwar religious identification in Bosnia and are still dominant today.

The racial layering extends into the other universalisms. Soldiers with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFR) are deployed along lines of race as well. The Global South makes up the bulk of its force, and the way troops are stationed in Bosnia is also revealing. Pakistani UN soldiers are stationed in Travnik (in Central Bosnia), while Egyptians are stationed in Sarajevo, the capital. Their leaders are white European. On their end, the UN soldiers engage in double-dealing and messaging home and abroad. Though under the umbrella of the UN, media in their home countries convey the idea that Pakistanis and Egyptians are engaged in some form of fighting on behalf of the umma. However, the 'umma', from which the jihadi draws his legitimacy and in whose name, he fights, seems like an equally utopian imaginary, as is the perceived solidarity of all other universalist projects. Li's original contribution extends to an ethnographic portrayal of how the USA-led Global War on Terror has mounted an unprecedented securitization and racialization of Islam. Hence, naming the USA an Empire ascribes to it attributes of colonial like racism in the pursuit of Islamist terrorists.

Li's meticulous book offers a much needed theoretical and methodological intervention in anthropological discussions by combining legal and anthropological theoretical rigour with multi-sited ethnography across cultures, race and continents. It is particularly generative for scholars of Islam, as it extends the debate on issues of Islamic ethics beyond the existing scholarship. It also asks very bold questions: who has the right to deploy violence in the name of the universal?

This book will be of interest to a wide range of scholars and students in the anthropology of law, the state and human rights. To scholars of Islam, it offers a good case study in how Islam is, and is not, deployed in the pursuit of jihad. The most outstanding contribution this book makes, however, is the way in which it deconstructs solidarity through the lens of colonialism. As such, it belongs to the genealogy of scholarship on race and decolonization.

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Hannah Knox, *Thinking Like a Climate: Governing a City in Times of Environmental Change*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, pp. 328, 2020.

Climate change is arguably one of the most pressing issues facing humanity. Based on ethnographic fieldwork undertaken between 2011 and 2018 among city officials and activists in Manchester, UK, Hannah Knox's *Thinking Like a Climate: Governing a City in Times of Environmental Change* offers an impressive attempt to elucidate some of the challenges that climate change poses to modern forms of biopolitical and neoliberal governing and organization. As such, the author productively carves out a space for analysing how these processes currently participate in the reconfiguration of the political in other settings. Yet, given its ethnographic richness and theoretical agility, the book is of relevance to scholars whose interests are not limited to climate but also include urban governance, planning, expertise, data and energy.

Recurrent throughout the eight chapters is the notion of 'thinking like a climate', a conceptual tool that posits climate as a 'form of thought' (p. 6), and under the aegis of which the introduction outlines an approach to data, models and material objects not in terms of their reality but their form. Instead of concerning itself with the way the ideational translates into material practices, this framework allows for the treatment of a wide array of phenomena as interacting on a common plane of signs. It helps to hold within view heterogeneous manifestations of climate, from carbon numbers in spreadsheets to everyday attention to light bulbs, and to examine how human sociality emerges through various proxy objects, such as technical devices and natural processes. Accordingly, Knox's is not a posthuman anthropology, but an attempt to 'extend anthropology's remit to be able to attend to representational capacities that the modern social sciences have tended to bracket out as not central to human meaning-making processes' (p. 7). The account therefore sets itself apart from burgeoning attempts to bring nature into politics. By the same token, it refrains from using local accounts to critique the failures of modern reductionism. Rather, the practices of city administrators are treated as in and of themselves situated modes of action that engender new forms of knowledge and relationality.

The first part of the book examines the qualities of climate change as it is made detectable, measurable and scalable, including how its patterns are evidenced, presented and circulated. Numerous examples foreground how this work raises questions around what constitutes appropriate and proportional responses to climate change. When beginning to see things as 'systemic thermodynamic wholes and disaggregated contributory parts' (p. 83), sites of governing become redescribed in terms of their carbon-producing effects. The boundaries of the city are unsettled, and officials' efforts become oriented towards objects that had formerly been removed from local government control. Similar effects ensue from consumption-based carbon footprinting. As the findings of climate science encounter techniques of accounting, the coherence of objects begins to dissolve, partially undoing commodities and the categorical foundations of contemporary governing practices.

Things become newly political and lines of responsibility are blurred. By guiding us through numbers, graphs, projections and models, Knox steers our attention to her interlocutors' questions around the relationship between 'knowing and acting, planning and doing' (p. 155), as well as to their reconsiderations of what counts as action in the first place.

The second part of the book delves into the ways in which the formal qualities of climate change have been generative of different modes of doing politics and of being a person. By conceptualizing ecological show homes and energy monitoring devices as infrastructural trials and diagnostic tools, two of the chapters trace the various reconfigurations that climate change propels in how knowing and acting relate to one another outside the context of city administration. As figurative devices with diagnostic effects, energy monitors instigate novel possibilities to engage matter. They turn people's houses into 'sites where the public politics of energy and climate change comes to manifest' (p. 254), thereby presenting vernacular engineering as an expression of alternative modes of responsiveness, attunement and enquiry. We further get to follow how climatological forms of activism move beyond notions of such activism as necessarily post-political, instead creatively producing knowledge and objective facts without succumbing to dominant systems.

Several of the analytics elicited throughout the chapters are then invoked to rethink how anthropology itself might become responsive to climate change. This, we learn, requires that we move beyond the logic of additionality, whereby other ways of living are simply extracted and celebrated. It would likewise abstain from a critique of representationalism and rather conceive of representational practices as always and already 'entangled, interpellated, and formed through more material and energetic forms of representation and thought' (p. 265). While scholars of a more critical bent might find these propositions unconvincing, *Thinking Like a Climate* is nevertheless an excellent demonstration of the merit of such an endeavour for the discipline more broadly considered.

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