CSSH NOTES

Randal B. Woods, ed., *Vietnam and the American Political Tradition: The Politics of Dissent*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. 324 pp., index.

To review a volume such as this in this journal is a bit tricky. I am not an historian of the United States nor of its diplomatic history. Rather I am a pre-modern historian of Vietnam looking at a book on American legislative history that deals with Vietnam and our war in that country. I shall seek to examine it from a more Vietnamese point of view.

The volume is a collection of individual essays that can be divided into three sections. The initial two essays, following the introduction, provide, first, a general background on American anti-imperialism, then a look at the Second World War and the emergence of our foreign policy thereafter. The second section contains seven essays, each focusing on an individual senator and examining the personal context for and consequent acts in his anti-war stance. These senators (Gruening, McGovern, Church, Fulbright, Mansfield, Gore, and—the lone Republican—Cooper) emerged from a variety of backgrounds and brought numerous different motivations (intellectual, political, personal, etc.) to bear on their opposition to this conflict. The final section of two essays turns from the opposition in the Senate to the Executive and the two major presidents who were opposed by these senators: Johnson and Nixon. The result is a kaleidoscopic view of the war and the opposition to it as we reiterate the same years (the 1950s to the 1970s) nine different times.

On the American side, this discloses to us the varied motivations against and for the war, all within the broader context of American traditions concerning both internal and external matters. For a Vietnam specialist, it confirms all too strongly how little it mattered how little we actually knew about Vietnam and Southeast Asia at the time. American expertise on the country and the region have really only developed since the events discussed here, indeed in part because of them. There has always been the thought: if only we had known then what we came to know subsequently about that area. Reading this volume tends to confirm my feeling that the extent of actual knowledge on the area really did not matter that much. What counted, as detailed here, were the perceptions and experiences brought to the debate from other times and other places.

Only Mike Mansfield had any real Asian experience and expertise, as both a soldier and a scholar, enhanced by quicky "fact-finding missions" to the region invariably taken by American legislators. As far as I can tell, only the Republican Senator Mark Hatfield had actually lived for a time in Vietnam (in 1945), and unfortunately he was not included here. Otherwise, no such regional knowl-

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edge existed among those discussed. Gruening's expertise was in Latin America. Fulbright read up on Vietnam during a long propeller-driven flight across the Pacific. The other senators picked up what they wanted for their positions on the fly, and the two presidents had their own specialists to inform them. In general, personal knowledge of Vietnam appears to have been incidental to the decisions each made concerning the war.

The essays, while occasionally looking at the 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s, concentrate on the period of major American commitment under Johnson and Nixon, that is, from 1964 to 1973. Starting with the Tonkin Gulf resolution and how nearly all (reluctantly) voted for it, until American troops left Vietnam amidst strong calls for the end of the war, we relive the era through the numerous personal observations of these seven senators and two presidents. This approach is quite enlightening for understanding the American dynamics at play in the ongoing debates over our involvement in Vietnam. In the end, the strength of this collection is the contextualization of the varied individual stances, mainly anti-war. It shows us how little actual knowledge of the Vietnamese political tradition meant in the decision-making concerning the war, its beginnings, and its debates.

———John K. Whitmore, University of Michigan

Roger Ivar Lohmann, ed. *Dream Travelers: Sleep Experiences and Culture in the Western Pacific*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. 246 pp.

Dream Travelers is a collection of essays focusing on Western Pacific societies that weaves together new theoretical insights and richly detailed ethnographic analyses on dreams as travels. The result is a fascinating and impressively coherent volume. Recognizing that dreams in most societies are considered to represent actual travels of the human soul across temporal, spatial, and spiritual planes, the contributors take as their starting point questions about the social/political, cosmological/religious, and personal/psychological consequences of this assumption in eleven societies scattered across Melanesia, Aboriginal Australia, and Indonesia. Lohmann's introduction provides an informative historical overview of the social science literature on dreams, and then confronts methodological and epistemological problems that have long-stymied those whose interests in dreams are more cultural than psychoanalytical. These problems stem from the widely accepted notion that dreams are more problematic than other kinds of experiences because they are personal/private/internal and can only be made social/public through narrative. Dreams, so it goes, can only be known in a limited, biased, and filtered way. But, as Kracke reminds us in his Afterword, the inability to directly share experience or verify their content is not a unique feature of dreams, but extends to all sorts of social and cultural phenomena. More importantly for the volume's authors, these assumptions

highlight a bias in anthropological thinking about dreams as mere (often bizarre) imaginings of the individual, rather than as actual travel experiences that are fundamentally important to social, political, and religious life.

Taking seriously local beliefs about the ontological reality of dream travel experiences, while contextualizing the production of dream narratives—especially the role of the anthropologist in this process (Kempf and Hermann, Hollan)—the authors examine several topics: local dream theories (Kempf and Hermann, Poirier, Goodale); dream narratives and other modes of dream sharing and reporting (Robbins, Keen, Hollan, Lohmann, Tonkinson); local modes of dream interpretation such as deciphering signs and portents, and deciding on literal versus metaphorical interpretations (Stewart and Strathern, Poirier, Hollan); and the creatively transformative, sometimes political uses to which dreams are put (Robbins, Tonkinson, Keen, Hollan, Lohmann).

In all of the societies examined here, dreams are central to religious life and are valued for their role in mediating and connecting the human, non-human, and ancestral worlds (Tonkinson, Poirier, Keen, Goodale). It is through dreams that the spirit beings posited by religions—whether local ancestors and nature spirits, or introduced supernaturals such as the Christian God and Satan—become most real for people in immediate experience (Stewart and Strathern, Tonkinson, Lohmann). Another theme running through this volume is the revelatory power of dreams. Dreams may reveal culturally valuable new or previously hidden knowledge about the past, present, and future (Stewart and Strathern, Goodale), about ritual formulas and objects (Tonkinson, Poirier, Keen), and about local/global spaces, places, and relationships (Kempf and Hermann). People may then pursue or otherwise act upon these revelations in their waking life. Furthermore, such knowledge is especially potent because it derives from and is invested with the power and legitimacy of the spirit world (Robbins, Tonkinson, Lohmann).

This cursory overview cannot do justice to the array of themes so skillfully addressed by the contributors, including emotion in dreams, dreams and life-cycle transformations, dreams in processes of Christianization and colonialism, cultural theories and typologies of dreams, and ethnographic representations and analyses of dream narratives. Two especially noteworthy contributions to anthropology here are Poirier's proposed five-point methodology for studying dreams and dreaming, aspects of which are found in all of the essays, and Lohmann's theoretical model of dreams in relation to other modes of perception and cognition. Lohmann challenges us to consider dreams as part of a continuum of consciousness, rather than locating them on a polarized spectrum of "regular" versus "altered" states of consciousness.

Dream Travelers is clearly written, well-organized, theoretically persuasive, and a pleasure to read. I turned the last page feeling as if I understood dreams in ways that make sense to their dreamers, not just to anthropologists. I highly recommend this collection as essential reading for those with an interest in

dreams, religious experience, social organization and relationships, and psychology in Oceania and beyond.

———Katherine Boris Dernbach, University of Iowa

David M. Scobey, *Empire City: The Making and Meaning of the New York City Landscape*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002. 344 pp. $59.50 cloth; $24.95 paper.

New York City's great importance has necessarily attracted exceptional scholarship, including recently a Pulitzer Prize-winning history as well as widely acclaimed studies of the city's physical and social dimensions.[1] Viewed from virtually every angle, the great city's history might appear to have been pretty well exhausted. With the publication of David Scobey's *Empire City*, however, New York may have received its most innovative and important study to date. Viewing the city's mid-nineteenth century boom as a crucial point in its development, Scobey manages both to infuse familiar subjects with new meaning and to invest them with broad national consequence.

At the heart of Scobey's study is an extraordinarily dynamic real estate market, which attracts a number of competing efforts both to capitalize on it and to direct it. Scobey avoids describing the contestants in the struggle to shape the resulting new urban landscape simply in terms of partisan or class affiliation. Instead, he reveals an essentially cultural struggle in which one side seeks to maximize returns in the form of profits and patronage while the other pursues direct development in ways that can inform and civilize the masses. This latter effort, which he labels "bourgeois urbanism," embraced a kind of "moral environmentalism" as the means through which to educate taste, inculcate virtue, and refine sociability (161). Like virtually all New Yorkers, this element of genteel Victorians wanted to foster the city's capitalist energy. At the same time, it sought to harness that energy to advance civilized order. By the mid-1970s that effort had failed, but that is hardly the point of Scobey's book. It is the ride though the mid-nineteenth century that he wants to take his reader on, and what a ride it is.

New York in this period sought to exploit new capital opportunities to establish its national dominance, or empire as the title suggests, and to a considerable degree it succeeded through the creation of new circuits of communication and monetary exchange. Market forces remained volatile, however, bringing with them stunning contradictions of status and wealth and creating a cauldron that could explode at any time. The goal of fashioning a physical city that could both enhance monetary values and enforce moral ones thus gained

[1] Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Max Page, *The Creative Destruction of Manhattan, 1900–1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999); Tyler Anbinder, *Five Points* (New York: Free Press, 2001).

particular urgency. Among a number of important figures engaged in this struggle was Frederick Law Olmsted. As he does so often in the book, Scobey deepens the assessment of a landmark in urban design, both by unveiling the uneasy political alliance that made the creation of Olmsted's Central Park possible and the underlying recognition on all sides, as he says, that "its value was simultaneously moral *and* pecuniary" (240). Though additional visual analysis, he guides the reader through a virtual tour of Olmsted's creation, revealing further in the process how subtle elements of design were intended to convey a moral message.

Throughout this volume, Scobey's lively verbal as well as incisive visual talent animate a story that, much like the modern comic book, threatens to burst its frame for sheer energy. In his hands, statistical tables become a "kind of capitalist erotica," Brooklyn Bridge, with "its gateways, vistas, and gigantic scale" transforms "an apparatus of urban mobility into an allegory of metropolitan grandeur" (165), and a *Harper's Weekly* depiction of a crowded streetcar becomes "a Dantesque scene of moral, class, and sexual danger . . . " (147). Heated language suits Scobey's dynamic subject, and despite the tensions he creates as a writer, he manages always to maintain the frame. Valuable for its deft methodology and its ability to draw conclusions from material and visual as well as written artifacts, *Empire City* deserves a wide audience of those drawn not just to the subject of city building, but the nation building process to which Scobey links his subject. Most significantly, readers of this book will never look quite the same way at New York in particular, or the process of urbanization more generally.

———Howard Gillette, Jr., Rutgers University-Camden

Gillian Hart, *Disabling Globalization: Places of Power in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

Dominant understandings of globalization, according to Gillian Hart, are "disabling." By measuring the effect of the "global" on the "local," conventional impact studies rely on a flawed conceptual opposition of time and space: the "global" is temporal and dynamic, the "local" spatial and static (12–13). This drives the lament, heard in post-apartheid government circles, that "there is no alternative" to the pro-globalization policies adopted when the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was displaced in June 1996 by a plan known as Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR). "The central premise of GEAR was that an orthodox neoliberal package—tight fiscal austerity, monetary discipline, wage restraints, reducing corporate taxes, trade liberalization, and phasing out exchange controls—would lure investment . . . unleash rapid growth, tighten labor markets, and drive up wages" (20). A few years later, poverty had grown among the poorest and unemployment remained high.

What is the alternative? Is there an "enabling" account of globalization, one

that will guide effective practical action? Can one steer a course between the twin dangers of voluntarism and determinism? Hart thinks that there is an alternative, one based in land reform and an emphasis on the local state. After noting a neglect of the agrarian question by the African National Congress (82), Hart compares two places in Kwazulu-Natal, Newcastle-Madadeni and Ladysmith-Ezakheni (the hyphens indicate a merging of former white towns and black townships). Once nodes of apartheid-era industrial decentralization, and destinations for Africans forcibly removed from agricultural land (96–110), they are, for Hart, dynamic spaces: imposing conditions on actors, they are constitutive rather than simply reflective of globalization patterns.

The weight of Hart's book falls on Newcastle, where globalization is not metropolitan but south-south: Taiwanese settlement, and investment—first drawn by incentives in the 1980s—in spinning and knitting. Their venture is not an unalloyed success. The factory owners clash with their workers, and their prices are eventually undercut by cheaper knitwear from China. A prominent Taiwanese industrialist allies himself with the Inkatha Freedom Party and proposes a free-trade zone where union activity would be illegal; life would have been better, some say, had they settled in China instead (198).

Accordingly, Hart turns in a transnational comparison that makes her book invaluable to theorists of globalization more broadly, and to Taiwan and southwestern China (where many Taiwanese opened factories during these same years). She does this not to refute the industrialists' assumptions, but rather to argue that dispossession of land is not, as South African Marxist historians have often assumed, an essential precondition for industrial development. Hart views access to land not only in terms of individual land-restitution claims but as a "social wage." Such a reconceptualization links urban and rural issues, and may, she argues, promote alliances between organized labor and other political groupings acting in the arena of participatory democracy offered by the local state (309–12).

Hart is at pains to distinguish her argument from the pro-capitalist one for which access to land as an alibi for low wages: "I [am] *not* proposing land reform as a way of subsidizing low-wage, highly exploitative forms of industrialization, but rather a broader strategy to secure livelihoods" (230). It is clear enough that Hart's advocacy is on behalf of workers, and that she has little sympathy for their bosses. Objectively, however, the complicity of *Disabling Globalization* with the interests of the latter is inevitable; the land reform that it advocates is likely to "enable" both parties. This, of course, raises an ethical and political question that has never ceased to trouble Marxists: If, as Hart says, "emancipatory alternatives might be prefigured within already existing capitalisms" (292), does such complicity matter?

———Mark Sanders, Brandeis University

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