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CSSH NOTES

Simon Harrison. *Dark Trophies: Hunting and the Enemy Body in Modern War.* New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2012, ix, 233 pp.
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Simon de Montfort, Hugh Despenser the Younger, Oliver Cromwell, Joseph Haydn, René Descartes, Charlotte Corday, Tasmanian William Lanney, Tswana chief Luka Jantje, Zulu leader Bambata, Governor Sir Charles McCarthy, General George Gordon, Mahdi of the Sudan, Black Hawk, Osceola, Apache leader Mangas Coloradas, Little Crow, Captain Jack of the Modoc, Emanuel Swedenborg, Francisco Goya, Nat Turner, John Wilkes Booth, Joaquin Murieta—these are only some of the well-known figures whose heads were separated from their bodies, and often preserved as skull or pickle. Harrison wanders the historical record to ponder a broad range of human head collecting and other body part harvesting by religious devotees, by enemy tribes, by tropical headhunters, by affronted kings and other early state authorities, by phrenologists and miscellaneous medical students and professionals, and by scientists, collectors, and museum curators. He focuses, in particular, on body part trophy collecting during modern warfare and military campaigning from the late eighteenth century to the present. Although collectors have made off with a range of body parts including penises, testicles, hair and scalps, ears, noses, and fingers, skulls when cleaned of skin and flesh and emptied of brain have the advantage of slower decomposition. The human head, moreover, brings along all sorts of powerful symbolic import.

As a project in ethnographic comparison, Harrison's aim is to explain trophy taking in cultural terms. Although individual psychology and human biology may have some effect here or there, enemy skull collection does not necessarily implicate deviant Hannibal Lectors or that all humans are evolved killer apes. Instead, wartime trophy collection models metaphorically on widespread hunting practices including bringing home, as trophies, animal heads and other body parts as demonstrative of a hunter's prowess, masculinity, control, and generativity: "Trophy taking is therefore neither a hallmark of 'primitive' war, nor a private stress reaction to which fighters everywhere are susceptible in battle. Rather, it is a symbolic practice in which the cognized boundaries between humans and animals, expressed in the activity of hunting, are shifted into the domain of human relations, and made to serve

there as a model for violence between social groups" (10). Skull collecting, which popped up during the American Civil War, again during World Wars One and Two, and then again during the Vietnam War, need not depend on enduring cultural transmission—old soldiers passing along the covert practice to new recruits. Instead, anyone who conceptualizes modern warfare in terms of hunting might independently engage in trophy collection, blurring his cultural expectations of the two domains. Harrison, thus, calls trophy taking an "interstitial practice."

Harrison is careful to remark cultural and historical differences in the meanings and practices of body part collection and of hunting (focusing down on the modern era). People elsewhere entertain diverse notions of animal prey. Human heads, sometimes, represent agricultural "first-fruits" rather than animal hunting trophies. Solomon Islanders, New Zealand Maori warriors, medical students, phrenologists, criminologists, and anthropologists all have had their own particular reasons for collecting skulls. Harrison argues that modern military trophy taking has been shaped by changing European notions of race. Typically, collectors have restricted themselves to taking the body parts of those they consider racially inferior and who more easily might be posed as nonhuman animals—American Indians, Africans, or Asians including the Japanese during World War II, for example, rather than German or Italian enemies. True, although both Southerners (mostly) and Northerners made off with each other's body parts during the American Civil War, this was a particularly racialized conflict and each side fiercely dehumanized the other.

A more psychologically inclined analyst might have pursued even more vigorously some of Harrison's points, including his equation of warfare also with team sport and his comments touching on the basis of modern masculinity. Just how do those collectively signed, enemy trophy skulls (167) recall the signed baseballs and basketballs of winning sports teams? Why did head collection, or drinking liquor from a mascot enemy skull, often serve as a recruit's rite of passage into cohesive wartime military units? How do males bond through communion with human body parts? And if warfare = hunting, the fundamental question of trophy taking itself can be broadened. Why bring home the head (and, once, the testicles) of the stag to hang on domestic walls? And why the stag's head, mostly, and not the doe's?

New practices of body part collection today supplement onetime military trophy taking thanks to organ transplant advances. Kidneys, corneas, and skin harvested in one part of the world end up in bodies living in another. Although Harrison makes no such explicit prediction, his theory implies that trophy taking also will occur in future conflicts so long as Westerners continue to conceive metaphorically of warfare as a form of hunting and so long as racial perceptions persist. Some American servicemen in Afghanistan recently have proved themselves capable of urinating on enemy bodies although this

behavior leads one into cultural realms beyond hunting *per se*. Despite military regulation, soldiers in Iraq also posed themselves photographically with severed enemy fingers (194). Because Westerners, unlike onetime Melanesian ancestral head keepers, lack a detailed cultural template about how to curate skulls and other body parts, these typically become a problem, particularly after the original collector has left the military or has himself expired. Harrison recounts various sad stories of Americans struggling with what to do with granddad's trophy skull, now abandoned in the attic or garage. Just as Harrison has opened up the topic here, in real life, too, dark trophies often come to light.

———Lamont Lindstrom, University of Tulsa

Anna Bigelow. 2010. *Sharing the Sacred: Practicing Pluralism in Muslim North India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-536823-9, 314 pp., $74.

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Anna Bigelow's important study of Malerkotla, a Muslim-majority town in Hindu-dominated Punjab, uses the fifteenth-century Sufi saint Haider Shaykh's tomb shrine as a "window" (7) into the workings of convivial inter-religious interactions. *Sharing the Sacred* provides a fine-grained ethnographic analysis of how the social and historical context of this particular shared shrine is refracted in inter-communal interactions within the precincts of the holy place. Her study, segueing between descriptions of practices within the shrine, recountings of town and regional histories, and vignettes of contemporary interactions between Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains, demonstrates the "daily work of community maintenance" (122) involved in perpetuating a haven of inter-communal conviviality in the midst of a region deeply incised within historical memory by ethnic cleansing and population displacements.

Six years before the Partition of 1947, the Punjab population was 53 percent Muslim, 31 percent Hindu, and a 15 percent Sikh; by 2001 Muslims made up 1.5 percent of the state, Hindus 36.8 percent, and Sikhs 59.9 percent. Malerkotla has resisted the regional trend, maintaining a demographic since pre-Partition of 70 percent Muslim, 21 percent Hindu, and smaller numbers of Sikhs (5–8 percent), Jains, and Christians. Bigelow's study seeks to explain this anomaly, and offers a theoretically sophisticated counterpoint to studies of those sites of endemic inter-communal conflict that fuel the arguments of advocates of "the clash of civilizations." She analyses a setting in which conflictual events, rather than triggering widespread violence through well-established channels of communication, are instead "managed" through "self-policing on the part of the various religious communities" (224). In