

The volume is addressed not only to academic audiences, but also to a broad community of readers who are interested in Polish studies and postcolonial theory. It provides a speculative interpretation of the notion of identity, through a prism of “otherness” and Polish literary themes, which should be recognized as original. For Skórczewski, the significance of difference and “otherness” must be stressed in postcolonial studies as it is an essential epistemic principle that departs from the idea of “sameness, identity, and unity” (238) to show the unknown landscape and discourse of the Other. Also, postcolonial studies should be enlarged by reflections about evil and human susceptibility to it. Various expressions of colonial violence should be understood, rejected, and changed into positive values. Postcolonial theory thus must learn how to focus on universal human experience, stress human consciousness, and reject but forgive colonial oppressors to save the “mystery of humanity,” according to the author.

In conclusion, Skórczewski’s tome should be widely promoted. The author innovatively applies personalistic thought to the methodology of postcolonial studies and retreats from Said’s initial phase of postcolonialism to stress the value of human experience as well as the spirit of humanity that go beyond the existing postcolonial methodology. He writes, “Human experience. . . cannot be enclosed in postcolonial conceptualizations” (240). Promoting personalistic thought in postcolonial theory leads Skórczewski to a highly creative and original solution.

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***Steppe Dreams: Time, Mediation, and Postsocialist Celebrations in Kazakhstan.***

By Margarethe Adams. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020. x, 238 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. Figures. \$45.00, hard bound.

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In *Steppe Dreams*, Margarethe Adams provides a broad, nuanced account of postsocialist life in Kazakhstan through the lens of holiday celebrations. She examines media and song to tease out the temporal complications involved in nostalgically celebrating years and regimes past while also looking toward an uncertain future. Her book provides rich, thick descriptions of performances, media, and settings (mostly in urban Kazakhstan). Adams cites work and analyzes songs in the Russian and Kazakh languages and her English translations read accurately and smoothly. *Steppe Dreams* is free of excess jargon and technical musical terminology, so it can be easily read and appreciated by generalist scholars in the arts, humanities, and social sciences, and would be useful in graduate seminars on ethnography, media, and postsocialist culture.

The major contribution the work makes to the fields of sound studies and ethnomusicology is its drawing together of existing scholarship on timbre to posit it as an important and often under-analyzed sonic method of producing meaning. Reading from a specialists’ perspective, I would love to see this aspect of Adams’ work expanded in the future, to provide richer and more detailed accounts of the power of musical timbre throughout its different manifestations of musical life in postsocialist Kazakhstan.

One highlight of the book is its in-depth examination of teacher-student relationships, as Adams engaged in a study of the *qyl-qobyz* (bowed fiddle) over the course of her research. Her account of beginning to learn the qobyz in Chapter 1

(22–28) is especially evocative and a helpful example of how Adams weaves together personal accounts with larger political issues and theoretical perspectives to provide valuable insights on how those larger agendas are interpreted and internalized by individuals.

*Steppe Dreams* uses these various celebrations to tell important stories about Kazakhstan's complicated engagements with history and temporality. Chapter 2, "Airing Independence: Performing the Past and Future on December 16" discusses public Independence Day Celebrations and the state-sponsored project of imagining a national history. Chapter 3, "Same Time Next Year: Winter and Rhythmicity on Television," focuses on how individuals interact with nostalgic film and other media during New Year's celebrations. Chapter 4, "An Archaeology of Nauryz: The Ancient Past in Public Culture," treats memory and historical imagination in televised and concertized celebrations.

In Chapter 5, "Traveling Histories: Ethnicity, Mobility, and Religion in Spring Celebrations," Adams moves on from Nauryz and examines spring festivals in Uyghur, Ashkenazic Jewish, Evangelical Protestant, and Korean communities. This creates an especially thorough picture of the music, faith communities, and ethnic groups in Kazakhstan, since so much scholarship on the country focuses solely on the Kazakh and Russian populations.

Chapter 6, "Playing at War: Musical Commemorations of World War II on May 9," presents the continued prominence of World War II in Kazakh consciousness by examining musical celebrations marking Victory Day on May 9 (commemorating German surrender in 1945). The public celebrations and school performances and the interconnected temporalities of nostalgia and military commemoration Adams describes are helpful when considering how World War II persists in public memorials throughout the former Soviet Union, especially as the generation that personally experienced World War II is passing. This chapter also includes admirable breadth as it engages ethnically Kazakh and Russian experiences, as well as Jewish Kazakhstani commemoration.

Chapter 7, "The Precarious Present and the City of the Future," focuses primarily on religious shrines and pilgrimage and considers differing manifestations of Islamic practice and devotion as they connect to and create a sense of the ancient past that provides stability in the present. It then turns to the creation of the capital city, Astana, and President Nursultan Nazarbayev's vision for a future-oriented national project.

*Steppe Dreams*' scope is admirably broad, examining small private gatherings, large public festivities, and televised media. It addresses secular and religious activities in a variety of settings including public parks, private homes, schools, concert halls, and religious shrines, and includes those performed by ethnic minorities. The book is a pleasure to read and would be informative for scholars across Central Asian area studies, especially those interested in media, nostalgia, and temporality.

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***Legal Change in Post-Communist States: Progress, Reversions, Explanations.***

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Despite being an essential building block to economic and political transitions, law is often left out of the story. In *Legal Change in Post-Communist States*, law