form, to preside over the apportionment of lots (fragmentary tasks, privileges, knowledge, powers) that give all a stake but no one a purchase on the whole and keep the entire system in balance. At the same time, Lambek makes clear that he believes it is ethical imperatives that set all this in motion. As a result, the book not only provides portraits of the often quirky and original characters who bring this historical world into existence, but also insists on seeing them as doing so not just in order to seek out some kind of advantage, or to perform some identity, or even unconsciously to work out some structural problem, but to negotiate their way as human beings through what Lambek himself describes as a maze of walls and disguises and conflicting commitments to multiple characters living and dead (often several speaking through the same individual), all in endless struggle to do the right thing.

It is in this emphasis on "phronesis" that Lambek is at his most innovative. In a way this is odd. It is not as if anyone would argue that the moral dimension of human life is unimportant. Yet somehow (perhaps because Durkheim's argument that sociology is the scientific study of moral life became so closely associated with structural-functionalism?) contemporary practice theory has largely ignored the moral dimension or at least relegated it to a secondary status. One hopes that this work will encourage others to begin to fill the gap. Even if it does not, such an attempt to bring ethnography back to basic questions of the nature of the human condition is not only a first-rate contribution to African ethnography, but also a form of ethical practice in the best sense of the term.

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Laura C. Hammond. *This Place Will Become Home.* Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press. 2004. xii + 257 pp. Maps. Photographs. Notes. Glossary. Bibliography. Index. $45.00. Cloth.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Ethiopia experienced adversity unprecedented in its modern history. War, recurrent famine, and political persecution by a ruthless military regime took the lives of countless innocent people and forced hundreds of thousands to flee to neighboring countries. By 1990, the number of Ethiopians who had fled to Sudan had risen to almost a million. Many of these refugees have slowly returned since the collapse of the military regime in 1991. Laura Hammond's *This Place Will Become Home* provides a captivating story about how a group of repatriated Ethiopians have reconstructed their lives and livelihoods from scratch and against all odds in a place they call Ada Bai. The book is the result of an exhaustive anthropological study that was carried out over a period of nearly two years in northwestern Ethiopia in the mid-1990s.

In the first of six chapters, Hammond provides a brief history of the civil war in Tigray and its devastating impact on the people, the land, and the economy. According to Hammond, two principal factors led thousands of Tigrayans to flee to neighboring Sudan in the 1980s. One was the escalation of the military campaign against the insurgent movement in Tigray. The other was the government's deliberate withholding of food relief to the victims of the 1984–85 famine in an effort to starve the entire Tigray population into submission.

Chapter 2 describes life in refugee camps in Sudan based on individual accounts of returnees (from Wad Kowli/Safawa camps) and reports from various secondary sources. Hammond portrays a situation in which refugees suffered from appalling material deprivation and diseases in their first two years in refugee camps. As time passed, however, their cultural background, ingenuity, and hard work, together with generous support from international relief organizations, "enable[d] them to survive, and thrive, in their new habitations" (24). Of course, while this may be true of returnees from these particular camps, it was not necessarily the case for all other refugees. Scattered in twenty-six or so camps in eastern Sudan, Ethiopian refugees were unable to move in order to realize social and economic opportunities. Nor were they allowed to become settled among their hosts or contribute their know-how and labor to Sudan's economy. Most refugees suffered from perpetual food and water shortages, inadequate shelter and sanitation, and little or no access to health services.

In subsequent chapters, Hammond examines the process by which the returnees transformed a desolate lowland area of Ada Bai into a livable community of homes, shops, and farms, with little no financial or material assistance from outside agencies. The community the returnees established, the author writes, combined features of their places of origin in pre-exile highland Tigray and of the refugee camps in Sudan, as well as innovations appropriate to their new environment. She looks closely at household strategies adopted by Ada Bai returnees to meet their basic daily necessities and to enhance the viability of their community, and then turns to a detailed discussion of birth, death, and life cycle rituals and beliefs espoused and practiced by Ada Bayans. One cannot help feeling a sense of melancholy when reading this chapter, especially regarding how Ada Bayans respond to morbidity and mortality and the indifference of health-care institutions to illness and death. Hammond writes that people routinely opt for traditional remedies to cure diseases or injuries—remedies, she says, that could harm or even cause death. Illness and death are mostly explained by spirit possession or the evil eye, or attributed to God's will. Parents become resigned to the death of their young children once they become seriously ill. Health-care workers lack compassion toward their patients, a situation painfully witnessed by Hammond in the course of her many attempts to help sick friends access health services.

The final chapter surveys the ways in which Ada Bai returnees' lives

and livelihoods are linked to and affected by the outside world. They have been influenced by neighboring Sudan and Eritrea through commercial farm employment and trade, by transfer of financial resources from family members living abroad, and by their national government's postreturn integration policies. A critical finding articulated in this chapter is that returnees' lives (especially during the first two years following their repatriation) were made extremely difficult by the failure of the national government and of international aid agencies to provide reconstruction assistance, a point the author reiterates in her conclusion as she underscores the harsh realities of refugee reintegration.

This Place Will Become Home is an excellent piece of scholarship. The richness of the ethnography is remarkable. Thanks to Hammond's keen eye for detail, readers feel as if they are experiencing first-hand the day-to-day struggle of Ada Bayans in their unrelenting efforts to reconstruct a new habitat out of a less-than-hospitable geographic environment. By highlighting the extraordinary challenges facing the Ada Bai returnees, Hammond offers a significant contribution to research in the field of forced migration and expands our understanding of the dilemmas and complexities concerning refugee repatriation. There are many other insights in this work. The author pays attention to issues relating to gender differences, the adverse impacts of harmful traditional practices on women, the politics of identity and decentralization in postconflict Ethiopia, and the politics of international humanitarian assistance.

My one criticism of this otherwise perceptive, compelling, thorough, and informative work concerns the absence of data comparing Ada Bai with other returnee communities. One might ask: Why did the Ethiopian government opt to repatriate Ada Bayans on its own without securing international help, while returnees elsewhere were able to get some reintegration support? For instance, returnees to Rawyan, Metema, Kokit, Shehedi, and Kumar in Tigray and Amhara Regional States were given reintegration assistance in the form of primary schools, health clinics, waterholes, and farm and household equipment. Returnees (from Djibouti and Kenya) to Somali and Oromiya Regional States were also provided with agricultural hand tools, seeds, livestock, beehives, and equipment for income generating activities.

This criticism aside, Hammond has produced a groundbreaking work that will appeal to a wide audience of scholars, development policymakers, and humanitarian organizations. The book is enhanced by a series of photographs depicting the faces and activities of the Ada Bai residents. Readers will also appreciate the extensive index, the Tigriny and Amharic glossary, and the useful discursive endnotes.

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https://doi.org/10.1353/arw.2006.0074 Published online by Cambridge University Press