

# CSSH NOTES

Michael W. Young. *Malinowski: Odyssey of an Anthropologist 1884–1920*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.

Ever since the 1967 posthumous publication of parts of Malinowski's field diaries (*A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*), the legendary ethnographer has been the subject of a dual fascination—of interest because of both his pioneering ethnographic work and also for what we learned from his diaries about his complex psyche. The disparity between Malinowski's productive public persona and his tormented private soul has puzzled anthropologists ever since. Now, with the publication of Michael Young's *Malinowski: Odyssey of an Anthropologist, 1884–1920*, we need no longer rely on our own flights of fancy to imagine the totality of Malinowski.

Young presents us with an ambitious literary biography, and an engaging read as well. In this deftly-written account, Young masterfully navigates a diverse terrain of intricate historical detail, lusty amorous adventures, and ethnographic enlightenment, making the book read like adventure story, romance, and anthropological history all wrapped into one. Young shows us how the seemingly incongruent aspects of Malinowski's persona—meticulous researcher, prolific writer, Polish alien enemy, lonely misanthrope, devoted son, passionate lover, tormented human being, and desirous dreamer—all fit seamlessly together.

From the outset, Young lays out his intentions: "I want to show that so much more was happening in Malinowski's life during the various phases of his field-work than the detailed accumulation of anthropological data" (p. xxii). Indeed, the anthropological aspects get surprisingly short shrift when compared to what Young shares about the social, political, psychological, and medical strands that make up the legendary figure's life. Just as Malinowski was driven by a desire to understand the native point of view, Young, in true Malinowskian style, doggedly seeks to understand Malinowski's point of view.

In doing so, Young makes his biographical research methods transparent. These consist of the painstaking piecing together of Malinowski's full-bodied life from tattered and dim fragments, such as faded photographs from which he tries to read the lines of Malinowski's pouting mouth or solemn facial expression, trails of postcards Malinowski sent to friends while on a Cook's tour of Europe with his mother, notes he sketched for unwritten books, and always jottings in his diaries. Fortunately for Young, "Malinowski saved almost every document that came his way" (xxix).

The hefty 690-page biography is divided into three parts. Part I (1884–1910) covers in exacting detail (occasionally more thorough than seems necessary) the early part of Malinowski's life: his absent linguist father whose gaze young Malinowski avoided (and who died when Malinowski was fourteen); the enveloping embrace of his doting mother; his early fascination with travel; his love of Frazer's *Golden Bough*; his admiration for Joseph Conrad and his ability to explore the empire's outposts and return with fabulous tales; his family's social circles in Poland, where "culture became the nation's line of defense" (11); his early experiences with the duality of urban and rural life; his own preoccupation with his physical needs and delicate health (which included near blindness and depression); his unrivaled schooling; his fascination with maps; his youthful love affair with Annie; and his almost obsessive need for self-discipline, as evidenced in his daily exercises in the application of willpower.

Part II (1910–1914) progresses to Malinowski's attraction to English culture and his relocation to London; his studies at the London School of Economics; the influence of the Cambridge expedition to the Torres Strait (which marked the beginning of modern fieldwork-based anthropology in Britain); his friendships with such luminaries as Haddon, Rivers, Seligmann, and Westermarck; and the early stages of his writing. And always, there are Malinowski's many romances, both joyous and draining, in which he totally immerses himself, and which constantly infuse his studies and writing.

Finally, in Part III (1914–1920), Malinowski arrives in New Guinea. He begins his fieldwork in the Trobriand Islands after a circuitous route. He first spends several months in Australia, then works in the Port Moresby area of New Guinea, and then moves on to the island of Mailu on New Guinea's southern coast. During this period, Malinowski's horizon is clouded by news of World War I, by his own sense of alienation from his Polish homeland and mother, and by his longing for the growing trail of women with whom he had fallen in love in England and Australia. His lengthy sojourn in New Guinea (1914–1918) was punctuated by several trips back to Australia to write up his work and visit friends.

Although conducted almost a century ago, Malinowski's research in New Guinea still resonates with much that is familiar to ethnographers today: dependence on intermediaries to make connections in the field; days of despondency and despair; escape into novels, naps, and mail; frequent trips away from the field; and, as Young wanted to underscore in the case of Malinowski, the general sense that life beyond "the field" influences one's research as much as do the lofty ideals of method and theory. When the war is over, Malinowski departs from the Trobriand Islands, confiding in his diary that he is relieved to leave the people and village behind him. He returns to Australia and his wedding with Elsie.

The most precious gems of the book are those rare moments of brilliant insight when Young, who generally shies away from speculative interpretation,

consciously unites Malinowski's inner turmoil with his anthropological contributions. One such example is when Young describes how in the Trobriand Islands Malinowski constantly felt in limbo—as though he were passing time, stranded, waiting to leave—and how this dislocating feeling of suspended time may have influenced his ideas about synchrony and functionalism (523).

This impressive volume covers only the first thirty-five years of Malinowski's life (and in the introduction Young hints that a second volume may follow). It ends with Malinowski sailing back to Europe with his “notebooks full of riches” (610), much like Jason returning with his fleece. Although Young has written several other books, this monumental, labor-of-love tome may well be his own golden fleece.

———Miriam Kahn, University of Washington

Anna Tsing. *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connections*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005.

In *Friction*, Anna Tsing uses logging practices and timber consumption, environmental activisms and ideas about nature, local loss of livelihood and local despair over the loss of forest-as-life (as opposed to forest-as-resources), and Indonesian nation-making through business practices and international investment as her entry points for a richly argued and ethnographically nuanced analysis of the social processes by which the spatial, discursive, and metaphoric sites that have come to be known as the ‘local’ and the ‘global’ are made by each other. Her ethnographic contribution is her ability to demonstrate multiple experiences of events—from Meratus Dayak elders to Indonesian environmentalists, from Indonesian businessmen to consumers in an IKEA, from the Korean Development Company to Freeport McMoRan—which each person and institution understands and narrates differently. Indeed, Tsing shows that these people and institutions understand events and misunderstand each other in profound ways, but that the misunderstandings are productive, creating the social fact that is the Indonesian forest.

She begins by asking how one should approach the study of the global, then proceeds, throughout the book, to explode both the idea of an independent ‘global’ and the ‘local’/‘global’ dichotomy. She does so by showing how the two are mutually constituted in an on-going dialectic and by teasing out the friction between the imagined universal and the imaged particular. She grounds her analysis in a lengthy introductory discussion of the claims made for universals. The book itself is organized around three motivating dreams of the universal that are at the center of contemporary humanism: prosperity, knowledge, and freedom.

Tsing's basic argument is that everything and everyone in the world depends upon global connection and that capitalism, science, and politics, *as processes*,

are especially dependent upon them. Throughout the book she tracks capital, scientific knowledge, and political ideas as they move and traces them back to a kind of ideology of the universal. Yet she argues, using her unique ethnographic style, that neither these processes nor the universal claims on which they are based make everywhere and everything the same. Her metaphor of friction works because she shows how previous attempts to track flows around the planet have fetishized the objects and subjects that are doing the moving and have focused too little on the social creativity at the sites where peoples, ideas, practices, and politics come together in the wake of these objects' and subjects' departure. Her flows do not image the globe as a marble—smooth, solid, and slick, but rather as something like a Durian fruit—pointy, messy, and sticky, with endless possibilities for surprises, impediments, and barriers, and well worth exploring beneath its surface. In places, Tsing's text also requires a good deal of work to penetrate, yet that, too, is well worth the effort.

*Friction* brings new life to the anthropological notion of multi-sited fieldwork by taking sites of ethnography to be everything from the mountains and villages of South Kalimantan to the offices of Wall Street investors and brokers to the imaginations of tourists seeking an exotic, wild, and untouched Indonesia. Cultural diversity is not lost in the mix—Tsing's story is not one of homogenization but rather of local social practices in her out-of-the-way places of long-term ethnographic research, making and being made by the frictions between places, peoples, and practices. Methodologically, Tsing argues that it is impossible to fully understand and appreciate every social group along the chains of any global connection, yet she holds onto the ethnographic methods of participant observation and interviews as her main source of data. As anthropology becomes more fixated on connections, commodity chains, and articulations between our 'field sites' and larger social, economic, and political processes, we must ask how this is changing our methods. She presents in this book an example of an ethnography that, while multi-sided and multi-temporal, does not simply skim the surface with thin descriptions. This book is about process, and it takes seriously the idea that cultural objects and subjects are never given, but rather are made within the friction of what Tsing calls throughout the book "worldly encounter."

*Friction* will be of interest across disciplinary and geographic boundaries. As a methodological text—and in many ways that it is what it is meant to be—it will appeal to anthropologists, human geographers, sociologists, and others dependant on ethnographic methodologies. Though geographically focused on Indonesia, it could well serve as a model for those working to understand similar processes in other parts of the world.

———Paige West, Barnard College and Columbia University

Maryjane Osa. *Solidarity and Contention*. Social Movements, Protest, and Contestation, vol. 18. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

Osa's study is part of a larger literature that looks at the decomposition of communism and postcommunist politics through the prism of the literature on social movements. The book stands out, along with Grzegorz Ekiert and Jan Kubik's *Rebellious Civil Society* and John Glenn's *Framing Democracy*, as among the best in this school of research. Osa concentrates on the creation of networks of resistance in communist Poland from early 1950s to the period of Solidarity's formation and suppression in 1980–1982.

The book seeks to answer two larger questions: First, how is it possible for a widespread protest movement like Solidarity to emerge in an authoritarian context? Second, why do some protests give rise to enduring social movements while others rapidly demobilize? To answer these questions Osa examines protest dynamics through the prism of several different strands in contemporary social movement theory, including political opportunity structures, network analysis, cultural framing, and protest cycles. She molds and adapts these concepts into a larger model to understand the give and take between state and society in a contested authoritarian polity. The model integrates several critical concerns: how protest actors are constrained by the existing structure of political opportunities, how triggering events interpreted through cultural frames can catalyze existing social networks to mobilize for protest, and, in turn, how such protests can alter political opportunity structures.

The book also presents a thorough discussion of protest action, repression, and the rise and fall of opposition groups in Poland from 1950 through 1982. To do this, Osa has done an impressive amount of work to develop data sets on social protest, oppositional organizations, and political repression in communist Poland.

Osa's depictions of events are original, and break with some of the more prominent analyses of the politics of the communist period in Poland. Two aspects of her interpretation strike me as particularly notable. First, she argues for greater continuity between the early period of resistance to communism and the more sustained opposition of the 1970s and 1980s. Osa also argues for the centrality of Catholicism to Polish resistance. She is to be lauded for making a serious sociological argument rather than letting a positive or negative attitude toward hagiographical accounts of the role of the Church drive her analysis. Her discussion of the Great Novena of 1966 (the 1000-year anniversary of the adoption of Catholicism) adds much to our understanding.

Another important purpose of the book is to engage the rich literature on the rise of civil society in Eastern Europe, particularly the legion of studies that have looked at its origins in Poland in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Here, Osa breaks from the dominant theme in the literature, arguing that civil society was present in Poland from the 1950s. Here I disagree with her, but I suspect that

our differences may have more to do with different concepts of civil society rather than understandings of the politics of the 1950s and 1960s.

A second problem that I have with the book is the limited ability of the data-event component of Osa's model to do full justice to the period of the late 1970s. Her data, drawn largely from the *World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators III, 1948–82*, simply does not seem to have picked up the consistent repression to which the opposition of this era was subjected. The only place to really get this data is from the Polish underground press of the period. Another problem with protest event-data analysis is that it can miss important developments, particularly organizational ones. The period from 1976 through 1980 was one of intense organizational and underground publishing activity, which by its nature eschews a public profile most of the time. This is not a problem specific to Osa, but of data-event analysis generally. It does not do a great deal of damage to her account because she compensates for its limitations with both her network analysis of the Polish opposition and her interpretative account of the period. Her use of multiple methods provides a useful corrective.

Even where I did have differences with the author, I found the process of working through her arguments to be highly rewarding. In many cases it forced me to reexamine my views. The book is theoretically sophisticated, empirically rich, and highly original in its interpretations, and provides another demonstration of how the integration of social movement and civil society approaches to the problems of resistance to authoritarianism and the transition to democracy can be fruitful.

———Michael Bernhard, Pennsylvania State University

Sandhya Shukla. *India Abroad: Diasporic Cultures of Postwar America and England*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003.

Sandhya Shukla has written a highly interdisciplinary comparison of Indian diasporic cultures in Britain and the United States. Specializing in Anthropology and Asian American Studies, she is particularly strong on historical and literary text analysis. She says, "The relational aspects of a range of texts and experiences, which include historical narratives, cultural organizations, autobiography and fiction, musical performance and films, are of paramount importance in this critical ethnography" (20). Contending that the Indian diaspora confronts "a simultaneous nationalism and internationalism," she is celebratory about India and "formations of Indianness," and uses phrases like "amazing force" and "wildly multicultural" (17). Her exploration shows "the tremendous impulse to multiple nationality that Indianness abroad has made visible" (14) and, "the amazing persistence of Indian cultures in so many places" (22).

Shukhla covers Indian immigrants in both sites from before World War II.

The postwar part of the subtitle is not really taken up analytically, as she structures her historical material more along the lines suggested by changes in immigration law and successive waves of immigrants from India in each country. Her method is selective: she says, “there is no singular history, but a set of stories about the past . . .” (27). Discussing “Little Indias,” she focuses on Jackson Heights, New York, and Southall, London. Comparing diasporic literature about the United Kingdom and the United States, she focuses on Krishnalal Shridharani, Dalip Singh Saund, Amitav Ghosh, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Abraham Verghese, and Urmila Mohapatra. Examining immigrant newspapers, journals, and films, she focuses on *India Abroad* and *News-India* in the United States, and *India News*, *India Weekly*, *Asian Times*, and *India Mail* in the United Kingdom.

Shukla’s contrast of the Indian diasporas in Britain and the United States is compelling and convincing. She examines early diasporic writers to show that “Ideologies of America . . . gave new ideas of nationality, of Americanness and Indianness, a flexibility unmatched by British national discourses” (137). Comparing *Bhaji on the Beach* and *Mississippi Masala*, she remarks, “The stories for ethnicity in these cultural occasions, then, are differently informed, in Britain by antiracism and in the United States by multiculturalism, and lead to very different senses of nationality and identity, in a contemporaneous set of representations” (245). She also discusses Apache Indian and other bhangra and cosmopolitan music developed by the second generations, and the ways in which “India is a metaphor that can do all sorts of work in a conceptual space far removed from the nation-state” (230). Surprisingly, her examination of newspapers and journals finds “how little the self-appointed cultural representatives of each of the national communities knew about one another, and how differently they saw themselves . . .,” throwing into question “the presumed diasporic connections among Indians around the world” (205). Here some ethnographic work, perhaps on global distributions of family members and marriage arrangements, probably would have shown strong connections (as my own ethnographic work demonstrates).

Looking at race, generations, and gender, as well as ethnicity, Shukhla has brought together an engaging range of interdisciplinary work and used it well to make points “about the subjectivity of nation and nationality, in which India and Indianness are deeply fissured, heterogeneous, and yet tremendously powerful” (177). Readers already familiar with much of the material will appreciate the ways in which Shukhla engages with it, and the section on immigrant newspapers and journals presents new material. Undergraduates may find the range and complexity of her observations somewhat daunting. One could wish for more attention to non-Hindus and, paradoxically, more interrogation of diasporic Hindu religious and cultural nationalism. Shukla seems to consider “traditionalist and politically conservative ideas in the name of cultural celebration” to be “static definitions of community,” while she is investigating “a more

complicated and hybrid set of identities,” “vital and dynamic cultures” (246–47). Unfortunately, Hindu religious and cultural nationalism is anything but static (and others are investigating this). There is no bibliography, and a few minor errors (of agreement, and non-words like “identificatory” and “narratival”) suggest that the editing could have been more rigorous.

———Karen Leonard, University of California at Irvine