discussing the actions of anti-Soviet elements: “By confessing their criminal actions and intentions, they simply inhabited, with their consciousness, the position to which they had been assigned in advance” (195). Petrov then turns to the 1934 Writers’ Congress, arguing that the repeated addresses to the assembly by groups—kolkhoz workers, factory workers, schoolchildren—with the demand that the writers “show us,” was part of the performance of socialist realism. In a fascinating explication of the speeches of Maksim Gor′kii, Aleksandr Avdeenko, Vladimir Kirshon, Abram Lezhnev, Iurii Olesha and others, Petrov argues that whatever the reason—true belief, self-preservation, or “resigned acceptance”—the speeches all filled the same role in the “official spectacle” and met the demands of the “official script” (218). Each speaker described the transformation that occurs when a writer “realized that he was not the one who generated the image of the world; he was just the site of seeing” (217).

Chapter 10, which serves as a conclusion for Petrov’s study, is a reading of Mikheil Chiaureli’s film *The Vow* (1946) as a metacommentary on socialist realism. Petrov illustrates the argument he has made in the previous chapters of Part 2 by showing that the film repeatedly demonstrates that the accomplishments of characters are not their own.

Unfortunately, Part 2 suffers from the same organizational problems as Part 1, a shame because Petrov’s intriguing argument is in continual danger of losing the reader. Chapters 9 and 10 are a particularly exciting new take on Stalinist culture as performance, an old cliche refreshed by Petrov’s discussion of the Writer’s Congress and *The Vow*. This, however, does not entirely make up for the lack of road signs for the reader, including the lack of a conclusion. Chapter 10 begins with Petrov telling the reader that he “will advance [his] thesis” (220) through a discussion of *The Vow*. Unless the reader has looked ahead, there is no indication that this chapter will be the final statement on the book. Chapter 10 could easily stand in as a conclusion, but it should have a little more call-back to the entire book than it does, and it definitely should be called something other than “Chapter 10.”

Automatic for the Masses makes an intriguing argument about socialist realism and performance that should be read by anyone interested in 1920s Soviet culture and the origins and definition of socialist realism.

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Ethnographies of Grey Zones in Eastern Europe: Relations, Borders, and Invisibilities. Ed. Ida Harboe Knudsen and Martin Demant Frederiksen. Anthem Series on Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies. London: Anthem Press, 2015. vi, 205 pp. Notes. Index. $99.95, hard bound. $40.00, paper.

The volume comprises nine empirical chapters and four more reflective “broader perspectives,” including the introduction. The volume developed out of a conference in 2013 with a similar title. The conference call and resulting book relate to a recent and dominant debate on the anthropological side of studies of the region—the critique of the teleological notion of social and political "transition" of post-socialist countries. The editors highlight the importance of focusing on the near universal experiences of increased insecurity and dislocation, despite the supposed finality and completedness of the reorientation towards liberal democracy and the market economy among post-communist, EU-accession countries. The orientation of the book is familiar to most scholars working on social problems of post-communist transformation and promises to provide a satisfying book-length broad brush, supplementing the continued interest in the debate. Indeed, both the editors' introduction and second chapter by Frances Pine more than achieve this aim. Pine in particular provides a succinct but detailed overview of the significance of the study of the everyday (through ethnographic approaches) to draw attention to the mismatch between the ordinary experience of social change and the "plan," whether relating to socialism, transition or ongoing neoliberal reform (25).

The term "grey zones" is presented as a "unifying concept" for the empirical chapters in the volume—it does a lot of heavy-lifting and at times is under strain because of it. This is because the "grey" the editors take their cue from relates to very broad and different conceptions, including Srila Roy on extreme violence become ordinary and A. F. Robertson on the "grey zone" of informality and corruption.[1] The introduction highlights the common ambiguity at the heart of the contemporary experience of economic, bordering, and citizen-state relations (an alternative demarcation of the three respective book sections). In an ambitious sleight of hand, the editors argue that "grey zones" encompass both geographical empirical objects and serve as a conceptual tool. There is no doubt that the former is successful—the volume highlights the ambiguities relating to borders, incomplete ("invisible") citizenship, and other problematized "relations" as they pertain to Lithuania, Belarus, Poland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Greece, Albania, Turkey and Georgia—glossed as eastern Europe and "beyond." Wisely, part of the introduction is also spent critiquing the assumption of commonality of experience and pathway for post-socialist polities, and the importance of "understanding eastern Europe in its own right" (8) as neither narrowly "post-socialist," nor unambiguously "returning" to Europe. The most interesting and original part of the book's arc is that EU membership (and its future possibility) remains a shadowy and incomplete grey zone—whether this relates to transition to market, law-based, citizenship and property "norms," or geographical integrity.

In the two non-empirical, reflective chapters, Pine provides an incisive example of how "gaming" the system of EU agricultural policy in Poland resembles approaches to socialist-era planning (37), while Sarah Green explores the gaps, inconsistencies and ambiguities of EU and nation-state border regimes at the peripheries of Europe—in the Aegean and on the Greek-Albanian border. In doing this her view agrees with that of Pine in showing the limits of EU hegemonic power. In critically examining the meaning of EU membership for ordinary citizens, the grounded approach of the volume is urgently needed and proves the value of a broad, area approach.

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[1] Srila Roy, "The Grey Zone: The "Ordinary" Violence of Extraordinary Times," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 14, no. 2 (2008): 316–33; A. F. Robertson, "The Anthropology of Grey Zones," *Ethnos* 71, no. 4 (2006): 569–73.

While the concept of "grey zones" proves a strength in linking the geographical—eastern Europe, post-socialist spaces and beyond—it is arguably less successful in accommodating the empirical work relating to borders and connecting this with the rest of the volume. This is despite the empirical chapters being of a uniformly high quality and tightly organised and edited. In the coda to the book, Nils Bubandt does a sterling job of arguing that anthropology today is by default "grey"—meaning theoretically and analytically pluralist. He also draws attention to the issue of rendering the term so capacious that it risks losing its analytical edge: for the contributors identity is grey; nation states are grey; politics is grey; the economy is grey (188). Bubandt goes on to note that ambiguity can be theoretically apprehended through any one of many named approaches used in cultural and social sciences: Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze and Pierre-Félix Guattari, Alain Badiou, and Donna Haraway. In this volume Giorgio Agamben gets a few references, as one would expect in a work dealing with citizenship and borders, but in addition to some engagement with Alexei Yurchak and Yael Navaro-Yashin, the reader could do with more theoretical cross-references such as those proposed by Bubandt.

Despite the theoretical underdevelopment of "greyness," individually the authors have worked hard in their empirical chapters to bring out their contributions to the volume's theme—the "dullness" of the everyday in socialist and post-socialist central and eastern Europe. They also discuss the fuzzy quality of all colours combined—encompassing the ambiguity of public and private, faith and uncertainty in the state, legality and illegality, truth and conspiracy, justice and injustice, democracy and dictatorship. Greyness is a master trope for the editors, and to be successful would require a feat of editorship ensuring that each of the eleven contributing authors engaged closely with this slippery and capacious conceptual framing to develop a theoretically, as well empirically satisfying whole. Inevitably, the degree to which authors achieve this varies considerably. The justification and explication of the validity of greyness is strongest when it relates to avoiding or overcoming binary views of transformation, and emphasise the "stuckness" of transition, although the volume doesn't make use of this latter term. Again, Yurchak is an important reference here (9), but it is revealing of the relative underdevelopment of the term "grey" as employed by the editors and contributing authors that Yurchak's provocative and productive discussion and expansion of terms like "inbetween" are not pursued.

A further, but no means secondary aim is the tying of empirical material for the book together in the three categories of relations, borders and invisibilities. As argued above however, the borders section, while excellent and in some respects highly original, does not comfortably fit as well in terms of shared categories of "greyness" (citizenship and informal economy, for example), as the other two sections, which clearly complement each other.

The first section of the empirical part of the book subtitled "Relations," draws together three chapters in the volume and thematically relates them in terms of intimate social relations of exchange, patronage and favours, and ethnic relations. Pine's chapter relates to the longue durée of informal economic relations in the Polish countryside—their embeddedness and origin in the socialist era and persistence in the present. As indicated above, her chapter serves as a good overview of the concerns of the first and last parts of the book—on "relations" and "invisibilities." Jennifer Cash's chapter shows that poverty statistics in Moldova fail to reveal both the grey zone of household economies or the everyday understanding of relative poverty and plenty. Čarna Brković on Bosnia investigates personalised relations (*vezel/štele*) not as the remnants of socialism or transition, but as emergent in the disjuncture between state and society in terms of the provision of welfare and public health.

In Part Two on "Borders," Aimee Joyce takes her cue in examining Belarus-Poland cross-border trade from Green's focus on the ordinariness and ambiguity of borders to argue for an eastern Polish orientation to neighbourliness and a long-standing connection to Belarus despite EU accession.[2] Maja Halilovic-Pastuovic focusses on Bosnia-Ireland post-refugee transnationalism as a grey zone of "potentiality" and the problem of the racialized conditions of post-conflict Bosnia. Kristina Šliavaitė explores the ambiguous and situational relationship of a monotown's ethnic Russians to their Lithuanian citizenship and state.

In the three chapters on "invisibilities," Katrine Bendtsen Gotfredsen questions simplistic narratives of Georgia's political and institutional transformation to poster-child for reform, highlighting the micropolitics of insecurity and ambiguity. Ida Harboe Knudsen provides a new inflection to her important and insightful work on Lithuanian day labourers who avoid contact with the state and whose personhood remains in a grey zone of pre-accession values and otherness. Finally, Martin Demant Frederiksen draws a portrait of organised criminals and corruption in Georgia as rendered invisible, yet still ever-present, despite the politics of transparency that would seek to render them historical.

In terms of coverage and general approach, the book is comparable to two recent works, edited by Jeremy Morris and Abel Polese and Nicolette Makovicky.[3] It is more ambitious and wider in scope than either. Regardless of whether readers fully accept such a capacious "grey" thesis, the book is a solid, tightly edited and provocative volume that deserves a wide audience in the social sciences.

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[2] Green, S. *Notes from the Balkans: Locating Marginality and Ambiguity on the Greek-Albanian Border* (Princeton, 2005).

[3] Jeremy Morris and Abel Polese, eds., *The Informal Post-Socialist Economy: Embedded Practices and Livelihoods* (London, 2013); Nicolette Makovicky, ed., *Neoliberalism, Personhood, and Postsocialism: Enterprising Selves in Changing Economies* (Farnham, 2014).