

host society—from the endless foreign interventions back home in Afghanistan to the ongoing quest for democracy in Iran, and the continued struggle for class, ethnic, and gender justice in both countries.

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Crafting Masculine Selves: Culture, War, and Psychodynamics in Afghanistan, Andrea Chiovenda, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019, ISBN 978-0-19-007355-8 (hbk), 274 pp.

Andrea Chiovenda's *Crafting Masculine Selves: Culture, War, and Psychodynamics in Afghanistan* is an original approach to ethnographic fieldwork in Afghanistan. The book is centered around the thematic question of how individual subjectivity is constructed and mediated by socio-cultural processes. The author writes a "person centered" ethnography of Pashtun men by focusing on "intersubjective spaces" generated through extended interview sessions (pp. 5–6). These interview sessions took place intermittently over the course of several months. Following the methodological works of Byron Good and other "clinical ethnographers" such as Philip Bromberg, Donnel Stern, Robert Storolow, this book situates itself skillfully within the complex and often contradictory conceptual architecture of psychoanalytical anthropology. Chiovenda addresses this difficulty of psychoanalytic ethnographic research early in the text by writing, "no single one, well-structured, and coherent theoretical system would really be so all-encompassing and far-reaching to cover alone and successfully all the possible variations of human psychological dynamics" (p. 12). This approach is characteristic of an ethnographic transparency that permeates the following chapters of the book.

The book problematizes the category of Pashtun-ness by not taking it for granted. This is exemplified when the author asks each person what the term Pashto or Pashtun means for them, and pays attention to what they have to say about Pashtun-ness as various identification markers. The author's relationship with each of his interlocutors is portrayed in the expressive and in-depth vignettes presented in each chapter. Chiovenda stays true to the way his subjects portray themselves, and uses his academic training and personal experience in psychoanalysis to analyze these conversations.

The first chapter provides a historical and ethnographic background to Pashtun idioms of masculinity. This chapter moves the discussion of Pashtun masculinity away from familiar narratives of Pashtunwali or honor to a more complex and dynamic understanding of gender subjectivity and individual construction of mascu-

line selves. Affording each individual the attention they deserve, the middle chapters are beautifully crafted around Chioventa's main research subjects: Rohullah, Umar, Baryalay, and Rahmat. These are the individuals with whom Chioventa spent extended amounts of time. All four Pashtun men identify themselves as Pashtun through linguistic and familial affiliation, but have differing relations with Pashtun idioms of masculinity. Each of these individuals is "functional" and able to achieve "subjective states toward the overarching sense of coherence they needed" (p. 236). This coherence of the self is not uniform as it allows for conflict, contradictions, conflict, and suffering. In some cases, the individuals are able to create new paradigms and models of articulating selves. For example, Rohullah is "covertly working" (p. 80) on changing his daily marital arrangements because his wife is "too modern" to fit a regular married lifestyle, a lack of fit that he clandestinely condones.

These four chapters are juxtaposed with chapter 6 on four interlocutors—Nasim, Wahid, Inayat, and Kamran—with whom the author spent less structured time because of their reluctance to subject themselves to intrusive and potentially anxiety provoking hours-long interviews (p. 195). This chapter shows both an integration and disintegration of the surveillance and disciplinary panopticon a Pashtun man may have been subjected to in a village (p. 196). For example, the author writes poignantly about how Rahmat creates various coherent selves for various psychological purposes in service of functioning socially (p. 177). The constructions of these complementary and contradictory selves both solidify and disintegrate the coherence of living a Pashtun life.

The middle chapters depict extensive chronicling of relationships, and allow the reader to share the author's journey into the lives of his interlocutors. The sessions with each interlocutor are structured differently. For example, Rohullah chose to conduct his sessions in English, while Pashto was mainly used when the author met with Baryalay. Some sessions were loosely structured, while others, such as those with Baryalay, were prearranged for a certain date, time, and length (p. 113). Some were continuous while others were sporadic. Rahmat sometimes spoke in English as a way of creating a private conversation not accessible to those around them. Kamran taught English and became known to the author and his wife along with his younger cousin Inayat as young children (p. 197). Inayat grows into a bold youth, who is able to convince his elders to allow him leave the village to embark on a journey that brings him to the cosmopolitan Kabul.

Chioventa is also candid about his own background as a psychoanalysis patient for many years (p. 12), a fact that adds texture and depth to the book. It allows him to converse with his subjects with sympathy, respect, and astute attentiveness. The author's ethnography brings interesting questions of socio-economic status and how these fiscal hierarchies are mapped onto Pashtun idioms of masculinity. The author is attentive to the urban-rural divide in addition to socio-economic status, and shows how these are all-important identification markers that do not get subsumed under the homogenizing category of Pashtun-ness. A universalizing notion of culture or Islam is not a unit of analysis or interpretive framework through which the author narrates the lives of these diverse Pashtun men. The subjects make disparate

references to Pashto as language or norm (Pashto *laar*) and the author is careful to preserve the complexity between a normative system and its enactment in everyday life. In chapter 2, on Rohullah, “Shifting Subjectivities and the Crafting of a Private Masculinity” (pp. 52–81), the author explains how the *qawmi laar* (tribal or familial systems) are differentiated across cities and villages, and render meaning differently in different locations. Rohullah, Umar, Baryalay, and Rahmat protest at and reject some if not many Pashtun norms of masculinity. Rahmat initially presents himself as a perfectly adjusted Pashtun man well immersed within his social milieu (p. 165). The chapter then narrates how this ideal type of masculinity is far from perfect. An interesting conversation worth highlighting is between the author and Rahmat in chapter 5, “The Dilemmas of a Perfect Pashtun” (pp. 161–94). The author discusses “parity and equality of treatment and opportunities between men and women” in the West as compared to Afghanistan, and is interrupted by Rahmat, who presents an inverse view on equality that is not “sanitized for ‘Western’ consumption” (p. 172). The conversation that ensues portrays two men from diverse backgrounds (the author and his subject) embarking on an intellectual journey to make sense of the place of women in their respective worlds.

Since this book abstains from making grand claims about Pashtun-ness, and instead focuses on the fraught lives of individuals, it countenances maneuverability and fluidity within the system, as Chiovenda underscores how all these processes are in constant flux. This allows for a disarticulation of essentialist Pashtun frameworks such as familiar Pashtun idioms, and cultural stereotypes through which Pashtun lives have been historically interpreted. Writing ethnography in this way brings the reader into the intellectual journey of discovery of the author. The ethnography then becomes a mutually revealing process. The author shows the psychoanalytic unfolding of each conversation, illuminating how each person and event is intersubjectively co-constructed. Psychoanalytical anthropology allows an ethnographer to put herself in a clinical situation while conducting fieldwork. This clinical situation replicates the therapeutic dynamic of a psychoanalysis session for both people in the field. Psychoanalysis thus is not only used as a philosophical or intellectual tool, but the collection of ethnographic data and its organization in this way is made possible by psychoanalytical training.

This book makes an important contribution to studies of gender and masculinity, psychoanalytic and clinical anthropology, and ethnographic methodology. Ethnographers of Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, and related regions would find this study worth reading. It benefits from a deconstruction of identification through tribal affiliation, even if done as an intellectual experiment. The book also makes a contribution to studies of memory, trauma, war, and conflict. It highlights the transformations of masculine self-making in the ongoing presence of violence and conflict for the last thirty-five years in Afghanistan. While this violence has been institutionalized and routinized into the lives of ordinary men (p. 237), the ethnography shows the possibility of individual dexterity. For example, Umar leaves behind militant radicalism to become an enlightened pious Muslim (p. 110). Rohullah demonstrates a “plasticity of self”

(p. 81) by crafting a malleable masculinity to navigate between his spouse and his parents.

Crafting Masculine Selves demonstrates how ethnographic method can be expanded to include interdisciplinary expertise, while remaining critical of the knowledge production processes that undergird this expertise. Chiovena writes:

The analysis of non-Western milieus, where cultural idioms of interrelatedness and connectivity may call for different expectations as to how one should behave (and feel) toward oneself and the family members, I believe might be important in order to radically revise the crucial place that in Western psychological thought has been given to concepts like “individual psychic autonomy.” (p. 187)

In paragraphs like these, the author demonstrates the usefulness of writing ethnography by combining his anthropological and psychoanalytical training. Rather than taking for granted western psychoanalytic principles, the author problematizes overarching theoretical frameworks through his ethnographic data. This in itself is a significant contribution to the critical processes of how we develop analytical frameworks and expertise practices in academic disciplines.

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Parcham – Journal of Ahmad Kasravi and His Followers: A Snapshot from the History of Press in Iran, Stanisław Adam Jaśkowski, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Akademickie Dialog, 2017, ISBN 978-838-0027-36-7, 228 pp.

As the author of the work under review explains, the bi-weekly *Parcham*, published by the celebrated Iranian social and religious critic and historian Ahmad Kasravi (1890–1946), was significant because (1) it marked the culmination of Kasravi’s idiosyncratic religious thought and (2) it was the religious attacks on Shi‘ism written by Ali-Akbar Hakamizadeh published in that journal which led the young cleric Ruhollah Khomeini to call for the execution of Kasravi, culminating in his savage murder on the steps of the courthouse in which he was being tried for heresy. I would add (3) it was these challenges Kasravi launched against Shiism which inspired many young Iranians to break with the beliefs of their forefathers; as Ervand Abrahamian states, many of the members of the Tudeh Party, which was one of the biggest communist parties in the Middle East and had a huge influence on the post-war 2017 generation, recalled Kasravi’s fiery attacks on Shiism as the turning point in their ideological development.