

humans (p. 173). Hungarian cattle walked the longest circuit to market, travelling across the Ottoman and Germanic Empires, spreading the "plague of the steppes" throughout Europe. The author documents both practical and superstitious attempts to control these outbreaks, noting that "the invisible was always close to the occult" (p. 180). Shifts in attitudes towards animals in the 1700s permitted the slaughter of sick animals with guns. Once again, peasants calculated the acceptable risk of selling and eating diseased meat. Dishes were designed to minimize risk by the use of purifying techniques based on salt, vinegar and fire.

The book documents the regulatory role of public authorities, noting their first act was to consult experts on animal and human health. They judged the nourishing parts of animals—muscle and milk—as fit to eat, but banned tripe and innards, the former a staple of the poor (p. 220). Officials stressed the need for individual responsibility in deciding whether or not to consume the available meat, or abstain; suspect meat was distributed to the poor (p. 225).

One chapter examines the dangers of domestic alchemy, and documents how the use of metals such as copper, zinc, lead and pewter affected food and health. Raw moist fruit was also blamed for digestive disorders, while preserves were considered better than fresh (p. 233). Public hygiene monitored by the state focussed attention on air and environment, while municipalities were responsible for food safety, including monitoring slaughterhouses (p. 259). In Ferrieres' words: "For a long time, everywhere, the belly and the entrails of the city, before becoming a literary metaphor, were warm, pulsating realities" (p. 261). Around the same period (1735), pellagra was identified and linked to the lack of niacin in the diets of the poor.

The science of nutrition permitted the development of the "food as fuel" model of the calorie (1864). From this point on, the holistic understanding of food gives way to the analysis of elements and nutrients, stripping food of its primary association with pleasure. Concern for adulteration continues, and becomes more difficult to trace with the development of processed foods where different foods are combined.

Later chapters shed light on the development of milk as a superfood, threatened by tuberculosis in cows and its potential transfer to humans. The last chapter takes us further afield to Chicago where shopkeepers become consumer advisers to women who were expected to protect their families' food supply from the privacy of their kitchens, trusting in labels and the advertising claims of brands like Heintz and Armour (p. 305).

The book concludes with the observation that the media plays an important role now in publicizing food fears. Food fears link to the fear of food shortages, the circuit from producer to consumer (the shorter the better) and value of food around the axis of gustatory pleasure, conviviality or health (p. 327-328)

Anthropologists in particular need books like this to appreciate the historicity in the rise and fall of food fears, but we also have the potential and the responsibility to broaden the

range of examples in time and space and to explore contexts and meanings in more detail. Many of our food fears and our reactions to food scares may well be lodged in this European history. But the food fears of our neighbours are doubtlessly lodged in other histories.

Pnina Werbner, *Imagined Diasporas among Manchester Muslims*, Oxford: James Currey, 2002, 306 pages.

Reviewer: *Patricia L. Kelly Spurles*
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This is a sophisticated and well-documented contribution to the literature on diaspora and identity. The title reference to Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* suggests Werbner's argument that diasporic communities are constructed or "imagined" through performances by different constituencies (older men, women, young men) in distinct spaces (community meetings, processions, dinners, pageants and fundraisers) that constitute the public sphere, "a series of interconnected spaces in which the pleasures and predicaments of diaspora are debated and celebrated" (p. 15). Drawing on extensive fieldwork among Manchester (U.K.) residents (i.e., Mancunians) of Pakistani background in the 1980s and 1990s, Werbner shows how community is defined by a shared sense of "moral co-responsibility" that is expressed as financial and political engagement with the homeland, and which consists of aesthetic performances in which community members emphasize one or several aspects of their multiple identities as Mancunians, British, Pakistanis, South Asians, Blacks and Muslims.

Composite, "hybrid" identities are not fixed; rather, they are dynamic as individuals participate in different arenas. For instance, despite competition among different political factions as older men support and participate in community centre meetings and elections, through the recasting of contemporary power struggles in religious idiom, they recreate a traditional social order in which they are predominant and superior to young men, whose attempts at presenting their own public events (emphasizing cricket and youth culture) are disparaged by the male elders. Successes by women at organizing public events that present an alternative, less male-dominated ordering of society, are marked by their emphasis on an aesthetic that joins both South Asian ideas of fun (such as contemporary South Asian fashion and film) and traditional religious forms (Quranic recitation and songs of praise to the Prophet).

This discussion of performance and identity is situated within the broader context of Werbner's desire to understand the dynamics of British Pakistanis' support for an Iranian condemnation of author Salman Rushdie. "The publication of *The Satanic Verses*," she writes, "was a conjunctural moment in which citizenship and faith were both tested and revalued, an

exceptional moment of disruption and crisis which compelled Muslims, [non-Muslim] intellectuals and [non-Muslim] policy-makers to reflect consciously about what these terms meant" (p. 107). While non-Muslims emphasized freedom of speech and were outraged that British Muslims repeated demands for Rushdie's death, Muslims, in Britain as elsewhere, considered the novel an assault on the dignity of the Prophet. Werbner writes: "The libels against the Prophet and his family are voiced or perpetrated in the novel by fictional characters who are cunning traitors and are part of a whole series of dramatic ordeals that the Prophet undergoes. These move the action forward and underlie the narrative structure of the book and its moral message: the way in which character is tested and shaped by ordeals of treachery and betrayal" (p. 116). For British Muslims, the affair was interpreted as institutionalized racism in which Islam and Muslims were denied the legal protection from blasphemy afforded to the state religion. Werbner considers why the novel was rejected by the community it ostensibly aimed to portray: the religious idioms repeated throughout the work evoked, for Muslim readers but not for non-Muslims, an Islamic aesthetic that was utterly incompatible with the plot in which sacred and profane are repeatedly and emphatically mixed. She notes, "The offence felt by Muslim secular readers...points to the fact that aesthetic canons can persist long after faith has lapsed" (p. 116).

Werbner's familiarity with classic and contemporary sources in anthropology, Islamic studies, and critical theory is evident throughout, as she deftly summarizes a broad array of work with which she enters into dialogue. Her theoretical contribution is original and weighty, and many of the chapters easily stand alone as fine essays. On the other hand, the book would have benefited from greater editorial care. Several very lengthy passages that relate speeches given at community meetings could be substantially shortened. As well, and this is a minor but jarring note in such a carefully written volume, the name of a significant player in community politics appears in several different Latinized spellings throughout the volume. Overall, this is a dense but very worthwhile read for graduate students and scholars whose work engages concepts of identity and diaspora.

Monique Skidmore, *Karaoke Fascism: Burma and the Politics of Fear*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004, 264 pages.

Reviewer: *Nicola Tannenbaum*
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Skidmore did difficult fieldwork in Burma during 1996, a period of increasing turmoil as students and others openly demonstrated against the current regime. Her research was, ostensibly, to "understand the idioms of emotional and psychological distress used by various Burmese communities, and to

explore the role of religion and medicine in conceptualizing and mediating such distress and as pathways for action" (p. 8). Rather than focussing directly on these topics, Skidmore directs our attention to the all encompassing fear that Burmese have to deal with on a day to day basis and the consequences this has for individual Burmese as well as for Burmese society. Researching fear is not easy, as Skidmore asks, "How does one research fear when doing so produces the very emotion in question, both in the research and the informants?" (p. x), something she explores most completely in her third chapter.

To get to this exploration, Skidmore first provides a brief introduction to Burmese history and a sketch of the resistance activities in Rangoon in September 1996. These activities are juxtaposed with places of refuge that Burmese Buddhism provides, both physically and spiritually. The third chapter then explores the fear that Skidmore faced and the Burmese continue to face. Here Skidmore argues that her experience of fear and her understanding and analysis of her embodied fear allows her to "intuit the experience of Burmese people whom I have come to know. In so doing, I argue that emotional knowledge arising from similar (never identical) circumstances can be important, in this case, necessary, for an analysis of fear in everyday life" (p. 35). These three chapters are compelling but difficult reading. After finishing part of a chapter I would have to put the book down because of the overwhelming awfulness of the situation that I was reading about.

In the next four chapters, the focus shifts to the contexts that the Burmese must interact in and the role of the government and its military in defining these contexts. Skidmore discusses the way the military define spaces and the thin veneers of modernity and conformity as well as the tensions created by the juxtaposition of modernity, fascism and terror. These chapters also include accounts of how people deal with the situations created by propaganda and the continuing inability to trust people because of informers and the consequent self-censorship that this entails. For her analysis, Skidmore draws on scholars of modernity and fascism, particularly Benjamin and the Frankfurt School (p. 84). I found these chapters equally difficult to read but more because of the analyses than the content. In the end, I was not convinced that drawing parallels between the situation in Burma and high modernity in Paris and Nazi Germany provided any enlightenment about the Burmese generals and their behaviour or the situation that the Burmese people face. A more meaningful comparison would have been to place the Burmese situation in its South-east Asian context of political violence with discussions of similarities and differences with Cambodia under Pol Pot and Indonesia in the aftermath of Sukarno's defeat in 1965, the annexation of East Timor, or, more recently, the end of the Suharto period.

The last three chapters return to more ethnographic accounts of life in the resettlement shanty towns that resulted when urban residential areas were condemned for new modern hotels and department stores. The displaced people were forced to resettle in these new communities without services,