dressing and sexuality in private and public spaces. The evolved wiring of the male brain to manage conflicts with surrounding groups would account for male social dominance in circumstances that include production surpluses.

In Chapter 5, Boyer reconstructs the growth of markets out of prehistoric exchange routes to our current monetised one and attempts to explain the tension between market and justice. A combination of cognitive specialisations would have helped markets grow – specialisations for viewing things under a common utility measure, for monitoring the intents of others and for avoiding the ruinous egoistic appropriation of "commons" such as rivers or pastures. Intuitions of property and fairness evolved in the contexts of sharing the spoils of hunting, and of a "market for cooperators" with partner choices, which meant ditching free riders and cheaters. On this account, the lack of a coordinating metacognitive system between fairness and property leaves these two as irreconcilable, which creates the space for both endless academic debates and intuitively appealing, but inconsistent folk conceptions.

Chapter 6 follows a route similar to that of Chapter 5. The extension of social groups from tribes to nations is said to rest on a set of cognitive systems for dividing labour according to each agent's skills and for building production and coordination hierarchies that partly replace those commonly found in other ape species, which stand on resource monopolisation and bullying. The working of large-scale societies is seen as parasitic on information-processing suited for small groups. It is said to be opaque to our mind but made manageable by cognitive by-products that consist in essentialising societies as agents with intents of their own and power as a physical mass, putting pressures on us from top to bottom.

Rather than a summary, the Conclusion is a chapter unto itself. A theory of communication as "intent reconstruction" is presented, which relates to how intuitive thoughts are turned into reflexive ones and to how our evolved preferences and biases contribute to the formation of traditions. Boyer opposes separate chains of transmission to culture as a whole integrated system. He critiques cultural transmission as imitation (which only captures the surface features of behaviours) and as internalisation (which presumably fails to see that agents constantly transform and select whatever information they get and that communication does not come with a ratchet preventing interpretative or inferential drifts).

Elegant, dense, ambitious, but somewhat dry, *Minds Make Societies* is yet another attempt to explain large-scale – social or cultural – dynamics by the aggregate workings of individual minds. The overwhelming presence of our unconscious, intuitive thinking is aptly put to light without being boiled down to a celebration of homo economicus, as critics of prior evolutionary thinking would have led us to suspect (Sahlins 1976).[1] Anthropologists interested in challenging their view of their discipline and its relations to biology and psychology should give it a careful read. It remains to be seen if specialised cognitive systems can only be built through biological inheritance, as Boyer seems to claim. Other work in neurosciences forcefully argues for the opposite (Barrett 2017; Heyes 2018). It may also be that, beyond certain communicative and cooperative skills, explaining culture by specialised mechanisms, either learned or biologically inherited, is uncalled for (Morin 2016). Further clarifying such issue may lead to an even more informed bet in the race between the new natural social science that Boyer advocates and anthropology as we know it.

Notes

1 "The fact that humans everywhere engage in collective actions in many different domains, and in all known human groups, would suggest that classical economic models were perhaps based on the wrong assumptions" (Boyer 2018, 210).

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The Moral Ecology of a Maya Forest, by José E. Martínez-Reyes, offers a lucid critique of the "nature industry" and the limited understanding of human–environmental relations applied by conservationists and anthropologists. It is a compelling ethnography of an Indigenous Yucatec Maya *ejido*, which stands out among recent anthropological studies of the politics of environmental conservation. It draws on detailed fieldwork with the Tres Reyes *ejido,* near the Caribbean coast of the Yucatan peninsula, to examine the *ejido*'s relationship to regional conservation efforts in the context of the global "nature industry" and to present a critique of current approaches in environmental anthropology.

Martínez-Reyes is a Puerto Rican anthropologist and environmental historian who studied with Arturo Escobar and now teaches at the University of Massachusetts Boston. He frames his book as tackling "how the nature industry in the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve and the Zona Maya are emblematic of the problems inherent in the question of nature in the global era, and examines the challenges and resistances offered by the moral ecology of the Maya Forest" (31). The book explores the concept of moral ecology and offers the new concepts of post-conservation, nature industry, coloniality of nature, critical ethnoecology and political ecological ontology as frameworks for understanding human–environmental relations and Indigenous lifeworlds. The six chapters present a colonial and postcolonial

history of land grabs in the Yucatan, a history of conservation in and around the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve, a discussion of the undermining of subsistence and livelihood strategies by the nature industry, and a discussion of hunting, multispecies engagement, and postconservation.

The ethnographic work focuses on Tres Reyes and two neighbouring Maya *ejidos*, Chumpón and Chunyaxché. All three communities lie within, or are close to, the Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve, a focus of conservation and ecotourism development in the Riviera Maya since it was created in 1986. The book traces the histories of these *ejidos* and their members with two kinds of environmental NGOs – institutionalised and localised – and projects they were implementing involving parrots, butterflies and ecotourism. What results is a nuanced discussion of the multiple formal and informal dimensions of relationships between *ejidos* and NGOs. The time period is between 2001 and 2013, with a focus on fieldwork undertaken in the early 2000s.

Most of the projects focused on incorporating Maya communities initially into conservation and development initiatives and later into climate change mitigation strategies of payments for ecosystem services and carbon sequestration. By tracing how these conservation projects were conducted in the community and the reasons they ended, the book explores the transition to "postconservation" in which the *ejidos* began to direct their actions to environmental concerns they identified themselves. Indeed, these were more autonomous responses, as the Indigenous communities kicked out environmental groups and their projects and barred their return. They had found that the NGO projects demanded time and effort for few results and were "participatory in name rather than in effect" (66).

As the anthropological literature has amply documented, Indigenous and other place-based groups confront new sets of actors, organisations and environmental discourses when their territories are identified as global biodiversity hotspots. These protected areas become key to the global nature industry, which, as Martínez-Reyes writes, places "the burden of ecological conservation on changing and controlling Indigenous peoples' livelihood practices, rather than on changing and controlling insatiable Western consumption" (5).

Some of this is new; some of it is not. Martínez-Reyes's contribution is to push hard against the philosophical underpinnings of Western conservation, not just in defence of Indigenous peoples and their livelihood rights, but also to argue that Western conservation is "also intolerant or ignorant, at best, of moral ecologies that are based on mutually constituting rather than instrumental relations with nature" (7). Hunting, in particular, is a major source of conflict. It is actively discouraged by conservationists, and yet, in hunting, Maya men find "livelihood, engagement with other species and the environment, and a source of community-making through both the actual act and the subsequent story-telling" (11). The discussion of hunting is interesting but does not draw on the rich ethnographic literature on hunting in Indigenous communities.

The book tacks back and forth between a critique of the nature industry in terms that conservationists would understand and a push for a new anthropological framework for human–environmental relations. The "nature industry" Martínez-Reyes discusses hinges on the neoliberalisation of nature and biodiversity conservation that occurs in wildlife management projects, tourism and climate change mitigation strategies. Martínez-Reyes uses "coloniality of nature" to refer to the colonial relationships that constituted and that continue to constitute the concept of nature itself. Both concepts – nature industry and coloniality of nature – work the same conceptual terrain as Molly Doane's "conservation by accumulation" (Doane 2014).

Contrasting with all of this are the Maya's "moral ecologies of the forest." Moral ecology is, of course, a riff on James Scott's (1976) "moral economy of the peasant," itself drawn from E. P. Thompson, and recently developed by other anthropologists to account for the environmental dimensions of subsistence and livelihoods. Martínez-Reyes's "main contention is that a critical mass of ... people who live in Maya villages and maintain an intimate relation with the forest and their communities, are engaged in a 'beyond human' moral ecology of the forest. The *k'aax* (forest) as a whole has a moral ecology that permeates the everyday lives of the Maya in deep and meaningful and effective ways" (19). It is the Maya moral ecologies of the forest that serve as the foundation of resistance to the nature industry and of the postconservation in the title. It is these that shaped the ways Tres Reyes rejected conservation groups and projects, and their experiences of participating in the conservation projects in the first place. Unfortunately, the turn to postconservation that Martinez-Reyes develops does not preclude new pressures. Climate change is exacerbating the uncertainly of rain, on which Mayan *milpa* agriculture depends. Green land-grabbing schemes are subversions of the nature industry's carbon sequestration and ecotourism programs.

Drawing on the political ecology and political ontologies literature (for example, Blaser 2009), Martínez-Reyes develops the concept of ontological political ecologies. Here, he explores the disjuncture between moral ecology and the nature industry. Combining ethnoecology with the ontological and dialectical concerns of place, nature and landscape, and drawing from a compilation of Maya oral texts from the early twentieth century (Cocom Pech 2001) Martínez-Reyes develops a critical reading of political ecology. He offers evidence of the gap between conservationist "knowledge" and the moral and ontological ecologies of the Maya through his ethnographic description of Maya practices of *milpa*, hunting and being in the forest. Yet more fine-grained ethnographic description and a fuller sense of Maya environmental and ontological discourses would have strengthened the book, especially as these are at the heart of the theoretical argument and the case study. At times, the book reads as asserting the existence and importance of Maya ontological ecology, without the corresponding ethnographic insights.

Another weakness is that the book does not address the relationship between the twentieth century history of "rural development" in Quintana Roo and its successor neoliberal programs, which include conservation projects. Instead, it deals with the longer term, from the Caste War of 1847 through the "Pacification" after 1901. The history is remarkable, and the evidence is compelling that since the Caste War the Maya have confronted three distinct phases of land grabs, each of which has challenged their ability to live autonomously in their forest lifeworld, with conservation as the third. Yet more attention to generational change in cultural orientation might have presented individuals in the community more fully. The book could also have engaged

more with the rich anthropological literature on rural Mexico and Mayan communities of the Yucatan peninsula, even as the descriptions of relations between conservation workers and communities are eye-opening.

Still, Martínez-Reyes makes a far stronger argument than many other writers about the degree to which conservation relations are continuous with colonial relations. While other writers have described relations between conservation workers and organisations as "colonialist" because of the fundamental inequalities on which they are based, Martínez-Reyes argues for a continuity of the colonial relations from the arrival of the Spanish in Yucatan to the present. On one hand, there has been a constant pressure to appropriate "natural resources" and land on which the Maya depend for subsistence for the generation of wealth. On the other hand, there have been Maya resistance, defence of autonomy (especially in the area where Martínez-Reyes worked), and defence of lands and forest that are the Maya world.

Students of conservation as a political and cultural project in Latin America and elsewhere, anthropologists interested in the contemporary Maya, scholars of Indigenous and rural peoples of Mexico and beyond, people working in conservation and the "nature industry," and upper-level undergraduate or graduate students in courses on environmental anthropology, Indigenous studies or environmental history of Latin America will find this book particularly rewarding. The material can be appreciated at the levels of ethnographic description and theoretical development, and should be read in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America, as well as in the seats of power of the nature industry.

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A House of One's Own, by Alicia Sliwinski, is an ethnographic analysis of the cultural intricacies of postdisaster aid understood and experienced as the morality of gift giving and receiving in the context of two earthquakes in El Salvador in 2001. This rich account draws on fieldwork conducted between 2001 and 2002 in the small town of Lamaria (fictitious name), about 40 kilometres west of the Salvadorian[1] capital in the department of Sonsonate. Ethnographically, the book is informed by the lived experiences of key cultural consultants who received and gave humanitarian aid following a magnitude 7.9 earthquake on 13 January 2001 and a magnitude 6.6 earthquake on 13 February 2013 in Lamaria. What results is a theoretically sophisticated discussion of humanitarian action that explores the moral economy of postdisaster aid in El Salvador by focusing on the political economy of international aid and calamity management. Although the earthquakes occurred a number of years ago, the book remains urgent because the humanitarian encounters described are not dissimilar to those that have happened since or that may yet happen again.

What did different gestures of aid mean to the individuals involved in these humanitarian transactions? How did people engage in humanitarian activities and moralities, either as providers or as receivers of aid? The book shows how three different modalities of aid interacted to entail gestures and relationships between donors and receivers: (1) immediate local responses, (2) food aid and (3) a participatory housing reconstruction project. Each modality is a "humanitarian configuration," a concept that stresses a special arrangement of resources, values and roles. Each configuration took place at different moments, even as each was connected to and interrelated with the others. These fields of action were part of a wider totality of postdisaster humanitarian response, where each configuration included some people and excluded others and where each foregrounded a distinctive logic of giving and receiving. These distinctive configurations informed the relationships that engendered expectations of reciprocity and return, whether or not they were either present or absent, or accepted, negotiated or downright contested.

Sliwinski frames the localised humanitarian undertakings in Lamaria in terms of the anthropological category of the gift. According to the author, the gift is not an abstract category with which to make sense of humanitarian conduct in the face of disaster, but instead a lived dimension fraught with contradictions, even more so when different actors perform humanitarian roles. The gift, for example, is relevant to the rhetoric of community participation, since participation is the preferred methodology in the community for housing reconstruction projects financed by foreign donors. The richness of the book comes from telling the story of the people whose lives are at its centre and charting the social transformations caused by the disaster. Sliwinski successfully shows how the earthquake and its aftermath changed the lives of individuals who went from landless disaster victims to new homeowners. Paradoxically, disaster was a source of new opportunities and benefits.

Sliwinski demonstrates that beyond pragmatics, belief is central to the moral construction of gift giving and receiving in the face of disaster. A critique of Salvadorian NGOs and how and why strangers manifest their generosity when calamity strikes are important issues discussed in this book. Sliwinski incorporates the critique of the "politics of pity," a politics that is triggered when singular images of distant suffering or destroyed neighbourhoods prompt concerned citizens to donate