

“colonization of language,” where “access to family planning was pitted against the ‘rights of the unborn,’” feminists themselves are regularly paired with staunch Catholics in media coverage (82). The predictably “antagonistic exchange” makes both sides seem “extreme” (83), which, as Mishtal notes in her conclusion, dampens critique by encouraging people to view the status quo as “moderate” and a “compromise” (18). Finally, while most Poles reject Catholic family planning, they do not say so publically, partly because they still want Catholic weddings and other rituals. The upshot is a “duplicious system in which the symbolic power of the church is maintained” by people who privately “snub religious rules” (95).

Mishtal develops this last point in a chapter devoted to church surveillance of even sporadically practising Catholics. Building on Foucaultian governmentality – “the conduct of conduct” – she explicates how the church achieves “constraining effects on behaviour” through confession, household visits, confession cards, and premarital classes (the price of a church wedding) (113–114). Priests began using these to question and instruct women (but not men) on sexual and reproductive matters in the 1990s, reflecting the “religious and nationalist construction of Polish women as custodians of Catholic purity” (138). Meanwhile, “intensified reproductive governance served to bolster the public consolidation of Polish Catholicism in the early postsocialist years,” even if people reject it in their personal lives, as Mishtal’s chapter on “Abortion, Polish style” demonstrates they clearly do (138).

Up to 200,000 Polish women get clandestine abortions every year – similar to the number performed legally before the 1993 near ban. Some women travel to a country where abortion is legal. Others opt for abortion pills – cheaper and more convenient but dependant on the integrity of unregulated suppliers. Many, however, use Poland’s signature “‘white coat’ underground” – private provision by trained and licensed doctors who advertise their services in thinly disguised newspaper ads (146).

This system gives Polish women the distinct advantage of safe abortions, though Mishtal’s fieldwork shows that the cost can be daunting. Religious and state authorities generally pretend it does not exist, Mishtal says, to maintain the fiction that banning abortion works. Doctors have little interest in pressing for change, partly because private provision supplements incomes eroded by post-socialist austerity. But if it serves as a pressure valve, Poland’s abortion underground constitutes a limited kind of resistance. Women “develop their own *unofficial biopolitics*” (159). These are “distinctly different from what the church prescribes” but remain “individualized and privatized strategies for dealing with social and collective concerns about reproductive rights and health as well as gender equality” (159).

Mishtal’s final substantive chapter offers a fascinating account of women’s engagement with Catholic-nationalist pronatalism. Poland’s fertility rate dropped sharply after 1989. It is now among the lowest in Europe, well below replacement levels. But if Poland’s religio-political class regards child-bearing as a patriotic act, Polish women do not. Rather than accept blame for low birthrates, Mishtal’s informants point out that the post-socialist state presided over intensified inequality and insecurity, while dismantling programs that enabled women to combine work and family. “I think it’s great that we’re having

a demographic crisis,” said one woman. “It’s what the government deserves!” (168–69). In short, while priests and politicians accuse women of selfishly rejecting motherhood, the women Mishtal interviewed retort that the “state’s political position is *antifamily*, not profamily” (171).

Mishtal’s explication of how the church and its allies built and sustained a duplicitous politics of morality in post-socialist Poland adds a compelling ethnographic account to the by now irrefutable evidence that banning abortion accomplishes little other than to make it more difficult, dangerous, and costly, particularly for poor, adolescent, or otherwise marginalised women. By extension, the book shows how formal democracy can serve as a vehicle for gender-based and class-based injustices, making it harder to see and resist the problems. Here, the effects of neoliberal social policy compound the “liberal bind” entailed in “the conflict between a liberal state’s protection of religious institutions and the protection of women’s rights” (198). The questions raised are also pertinent in many less obviously “transitional” places. Mishtal’s book will interest scholars of feminist activism, political transitions, and political religion as well as anthropologists of Poland and reproduction. Her very accessible prose makes this book suitable for a wide audience, including undergraduates.

Teresa Kuan, *Love’s Uncertainty: The Politics and Ethics of Child Rearing in Contemporary China*, Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015, 272 pages.

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Love’s Uncertainty is about child rearing in the context of a major historical transformation in China, which has been, and continues to be, engineered by the state – the economic and human modernisation of the nation. The book takes as a central question the problem of moral agency in contemporary life and argues that Chinese social reality is tremendously contradictory and inconsistent, thus requiring the reconciliation of conflicting moral goods and the location of opportunities for exercising personal efficacy (8). Teresa Kuan presents her book as a critique of the ideological mystification argument, commonly found in studies of motherhood under capitalism (13). A focus on moral agency and experience provides, she argues, a remedy for structural or political-economic reductionism without reverting back to the kind of humanism that assumes a rationally and morally autonomous subject. Moral experience refers to the intermediate space between the force of social norms and moral codes, on the one hand, and the capacity of actors to deliberate about their situation and make the effort to respond accordingly, on the other (15). Moral agency then relates to what Kuan calls an ethics of trying, a kind of practical philosophy that takes causation and efficacy, responsibility and blame, as its central concerns (18). The moral problem for middle-class mothers in modern China consists of whether one has tried everything possible to secure the good life for one’s child in the face of intense social competition.

Kuan claims that imbalances of various kinds (between population size and available resources, between overproduction of college graduates and an economy unable to absorb the surplus of white collar labour, between new norms for good parenting and the realities of social competition) challenge middle-class family life, generating a kind of anxiety and insecurity that is uniquely Chinese, as they are the scripts for action in turn mobilised (8). To interpret China's population and middle-class rearing projects, Kuan uses the notion of affectivity, broadly understood as the power and susceptibility that humans, things, and circumstances have to influence and be influenced by (9). Following François Jullien (1992), Kuan argues that what differentiates human from non-human activity is that human actors have the capacity to manipulate reality by artfully disposing and arranging things in a strategic way. In this framework, discerning the relationship between existing constraints and the scope of human agency becomes an ethical question (9). Both running a country and raising a child in contemporary China are spheres of government that involve what Kuan refers to as the art of disposition: a moral practice that simultaneously recognises the embeddedness of human activity while locating opportunities for strategic manipulation (21) (Foucault 1977). It is a notion that insists on the active side of affectivity, the capacity humans have to assemble things and to create conditioning external circumstances (115). As the primary caregivers, mothers experience themselves as agents in managing the uncertainty of their children's future, which represents a moral burden fraught with the fear of potential or actual regret.

Methodologically speaking, the book is based on textual and ethnographic research. The former includes the analysis of official state documents pertaining to children and education as well as popular magazines, television shows, newspapers, and advice books intended for parents. The ethnography consists of following ten "new" urban middle-class families and interviewing psychological health counsellors, popular experts, and schoolteachers in Kunming, the capital of Yunnan Province. Kuan selected her research participants based on their "middle-class" consumption power, and she justifies restricting her "extremely small" sample size so as to get to know individuals and families at a more intimate level (Zhang 2010). Yet this remains very challenging not only because these people are particularly busy but also due to the researcher's own position as a young American woman with limited command of the local Kunming dialect (28). Families in the book are portrayed as living double-income households that devote enormous amounts of energy and income to the education of their only child. Parents in the study were born in the late 1960s and early 1970s and most have college degrees. Nine of the ten families analysed are Han Chinese; many of them travel for leisure, and some own a car or their home (27).

Mothers and experts, being the primary focus of the ethnography, are brought to the fore, allowing for a detailed examination of their strategies in the art of disposition, which are correlated with state efforts to modernise the nation (27). The "emotion work" done by middle-class mothers and their experience of self-doubt is situated in the context of changing ideas about good parenting. Chinese mothers work to suppress their anger so as to cultivate the child's inner subjectivity. Popular experts, for their part, couch their formulations in

storytelling, producing aesthetic and moral effects in readers and listeners. While ordinary parents are receptive to experts' advice – warning against the obstruction of children's hidden potential development and the threat to their psychological health due to excessive pressure to perform or anger – mothers find themselves having to balance two incommensurable goods: protect the child's happiness or ensure survival (86). These incompatible values generate intrapersonal conflict, yet, at the same time, they are constitutive of ethical subjectivity. Thus, the experience of problematic emotions become constitutive of a mode of judgment about external circumstances, which illustrates how responsiveness and responsibility are inextricably intertwined (87). It is through the intensification of both the child's and the parent's subjectivity that national strength and arrival at modernity are to be secured (81).

The book is organised in eight chapters. The introduction lays out the book's main themes and its theoretical framework while briefly describing the research's methodology. A richer characterisation of research participants would strengthen the book's theoretical stake on the embeddedness of human activity (21) and the importance of historically situated phenomena (39). Indeed, we know barely anything about the socio-economic, political, or kinship trajectories, to only mention a few, of the parents in the study. What are the jobs they do and how do the labour regimes imposed upon them affect family life and child-rearing practices? How does the pressure to make "enough" money (to consume according to new middle-class standards) and to remain competitive at work affect couple relationships and parents' strategies to secure their only child's good life prospects? Mothers are portrayed in narrow terms as if they would not have any other concerns in their lives apart from that of raising their child; other crucial facets of their persona, influencing their art of disposition, are completely absent in the book.

Chapter 1 traces the evolution in state discourse pertaining to the role of the child in the development of nation along with the attendant public strategies deployed to enable different social actors and institutions to engage in this effort. The chapter also examines the role that popular, expert advice has played in the dissemination of child-rearing knowledge among the new middle classes. Chapter 2 analyses how horrific and exemplary stories, in the context of popular advice, make moral arguments for attending to the inner subjectivity of children and generate new categories to be discovered and understood: psychological health and human potential. Chapter 3 examines the "emotion work" done by middle-class mothers and their experience of self-doubt in the midst of changing ideas about good parenting. The chapter highlights the gendering of advice and parental responsibility as well as the extent to which emotions (in this case, the anger experienced by mothers) are subjected to cultural rules for control or expression. Chapter 4 focuses on the art of disposition or creation of *Tiaojian* (conditions, circumstances), a moral practice in which mothers engage when seeking to secure their child's good prospects. Chapter 5 argues that the assertion of modern values such as autonomy and freedom, as they are realised in popular television shows, depend on papering over social and economic realities and trivialising the concerns of well-intentioned mothers. Chapter 6 discusses two conceptions of good parenting, juxtaposing the advice of a parenting expert with the position of an

ordinary parent, to argue that it is in and through economic thinking and behaviour that these two individuals offer some sort of control over the contingencies posed by social competition. Competing and consuming are interpreted as expressions of an ethics of trying to survive. Chapter 7 uses ethnographic materials to argue for an understanding of the world in terms of affectivity, which takes the agencies of non-human forces and things seriously while paying close attention to moral life and the cultivation of sensitivity.

Love's Uncertainty represents a timely contribution to the study of the middle classes in Asia and to current theoretical debates on mothering, affect, and subjectivity. The book is very well written and exhaustively documented, constituting an interesting text for scholars and upper-level students interested in these subject matters.

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Mason, Courtney W., *Spirits of the Rockies: Reasserting an Indigenous Presence in Banff National Park*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014, 224 pages.

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Spirits of the Rockies: Reasserting an Indigenous Presence in Banff National Park relays a history of the Nakoda First Nation presence in the Banff–Bow Valley region and of how Nakoda experiences in the post-treaty era have been shaped by Canada's assimilative Aboriginal policies and by the local tourism economy. The book gives a rich history of Nakoda responses to colonial constraints brought on by European settlement in the Banff–Bow Valley region through an examination of power relations inherent in the colonial process. Courtney Mason relies heavily on French theorist Michel Foucault's approach to conceptualising power – that is, not just as a repressive mechanism but also as a productive force. Mason applies Foucault's slant on power relations to his own theorisation of how Nakoda responses to governmental assimilationist policies, and participation in the tourism industry, reflected the strategies of Nakoda people to manage colonial influences and to maintain their ways of life.

Mason situates himself clearly throughout the book, and his methodologies are consistently justified to the reader in such a way that he regularly acknowledges the book's weaknesses. Using a "mixed methods" approach, which draws on historical

accounts, archival materials, and personal interviews, Mason leads the reader through a history of Nakoda–settler relations in what became Banff National Park and situates Nakoda experiences of colonisation within the broader scope of Indigenous–state relations in Canada. This history is not relayed in a strictly chronological sense since that would betray Mason's aim to demonstrate the multi-layered complexity of power relations at play in Indigenous–settler interactions. Rather, he relays this history through a detailed recounting of the impact European settlement and colonial administration had on the Nakoda peoples and, most importantly, by showing how Nakoda peoples negotiated and managed this terrain by taking advantage of opportunities to continue their cultural practices and to redefine their ways of living in spite of these constraints. The result is more dialogical than linear, and this format is mirrored in each of the chapters with historical content.

The book is divided into three parts. The first details the body of social theory Mason draws from to situate the particular experiences of Nakoda peoples within larger systems of power relations. Despite his acknowledgement that Foucault fails to problematise colonialism, Mason argues that Foucault's conceptualisation of power as a relational force makes his theories effective for understanding colonial power structures. The second part of the book focuses on the policies that followed the signing of Treaty 7 in 1877, which greatly restricted Nakoda movements throughout their traditional lands. Mason draws attention to Nakoda efforts to maintain subsistence practices in spite of the restrictions imposed through the reserve system, the pass system, and the trend of "conservation" discourse that emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The third part of the book focuses on the growth of the tourism economy in Banff National Park and, particularly, the Nakoda presence in the annual Banff Indian Days festival. Mason argues that although the "naturalness" discourse that permeated the park's marketing campaigns homogenised and invisibilised Indigenous people through pre-colonial imagery, Nakoda people harnessed opportunities presented by the festival to further their own political and socio-economic benefits.

Mason relies heavily on Foucault to frame the power relations inherent in the colonisation process. Granted this allows the work to be situated within common academic debates, and he does point directly to the limitations of this kind of analysis. However, despite Mason's transparency about the limitations of his argument, the result is a rather disjointed commentary on Nakoda responses to colonisation, which relies on Foucault as the primary mode of analysis rather than on Nakoda concepts. While the book's content about Foucault's theories may indeed demonstrate that those theories parallel Nakoda experiences of colonisation, Mason's claim that he puts an emphasis on Nakoda perspectives falls short, since his discussions of Foucault repeatedly overtakes the potential for his argument to be more deeply informed by the words that come directly from Nakoda individuals. As a result, the reader winds up learning much more about Foucault's "disciplinary regime" than what it means, for example, for Nakoda lives to be ordered by the seasons. Granted, there are cultural protocols around the sharing of knowledge and stories, but Mason's reference to these protocols is buried in the appendix, leaving a series of blank spaces throughout the book where the words of Nakoda people seem secondary to those of Foucault.