

exemplify how nationality serves to produce (or complicate) relatedness and imageries of good homes for children. In her discussion of various expressions of solidarities between adoptive families and immigrants (Chapter 5), Leinaweaver shows how the presumably shared national substance is reified in a context of everyday racism and globalized inequalities. Racialized ideas that imagine culture and migrant status as almost biologically inheritable provide the ideological background that makes immigrants and adoptees conceptualize themselves as tied to Peru in crucial ways or, conversely, contest the Peruvianness imposed on them. Leinaweaver's description of practices of becoming and unbecoming Peruvian (Chapter 5) subtly portrays this double bind that adoptive parents and their children experience, oscillating between compliance with Peruvian cultural identity as a source of strength and a refusal to be positioned as an outsider.

*Adoptive Migration* is written in accessible, vibrant and meticulously argued language, which makes it interesting and enjoyable reading for both academic and broader audiences. The remarkably non-judgmental stance Leinaweaver takes is rare in the current public and academic debates on transnational adoption, which tend to be polarized and polemic. Deeply aware of and embedded in the post-colonial critiques raised in critical adoption studies, this book chooses to provide an anthropologically "thick" description of a diversity of migratory practices, capturing reality in all its complexity, nuances and ambiguity. The novelty of the book lies primarily in the clever correlations that carefully deconstruct divisions in everyday and academic discourse. It is the unexpected overlaps that provide us with fresh eyes for a critical evaluation and further theorization of various aspects of transnational adoption and migrant integration. One point that deserves to be further developed is the critique Leinaweaver initiates of the centrality of an ideology of national substance in the ethical principles of international policy frameworks for child protection. By advocating continuity in child-rearing along national lines, the subsidiarity principle adopted by the Hague Adoption Convention glosses over national heterogeneity and the complexity and fluidity of national identity in an increasingly mobile world. This and other issues raised in this wonderfully rich book will undoubtedly inspire scholarly work in the years to come.

---

**Abu-Lughod, Lila, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013, 324 pages.**

*Reviewer: Marc-André Morency  
Université Laval*

In autumn 2013, the province of Quebec's leading party (the Parti Québécois) promoted Bill 60, which would potentially lead to a ban on all ostensible religious symbols in the public apparatus. It quickly became clear that the Parti Québécois was mostly interested in banning the hijab, therefore targeting Muslim women. The party argued that a *Charter of laïcité*, in this precise version, would improve equality between men and

women, assuming that the latter, especially veiled women, need emancipation. But "Do Muslim Women Need Saving?" (2013), asks Lila Abu-Lughod.

As I read her most recent book, links were easily drawn with the Quebec context. This reveals the accomplishment of one of her self-defined tasks: to offer a West-reflexive discourse to challenge certain public opinions regarding Muslim women. Here, the anthropologist found inspiration outside the academic theoretical agenda. She focused rather on the necessity of questioning a dominant frame of thinking, in the global Western public, about Muslim women's rights. More precisely, Abu-Lughod asks, "What can thinking about their circumstances teach us about values like choice and freedom in the context of human lives—any human lives?" (26). Therefore, Abu-Lughod's book is less concerned with Muslim women than it is with power-embedded truth assumptions, themselves produced and reproduced by specific discourses in the global arena.

The book is the result of Abu-Lughod's long intellectual journey into Muslim women's lives, especially in rural Egypt. Methodologically, it thus reveals itself as a synthesis based on data collected in the last few decades. The author writes in a fluid, clear and welcoming style. Theoretically, she stands close to Talal Asad's (2003) and Saba Mahmood's (2005) post-colonial thinking. Each in their own way engage in a critique aimed at the Western secular hegemony, located in the modern discourse of the Enlightenment which frames (non-Christian) religion as its non-modern other, constantly asked to prove its adequacy to modernity by cleansing itself of particularism, violence, superstition and so on. With Mahmood, Abu-Lughod also shares in this book a critique aimed at a certain liberal feminism that often appropriates agency for itself, thus denying Muslim women's voices and power to act for themselves, even through social constraints. Precisely, "one of the things we have to be most careful about is not to fall into polarizations that place feminism, and even secularism, only on the side of the West" (44).

To me, the book develops around two major thrusts. The first four chapters (Chapter 1, "Do Muslim Women (Still) Need Saving?"; Chapter 2, "The New Common Sense"; Chapter 3, "Authorizing Moral Crusades"; and Chapter 4, "Seductions of the 'Honor Crime'") are devoted to the strong reflexive argument generally aimed at "the West." Among others, one major theme in these chapters concerns a new global *genre littéraire*, a "pornography of suffering" as the author calls it, based on biographical accounts of "liberated" Muslim women. In fact, these "suffering vignettes and extreme cases tell us little about the variety of ways women experience their lives and the contexts we must appreciate in order to make sense of their suffering" (78). In the final two chapters (Chapter 5, "The Social Life of Muslim Women's Rights"; and Chapter 6, "An Anthropologist in the Territory of Rights"), Abu-Lughod shifts her gaze to the second major thrust of the book, the development discourse and the "rights" concept: "an ethnographic approach that tracks the social lives in which the concept partakes may be more useful for understanding this subject and the movement we are living than moral posturing that judges women's rights to be either collusion with imperialism (to be denounced) or a hopeful sign of universal emancipation and progress (to be celebrated)" (170). Let us now look at the general argument of the book by outlining especially important themes, independently of the chapter they belong to.

*Anthropologica* 57 (2015)

First, the notion of “culture” is heavily counterbalanced, not to say rejected, by more precise and less essentializing terms such as *historical contingency*, *context* and *complexity*. Abu-Lughod’s rigorous commitment to ethnography helps her to warn fellow academics and citizens of the analytical risk of using “culture” as a concept able to fully grasp socio-political sources of suffering. She reveals an insufficiency in the argument about Muslim women’s “lack of rights” under an oppressive patriarchal “culture,” since this “cultural framing” (31) remains in contrast to several women’s emic discourses in a vast area called the “Muslim world.” In their own self-understandings, which are generally globally muted, some rural Egyptian women would portray their situations as the result of state politics, militarization, poverty or family constraints, not as the consequence of the culture of “Islamland” (68). The latter term, according to the author, is a “fantasy space” (69), the ground on which “gendered orientalism” (88) stands. In assuming that culture alone produces women’s oppression in this multinational and multi-ethnic geographical space, one silences these women’s voices but also flattens the immense empirical complexity of such an—imagined—area.

Furthermore, the cultural framing also throws onto “others” a problem (Muslim women’s suffering) that is best understood as a global issue. Global politics, global (financial) governance and the lucrative industry of best-selling books portraying heroic and “freed” Muslim women, all of this legitimates NGO and military intervention in the Middle East, which are both erased as sources of suffering. In fact, “these books are caught up in a charged international political field in which Arabs, Muslims, and particular others are seen as dangers to the West” (96). Interestingly enough, the United States’ left and right poles find a common ideological ground regarding the issue of Muslim women. This blurring of political allegiances makes it possible for Hollywood stars, conservative politicians and liberal feminist academics to put their names on the same Web petitions. Skeptical about this odd reality, the author suggests that “we” should, instead of exporting liberal values out there, reframe “our” understanding of the values of autonomy, freedom and agency. Quotation marks are used here to indicate one critique that can be made of Abu-Lughod’s book: Who precisely is this we? It remains unclear.

But in this reflexive effort, should liberal democracies and modern states go as far as accepting the honour crime? As Abu-Lughod points it, “it turns out that honor crimes, whether ‘over there’ or ‘in our midst,’ are almost always implicated in the social institutions of policing, surveillance, and intervention” (131). The empirical veracity of acts of killing is not being questioned here. But Abu-Lughod points out that institutions can themselves *label* various cases of (domestic or other) violence as *honour crimes* perpetrated by the hand of a pre-modern tradition. The terms of intelligibility of the debate are thus set, making any counterdiscourse unheard, or at least hardly plausible. From Abu-Lughod’s perspective, the honour crime is seen as a rhetorical and discursive device.

But, trying to avoid a moral posture, Abu-Lughod gives herself the task to “track Muslim’s women’s rights into the multiple social worlds in which they operate” (146), to look at their production and effects. She argues that, whether NGOs defending Muslim women’s rights are foreign-based and mostly white, or locally-based and mostly filled with local women from

an urban elite, their dissonance with rural women’s discourses remains. The latter are usually socialized by local Muslim authorities, producing particular subjectivities. Hence, they normally want their situation to improve *within* this very framework. The top-down imposition of liberal values does not quite capture what these women—at least not all of them—generally long for. Still, paying attention to their words, Abu-Lughod realizes that the rights discourse has made its way to rural Egypt. When it is rethought by these women, though, its content radically changes and splits into layers of meaning according to these women’s multiple life experiences.

Do Muslim women need saving? The author would first say that “Muslim women” is a non-operable category, but she uses it to better highlight what is there in its backyard, what truth regime makes us think of it as valid and consistent. Then she would argue that these women have their own self-understandings that Western liberal subjects have little or no grasp of. If those subjects are to “help” women in the Middle East or immigrants in liberal democracies, they might need to (1) “hear” their voices, first, and then (2) proceed to a reflexive enterprise regarding the liberal lens they use to interpret one’s culture.

This book, and the title is a clue to this, seems to be aimed at a wide and public audience. It might leave academia’s ivory tower and reach a broader readership, but proof of this success will have to be found in the years to come. If we leave this aside, it remains a thorough contemporary post-colonial investigation on liberal thought’s shortcomings regarding non-Western religions, especially Islam. It includes post-colonial studies, critical religious studies, development studies and feminist theory. Its relevance in anthropology’s undergraduate curriculum is evident, for it is rich and insightful in these different domains. Finally, and most importantly, it is a call to reflexivity that should resonate in academia and in the larger society synchronically. When certain liberal academics are prone to adopt too quickly normative postures on religion, a universalized category that is now being paid serious attention (Asad 1993, 2003; Fitzgerald 2007; Mandair 2009; Masuzawa 2005), Abu-Lughod’s latest contribution is ever-more valuable and necessary.

## References

- Asad, Talal  
 1993 *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.  
 2003 *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Fitzgerald, Timothy  
 2007 *Discourse on Civility and Barbarity: A Critical History of Religion and Related Categories*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mahmood, Saba  
 2005 *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Subject of Feminism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Mandair, Arvind-Pal  
 2009 *Religion and the Specter of the West: Sikhism, India, Postcoloniality, and the Politics of Translation*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Masuzawa, Tomoko

2005 *The Invention of World Religions, or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226922621.001.0001>.

---

**Tomori, Cecilia**, *Nighttime Breastfeeding: American Cultural Dilemma*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2014, 312 pages.

*Reviewer: Aimee K.H. Whitefoot*  
York University

In the book *Nighttime Breastfeeding: An American Cultural Dilemma*, Cecilia Tomori investigates one of the most intimate areas of social life that is by nature unseen and is “rarely shared with others” (1). Tomori uses ethnographic research methods to follow nighttime breastfeeding and sleep experiences among middle-class American families experiencing the birth of their first child from late pregnancy until the baby’s first birthday, skilfully bringing together two fields of research that have rarely been studied at the same time. To gain access to this unseen element of social life, Tomori conducted participant observation in two childbirth education centres, where strategies for infant feeding and infant sleep are an essential part of the curriculum. Several families from each centre filled out a sleeping and feeding log for Tomori. A smaller number of families participated in a series of in-depth interviews with Tomori where nighttime breastfeeding was discussed. Because discussions about sleep take place during the day, these meetings were also a form of participant observation wherein Tomori was able to collect mothers’ narratives about sleep.

Tomori’s research reveals that these two fields—breastfeeding and sleep—are intricately intertwined not only in practice but also theoretically through analysis that exposes the contradictions inherent in the cultural norms governing these intimate embodied experiences. As such, Tomori characterizes the parents in her study as “moral pioneers” (38) navigating the “moral minefields” (120) of parenting culture in contemporary America. Like many other parents in the United States and Canada, Tomori’s participants struggled with doing what “works” or following official biomedical recommendations about proper protocols for breastfeeding and infant sleep.

Within the contemporary field of breastfeeding research, there is an ongoing project started by anthropologist Penny Van Esterik (1989), and expanded by women’s studies scholar Bernice Hausman (2003), to use research on reproduction and reproductive technologies—breastfeeding in particular—to develop a concept of relationality that “not only encompasses the inter-corporeal relationship between mother and child, but also espouses a broader, ecological approach that includes other social relationships and human-environmental interactions” (80–81). Tomori’s work is explicitly part of this project since she conceptualizes the embodied practices of breastfeeding and sleep as never simply biological but also equally relational, taking on a biosocial approach.

Drawing on Marcel Mauss’ (1973) concept of habitus and Talal Asad’s (1997) work on embodiment, Tomori’s exploration of the various strategies used by parents for breastfeeding and sleeping draws attention to “the relational way in which people acquire habitus” (27). These “techniques of the body,” Tomori argues, are shaped by dominant cultural norms, which have developed over time to accommodate the ideological and temporal needs of industrial capitalism and to privilege the self-sufficient and autonomous individual. But as Asad suggests in his work, when these bodily techniques are carried out, they too have an effect on the culture that instructed them. The nighttime breastfeeding strategies actually carried out by parents in Tomori’s study are not a perfect reflection of dominant norms because the temporal-spatial demands of a capitalist ideology that idealizes self-sufficiency and solitary sleep do not resonate with the embodied needs of nighttime breastfeeding. As a result, all parents end up negotiating between the demands of culture and biology by crafting a variety of “in-between” practices, depending on each family’s own characteristics and needs.

Tomori offers to further this project by situating breastfeeding studies within the well-established field of kinship studies. This is a logical move, since bonds of relatedness are formed between parents and between parents and their child through the affective embodied engagements of breastfeeding and sleeping. In the process, new forms of personhood are crafted. Her book has seven chapters and covers four themes: the first theme, which Tomori describes as her exploration of “embodied moral dilemmas,” outlines the theoretical tools she will use to interpret her data. The second theme provides an overview of the relationship between biomedicine and capitalism. The third theme explores the role of childbirth education classes as a framework for developing parenting strategies. The fourth and final theme considers the moral contradictions of breastfeeding. All of these together draw on theory and ethnographic data to show how forms of personhood and kinship are established through breastfeeding and sleep arrangements.

The unique contribution that Tomori’s research offers is that it de-romanticizes the role of the breastfeeding mother by acknowledging the “moral praxis of women who are committed to breastfeeding” (141). Her work reveals that pro-breastfeeding moral frameworks are stigmatizing even among mothers who do breastfeed and that additional moral quandaries are encountered throughout the process of actually breastfeeding a baby, and especially with regard to nighttime breastfeeding practices. Tomori’s participants were subject to the scrutiny of friends and family who objected to their breastfeeding practices based on cultural expectations about measurability, the self-sufficiency of infants, proper sexuality, decency and incest taboos. In dealing with medical professionals, Tomori’s participants often lied to medical experts about their sleeping arrangements to avoid further moral anguish over defying medical and cultural norms for solitary sleep (137). In their conversations with Tomori, many mothers downplayed the suffering they endured while attempting to establish successful breastfeeding in the first few weeks and months. These breastfeeding difficulties, ranging from fears of insufficient milk to poor latch, often resulted in “mother (self)-blame” (129) resulting from the cultural imagination of idealized breastfeeding,