
Artifacts and Allegiances: How Museums Put the Nation and the World on Display, by **Peggy Levitt**. Oakland: University of California Press, 2015. 244 pp. \$29.95 paper. ISBN: 9780520286078.

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Museums contribute to the production of citizens, but what kinds of citizens are they creating? In *Artifacts and Allegiances: How Museums Put the Nation and the World on Display*, Peggy Levitt examines how museums in Europe, the United States, Asia, and the Middle East define and portray the cosmopolitan identities of their local audiences. Levitt locates these dozen or so cultural institutions on a spectrum of her invention, ranging between cosmopolitanism and nationalism. In incisive historical sections that frame the chapters, she explores the ways in which the particularities of places (nations, neighborhoods, museums) and people (nationalities, racial-ethnic groups, classes) combine with museological practices to locate cultural institutions on this spectrum. In this process, cultural policy, both codified and defined in practice, plays an important role in how diversity is managed both in and outside of the museum. Levitt persuasively demonstrates that a nation's self-portrait can still be found within museums, part and parcel of the project of creating global citizens.

As "postempire" (p. 10) nations, Sweden and Denmark boast museum displays that seek to locate these nations in the world but do not seek to demonstrate their dominance of it. In Stockholm and Gothenburg, museum collections display the country's long-standing cosmopolitan character and how it has produced a strong state and national identity, while institutions in Copenhagen use the global to emphasize their national character. In Gothenburg, the Museum of World Culture hosts exhibits on human trafficking and Bollywood; in Copenhagen, visitors can "experience over 14,000 years of Danish prehistory, from the reindeer-hunters of the Ice Age to the voyages of the Vikings" (p. 24). This first chapter includes a useful

discussion of how museum professionals think through the political dimensions of defining community when constructing an exhibit, a section that implicitly critiques outdated depictions of these experts as unreflexive elitists.

Museums in Boston and New York have collections that reflect each city's particular history of immigration and diversity, thus reflecting how the world is located *within* each place. The distinction between the two is quite nuanced. Briefly, the staff at the Brooklyn Museum, Queens Museum, and El Museo del Barrio present art from their diverse local communities, connecting each museum to the world through its patrons and artists. In contrast, exhibits at the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston) and the Peabody Essex Museum (outside of Boston) tell the history of American art through objects that Bostonians brought back to the city: how the world changed the city, reflected in the collections of museum donors. This chapter offers an accessible and parsimonious account of the curatorial history of American art, enlivened by trivia. Did you know that Paul Revere's Sons of Liberty bowl (1768) was modeled after a Chinese punch bowl? The argument here is that America has always manifested a cosmopolitan character, but a provincial one: the "world still needs to come to America rather than the other way around" (p. 90). In Levitt's wonderful description of the Peabody Essex Museum, we get a peek inside small towns that were once bustling, international, cosmopolitan metropolises; their slow decline into regionalism provides a nice contrast to the rapidly growing cities explored in the subsequent chapter.

Both Singapore and Doha are cities whose leaders aspire to having influential, global identities within their regions. They use museums to selectively adopt aspects of cosmopolitanism while simultaneously working to identify, or even manufacture, a uniquely local history and culture. The politics of such growth, particularly the fact that cultural development benefits elites and comes at the expense of migrant labor and civil liberties, takes center stage in Levitt's analysis. (As one professor is quoted as saying, "Cosmopolitanism stretches upward but not sideways" [p. 111], particularly in

Qatar.) The chapter's second strength lies in the clear explication of cultural policy regimes in the two cities and how these impact what is on display and who is in charge of creating and displaying it. I found the discussion (pp. 108–109) of "Peranakanmania"—a denigrated group, all descendants from Chinese traders, now find themselves celebrated as carriers of distinctively Singaporean heritage—particularly fascinating and revealing of how such "invented traditions" impact museology. As Levitt writes, "Peranakanmania in Singapore is the equivalent of falconry and camel racing in Doha: dusted off, previously disparaged traditions meant to stem the flow of disappearing memories and social dislocation" (p. 130). Attending to the explosive growth of culture industries in Singapore and Qatar makes Levitt's book one of the few in our discipline to consider how culture is consecrated outside the United States and the European Union and therefore critical reading for scholars in the field.

The book is written, as Levitt explains, "so that museum professionals, colleagues, students, and my ninety-five-year-old father will all want to read it" (p. 12). Indeed, the text is sparing in its use of jargon, written in a conversational tone, and includes a set of full-color plates; for scholarly readers, there are fifty pages of endnotes to peruse. Although the chapters are written as paired comparisons (Singapore and Qatar; Boston and New York; Sweden and Denmark), I think the book is best read (or assigned) as a single piece. In cases where that is not possible, students will need help understanding how the tension between nationalism and cosmopolitanism matters outside of the museum: relationships to trade, identity, terrorism, rights, and so forth. (That is, unless one is teaching a class on museology.)

While our televisions and newspapers document violent clashes wrought from conflicts between nationalism and cosmopolitanism, Levitt explores them in the quiet, white box spaces of modern museums. This light touch, felt also in her gentle guidance toward her analytical conclusions, might frustrate some readers. There are places in the text where Levitt's documentation does not resolve neatly into an argument, and in many places these contrasts and ambiguities are generative. Like museum collections themselves,

readers' reactions to this style of sociological argument will be a self-portrait.

Young People's Understandings of Men's Violence Against Women, by Nancy Lombard. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2015. 228 pp. \$109.95 cloth. ISBN: 9781472419910.

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Young People's Understandings of Men's Violence Against Women, by Nancy Lombard, concerns young people's (in actuality, children's) understandings of the social construction of gendered violence, specifically men against women. She claims that this is the first study of its kind: other studies exist that describe children's conceptualizations of gender or of victims of violence or describe their understanding of domestic violence. However, the author claims that these studies did not include children under the age of 14 (her research, conducted in Scotland, includes 11- and 12-year-olds) and ignored younger people's understandings of the gendered nature of violence.

Lombard's aims in producing the book are aligned with the following argument. She sets out first to "confront and challenge the 'everyday' occurrence and acceptability of the social problem of men's violence against women," and, second, to challenge the perception that children are "too young to 'know' about," form viewpoints of, or discuss gendered violence (pp. 1–2). A primary argument of her work is not only that children can, and do, form and articulate these viewpoints, but that their viewpoints matter to society, as the experiences and conceptualizations that occur in childhood serve as the basis for deep understandings of men's violence against women as a social problem—or not. In providing children a protected space within which to discuss and provide examples of gendered violence with their peers also allows them the opportunity to listen to others—an important catalyst for change and one that Lombard claims allows children to see that violence is a dynamic, not static, concept or experience.