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Author

LEONARD, KAREN

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The chapter “Generation X: Anthropology in a Media Saturated World” provides the most extended example of subjects situated within relations of power pursuing projects and being thwarted along the way. Ortner starts by complicating the notion of what constitutes “Generation X.” In contrast to media representations that homogenize (and, indeed, construct) this generation and represent them as slackers, Ortner distinguishes between lower-middle-class Gen Xers and upper-middle-class ones and understands each as subjects struggling with the on-the-ground reality of U.S. economic decline in the 1970s. As the neoliberal policies of the 1980s pulled the middle class further and further apart, lower-middle-class women and men whose “project” was to class climb became frustrated, depressed, and enraged as upper-middle-class Gen Xers became insecure and fearful, even terrorized, as their desire to maintain their parents’ class standing became more and more allusive.

Although Ortner’s insights into Gen Xers are compelling, it is a shame that she does not provide the kind of context that she champions in her chapter “Resistance and the Problem of Academic Refusal,” which critiques the failure to aspire to “thickness” and “density” in ethnographic representations. Ortner is especially concerned with the “thinness” of studies of resistance, which she argues, ironically, sanitize politics by focusing primarily on relations between dominant and dominated to the exclusion of other sites of tension. Neither do these studies, she claims, sufficiently explore the cultural richness of groups nor of the subjectivities of the actors involved in such struggles. Although Ortner does explore the tension between upper middle-class Gen Xers and their parents, suggesting that the media representation of the slacker is a reflection of parental anxieties, her analysis relies on others people’s writings and on slight interview data, providing us with little sense of the intersubjective context within which actors’ intentions, desires, fears, and projects are enacted, thwarted, or achieved. Nor, bewilderingly, does she provide a rich picture of the practices that construct and propel their projects.

However, when “Generation X” is taken together with “Reading America: Preliminary Notes on Class and Culture” and “Identities: The Hidden Life of Class,” what does emerge is a vivid picture of the ideological formation of “class” in U.S. popular and scholarly discourses and its submersion within other categories of identity. She shows how naturalizing class by emblazoning it on raced, ethnicized, or gendered bodies renders it invisible as the source of social and economic inequalities. It also has real consequences for lived experiences, as when, for example, working-class women, seen as more aligned with middle-class values, pressure their husbands toward middle-class respectability, creating tensions in their marriage, or when African

Americans who, despite high-status jobs, see themselves as lower class.

Ortner is masterful at locating connections between currents in contemporary social theory and at teasing out their similarities and differences, their limitations and potential. *Anthropology and Social Theory* is a highly valuable text, an accessible reckoning with some of social theory’s most fundamental but slippery and problematic concepts. It will be a welcomed read for scholars who also continue to wrestle with issues of subjectivity, agency, and power, and for students seeking a map to the theoretical struggles that will likely continue to vex anthropology in the 21st century.

Missing: Youth, Citizenship, and Empire after 9/11.
Sunaina Marr Maira. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009. 336 pp.

KAREN LEONARD

University of California, Irvine

Sunaina Maira has written a passionate, politically engaged, and ambitious book, one ostensibly based on ethnographic work with South Asian Muslim youth after 9/11 in a New England urban high school. Maira combines three strands or modes of writing: narratives about and by the youth; analysis based on her fieldwork and theoretical and political ideas; and accounts of her own involvement in community and political issues relevant to questions of youth, citizenship, and empire (p. 36). Of these strands, the second dominates. Thus, the first substantive chapter lays out Maira’s analysis of U.S. empire “to highlight the importance of this framework for research on a range of issues related to citizenship, culture, and politics in this historical moment, and to reinsert an approach into the study of youth and immigration that has long gone missing” (p. 36). Her discussions of politics and theory are well written and wide ranging. She proposes new concepts or new phrases to capture themes she attributes to the student interviews: imperial feelings, cultural citizenship, transnational citizenship, polyculturalism, and dissenting citizenship.

Maira has used pseudonyms for the town and high school that she studied in 2002–03 with a grant from the Russell Sage Foundation and the help of three research assistants. Her appendix on methods specifies interviews with 38 high school students and 29 adults, chiefly parents, schoolteachers, and staff; Indian, Pakistani, and Muslim community leaders; and a few employees in government youth programs. Narratives from 14 of the 38 students interviewed are reproduced, two students appearing five times each (a Romeo and Juliet duo) and the others once

each. Three of these students were from Bangladesh, three were from Pakistan, and eight were from Gujarat, India. By the end of the book, one does have a sense of the lives of those who are recent immigrants, their struggles in school, at work, and in their homes. However, in contrast to another recent ethnographic study of South Asian students in an American high school, Shalini Shankar's *Desi Land: Teen Culture, Class, and Success in Silicon Valley* (2008), there is no systematic presentation of the high school student body, staff, policies, or of the family and community patterns in which the students are embedded.

Selected student narratives do open each chapter and engage us, but then Maira moves into analytical mode, focusing on current politics and theory and only occasionally referring to the student narratives to illustrate her views. Given her strong criticisms of the United States, its imperial thrust, its discriminatory policies toward Arabs and Muslims after 9/11, and its neoliberal economic positioning of the students in low-wage service-sector jobs, it was striking (at least to me) that the selected narratives lent rather weak support to her generalizations. Yes, some students stated that they thought the war in Afghanistan was not justified, and, yes, some spoke of expressions of prejudice toward themselves, friends, or relatives. But on the whole, as Maira says herself several times, their criticisms were implicit rather than explicit (she explains this by fear), and all or most said they liked where they were living and valued or intended to get U.S. citizenship.

When a student showed her a cartoon about Bush, saying he did not dislike Bush but found it funny, Maira muses for several pages about what the student could really have meant by this "ambiguous dissent" (pp. 210–214). In another place (pp. 190–197), following three narratives from students from India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan who had been in the United States from eight to 14 years, Maira discusses them as having expressed a "critique of the anti-Muslim backlash" and states that their "dissent" was driven by two factors: first, they were forced to deal with discrimination "soon after arriving in the United States," and, second, they were from a "region" that was "experiencing a U.S. military invasion" (pp. 197–198). One might find her generalizations are overstatements, but to her credit she has given full enough statements from 14 of her interviewees so that we can assess the stances for ourselves.

Maira, like the recent book by the Detroit Arab American Study Team, *Citizenship and Crisis: Arab Detroit after 9/11* (2009), is intervening in, as the latter puts it, "a process of normalization that obscures the dangers, opportunities, and sociopolitical transformations now reshaping the post 9/11 world" (p. 26). Maira invokes Arabs and the situation in the Middle East frequently in her political and theoretical discussions, although unlike the book just mentioned, her focus is on South Asian and not Middle Eastern Muslims,

and the student narratives have little or nothing to say about the Israel–Palestine situation. It seems to this reviewer that the connections made to the student narratives are rather weak.

The third theme of the book, Maira's own activism, is a strong one and strongest in the final chapters. The photos in the book all illustrate this activism, but information about it is scattered and one never learns who exactly the "we" are that are carrying out South Asian Mentoring and Tutoring (SAMTA) and South Asian Committee for Human Rights activities.

Maira tells us of her leading role in setting up school and community events that she subsequently analyzes with respect to student reaction and participation, and some might find it problematic to stage events that one then investigates. The book ends with Maira's account of attempts to visit a Bangladeshi man arrested for immigration violations, a man who turns out to be "missing" when the activists finally arrive at the prison.

In sum, Sunaina Maira's book offers a well-argued analysis of immensely important political issues and compelling discussions of current theoretical work on these issues.

References cited

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Transnational Tortillas: Race, Gender, and Shop-Floor Politics in Mexico and the United States. Carolina Bank Muñoz. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press–Cornell University Press, 2008. 202 pp.

PAUL ALLATSON

University of Technology Sydney

Tortimundo is the inspired pseudonym proposed by Carolina Bank Muñoz in *Transnational Tortillas: Race, Gender, and Shop-Floor Politics in Mexico and the United States*, to designate a successful, and "real," transnational tortilla company with factories in southern California, United States, and Baja California, Mexico. Identifying these factories as "Hacienda CA" and "Hacienda BC" respectively, Muñoz enters into the murky worlds of their divergent factory regimes to identify how globalization, neoliberal policies, and state power, have transformed factory labor