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judging, expressing, thinking, planning, and recording for the future—all of these being somehow fixed in the law of contract but drawn out over time with the gift, because the gift also entails sustenance toward ongoing self-realization in life, for both giver and receiver. We learn from Hyland's analysis that "ingratitude" is one legally recognized condition that links, as well as contrasts, contract and gift. A contract cannot be unilaterally revoked, whereas a gift may be taken back in some instances (and systems) because the identity of the giver remains actionable across conditions arising in the arc of life, such as impoverishment, indebtedness, or the birth of new children (para 1072). Ingratitude is the "first legally recognized grounds for revocation" (para 1116), the first version of this being a former slave's apparent ingratitude for manumission in ancient Rome. The exposition passes through some fascinating situations, from a donee's subsequent "attempt to kill" the donor to the legal implication of the donor's "forgiveness." It should not be surprising, by the end, to find that revocation law contains many "inconsistencies," some of them precisely tied to intersections between legal regularization and the unpredictable arc of life.

This brief example of ingratitude and revocation shows how inspiring this book can be to anthropologists: to scholars of law and practice, for Hyland's detailed exposition of the continuing tensions of incommensurability; and scholars of transactions, for his frame-by-frame—in historical context, in vernacular languages—tracing out of the phases and stages that make up the interactional processes to which we give such portmanteau analytical terms as "the gift." For us, this is a book to read, and also a reference book to keep taking down from the shelf, as often as such problems cross our paths . . . which promises to be increasingly often.

## Reference cited

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**Journey into America: The Challenge of Islam.** Akbar Ahmed. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2010. 528 pp.

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Well known before coming to the United States as an anthropologist and government servant in Pakistan, Akbar Ahmed's book is billed, on the jacket cover, as "the most comprehensive study to date of the American Muslim community." Professor Ahmed and several of his students

traveled to some 75 U.S. cities in nine months, interviewing Muslims and non-Muslims and visiting mosques and Muslim institutions; they received various grants and donations (incl. a generous grant from the Department of Homeland Security) to fund the trip. The resulting book is rather idiosyncratic, with the author's views of U.S. history and society shaping the material. The team administered a questionnaire to 2,000 people, half of them Muslim, but the questionnaire is neither appended nor are any results presented quantitatively or even systematically. Because Ahmed's and the team's participant-observation and interview accounts are also presented anecdotally, the methodology and findings cannot really be assessed.

Ahmed sees himself as following in de Tocqueville's steps, seeking to understand and explain the United States. He relies on certain touchstones as he reviews "American Identity" in part 1: the Mayflower, Plymouth Rock, and Jamestown; the Founding Fathers (particularly Jefferson); Scots-Irish culture; and then Darwin and Jesus. Yes, "Darwin versus Jesus" is the title of a subsection (p. 24), and throughout the book Ahmed sees U.S. identity as torn between these two, as he defines them: between competitiveness, or the struggle for survival of the fittest, and true Christianity, or compassion and universal love. He also proposes three basic "identities" defining U.S. society: primordial, pluralist, and predator, all three derived from the white settlers at Plymouth and Jamestown. These ideas form the "anthropological framework" for the volume. Toward the end of the book, it is clear that he believes that true Islam, also stressing compassion and love, can help bring calmness and peace to the United States.

A very positive aspect of this book is the attention paid to African American Muslims, too often omitted from academic or journalistic accounts of Muslim Americans. Ahmed discusses racism at length, and, in part 2, "Islam in America," he places African American Muslims as the first of three groups. The second group is immigrant Muslims, and the third is Muslim converts. In this third section, he mistakenly asserts that the gender ratio of converts is four females to one male (p. 304, footnoting to a single article); he highlights female converts, white and Latino. Actually there are many more men, African American men, converting to Islam in the United States, many of them doing so while in prison. Discussing female converts, Ahmed links "original American identity" to notions of modesty, shame, and honor as in Plymouth and Jamestown (p. 331), seeing this as analogous to the respect with which Islam treats women. (He did not seem to seek out or encounter U.S. Muslim women engaged in the "gender jihad" underway in the United States and elsewhere.) He traces a decline of U.S. morality from early frontier society through the materialism and indulgence of the 1960s and 1980s (Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson) to the consumerism of the 1990s. To Ahmed and his team, Mardi Gras in New Orleans

represented a complete lack of moral boundaries, as did Las Vegas (pp. 335–340). Another of Ahmed's keys to U.S. culture emerges most strongly in this chapter as he repeatedly cites the *Girls Gone Wild* films and videos as symptomatic of a society without shame or honor. He invokes the idea of a clash of civilizations between Islam and the West and suggests that U.S. converts to Islam can counteract the idea of such a clash.

In part 3, the first chapter focuses on Jews and Muslims and the second on Mormons and Muslims. In the first, Ahmed and his students report on the anti-Semitism and Islamophobia they encountered. I am quite sure there is a serious misunderstanding here of statements made by Dawud Walid, an African American leader of the Council on American–Islamic Relations (CAIR) and a prominent interfaith activist in Detroit, Michigan (p. 384). That disservice, coupled with the superficial coverage of the well-known Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services or ACCESS, in nearby Dearborn, reminds us that Dr. Ahmed and his students were doing their fieldwork rapidly, probably without reading everything available on the contexts for their interviews and visits. The chapter on Mormons finds much to admire about this minority faith in the United States and reports some interesting survey results (pp. 420–421), notably that Mormons were the religious group most concerned about immorality and the breakdown of the family. Remarking that both Mormons and Muslims cling to their religious and cultural practices “in the face of a larger encroaching American culture,” Ahmed finds the similarities between Mormons and Muslims “gratifying” (pp. 427–428).

The final chapter, “The Importance of Being America,” likens the founders of the United States and Pakistan, Jefferson and Jinnah, to each other. Ahmed considerably overstates, in my view, the relevance in Pakistan today of Jinnah's views on democracy and women's and minority rights. Ahmed's recommendations to Americans and American Muslims to promote mutual education and better understanding are constructive. Then, as the book ends (pp. 467–468), he writes of the fairness and sense of justice of Muslims with a tribal background, evidenced in writings by Rudyard Kipling, John Masters, and British officers serving in Pakistan's tribal areas before 1947. Mentioning that Jinnah brought back colonial administrators after independence, he asserts a Scots-Irish empathy with South Asian Muslim tribals, stating that “it is this [British colonial] fairness and sense of justice that Muslims find missing in Americans” (p. 468).

Provocative and idiosyncratic, the book certainly conveys the diversity among American Muslims. It also struggles to portray regionalism and diversity in the United States, but in this it is less successful. Thus, Ahmed was nonplussed when a gathering of predominantly young Muslim professionals in Los Angeles derided the idea that Plymouth

Rock and the Mayflower were sacred symbols of the United States. Rather than listening to their dismissal of notions crucial to him, he judged them ignorant of the importance of the Plymouth settlers in U.S. mythology (p. 100). Eager to speak about Islam and supportive of interfaith dialogue, Professor Ahmed has achieved some prominence in eastern U.S. academic and political circles. Readers may well enjoy following his journey into the United States.

**Blood and Culture: Youth, Right-Wing Extremism, and National Belonging in Contemporary Germany.** *Cynthia Miller-Idriss*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009. 233 pp.

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Cynthia Miller-Idriss's *Blood and Culture: Youth, Right-Wing Extremism, and National Belonging in Contemporary Germany* makes a valuable contribution to a growing body of ethnographic research on everyday experiences of nationalism and citizenship. Miller-Idriss has meticulously researched the ways in which students and teachers at three German vocational schools create and made sense of the shifting meanings of the nation and national belonging. As Miller-Idriss points out, while scholars now widely view the nation as an imagined and socially constructed entity, we still know relatively little about precisely how national imaginaries are created and recreated in response to sweeping historical events and political change. *Blood and Culture* enhances our understanding of the ways in which citizens reimagine their nation in response to particular historical moments.

Germany's highly contested national history presents an ideal context in which to explore citizens' reconstitution of national imaginaries in the face of historical and political change. Miller-Idriss shows that understandings of belonging to the German nation, long thought to revolve around notions of German “blood” or ethnicity and a romantic notion of the German *Volk*, have been redefined in complex and multifaceted ways as a result of key historical trends in the last several decades. These trends include younger Germans' fading sense of personal responsibility for World War II and the Holocaust, the unification of Germany, and an increase in immigration. Miller-Idriss examines the beliefs and experiences of her research subjects against the backdrop of the changing narrative of nationalism in Germany, new citizenship policies, and public discourse about these policies.

The book is organized into seven chapters that follow a brief preface in which she lays out her central argument and provides an organizational overview of the book. The introduction and chapter 1 situate *Blood and Culture* in the