SEX, DEATH AND WITCHCRAFT: A CONTEMPORARY PAGAN FESTIVAL

By Douglas Ezzy

Bloomsbury: London and New York, 2014, 204 pp.
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Reviewed by
Kathryn Rountree, Massey University

From its provocative title this book appears to recapitulate longstanding popular stereotypes about witchcraft, bucking the trend in the scholarship of contemporary Paganism to bend over backwards to reassure outsiders that such stereotypes are wrong. Chapter One opens with a procession of seventy modern Pagan Witches – costumed or naked, body-painted and mud-smeared – emerging out of a candle-lit forest with a black-robed priestess, forming a circle around a monstrous bonfire beneath a full moon, and proceeding to chant, shout and beat drums until the ritual's climax and Baphomet appears. The hermaphroditic god/dess Baphomet is bare-breasted, wears a torch-lit goat-horned mask and black wings, and has a huge wooden phallus strapped to her groin. The ensuing ritual, involving face-to-face meetings with Baphomet, ecstatic trance, polyamorous encounters, and dancing naked around the fire, lasts most of the night and is the high point of the five-day Faunalia (a pseudonym) festival which is this book's focus.

The other main ritual of the festival is the Underworld rite, a dramatic enactment inspired by the myth of Persephone's descent to, and re-emergence from, the Underworld. In this rite the Witches confront their mortality through a kind of rehearsed death: one at a time they are abducted from the ritual circle, have a sack thrown over them, are placed in a grave-like trench, have earth shovelled on their head, emerge from the trench to face a series of other ordeals, and end up – one imagines with relief – in the Underworld, along with previous abductees and a couple representing Hades and Persephone.

The Faunalia festivals took place annually between 2000 and 2009 in rural south-eastern Australia. In a 'Methodological Appendix' Ezzy, a sociologist,

explains that he attended Faunalia in 2005 and interviewed participants before and after but not during it, apparently because of the conditions of his ethics approval for conducting the research. The text is liberally supported with frank and substantial quotations from these interviews with festival-goers. Ezzy tells readers that he 'was not doing fieldwork or observing participants while at the festival', and did not write field-notes either during or after the festival (p.184). I would have liked to understand more about the reasons for this and the challenges it posed.

Ezzy is quick to acknowledge that Faunalia exists on the margins of mainstream modern Witchcraft as an 'extreme case' (p.31), and that many Witches have claimed it messes with powerful and potentially dangerous energies. For Faunalia participants, though, many of whom returned annually, the lavishly theatrical Baphomet and Underworld rites reflect 'attempts to resist a broader culture that is afraid of suffering and sadness… and ambivalent about sexual desire' (p.23). By performatively engaging with sex and death as problematic but inescapable aspects of life through 'tactile, emotional, relational experiences with other people, deities and 'energy" (p.51), Ezzy explains, many participants experience profound and lasting self-transformation.

Like many (arguably all) of modern Pagan Witchcraft's rituals, the Faunalia rites are creative constructions inspired by various myths and impelled by a desire for magic and charged emotional and somatic experiences. In the case of the Baphomet ritual, the myths include traditional European folklore and myths of Dionysus as well as the medieval myth of the witches' Sabbat which fuelled the European imagination during the (15th to 18th) centuries of the witch-craze. Thus, in their efforts to create a ritual to come to terms with the anxieties and upheavals associated with erotic desire, these modern Witches co-opt and mimic myths used historically to damn and burn witches. Their dramatisation seems to represent a symbolic reclamation of the diabolical witch image; as Irigaray (1985, 76) pointed out, mimicry can serve to convert and gain some control over an undesirable discursive positioning by assigning an image with fresh meaning and value. Such mimicry – what one Faunalia organiser refers to more prosaically as 'shit stirring' (p.106) – is risky business. Certainly, I suspect, it seems so in the view of many modern Witches the world over. But it is apparently accomplished by these Australian Witches with a defiant and playful panache. They know that the medieval witches' Sabbat was a fantasy of the Inquisition, but have re-appropriated it anyway for their own therapeutic (and pleasurable) work with 'shadow' and 'dark archetypes' (p.81).

It is not possible to know how successfully they transform the wider society's ideas about witches – this book may well help with that – but Ezzy argues convincingly that they transform their own self-understandings; experience a release from fear, shame and guilt; and form a new relationship with erotic desire whereby it 'becomes a foundation for a new ethical way of relating both to others and to oneself' with courage and respect (p.127). Having said that, the behavioural transformations experienced in the liminal space of the Baphomet ritual, especially the polyamory, are not carried beyond the ritual circle into participants' regular lives. Participants typically return to monogamous relationships (or occasionally decide to leave them); thus, the behavioural transformations are temporary. Consequently, the Baphomet rite reads like a ritual of inversion or reversal: the ritual context gives license to conduct which not only transgresses everyday societal norms (something Witches may not be overly concerned about), but also represents an inversion of, and temporary departure from, participants' own normal behaviour. Rituals of inversion typically work to reinforce societal norms (in this case, a repressive attitude towards the expression of erotic desire) precisely because such rituals are rare and temporary. But in the case of Faunalia, it seems, even though participants do not carry their erotically expressive behaviour beyond the ritual circle, they do report important ongoing changes: 'The ritual practices provide a somatic, emotional and cognitive sense of self-worth and purpose; they provide a life with soul' (p.170).

Sex, Death and Witchcraft makes a fascinating and provocative contribution to the sociology and anthropology of religion and, more specifically, to extending scholarship on modern Paganism and Witchcraft.

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CLIMATE CHANGE AND ANTHROPOS: PLANET, PEOPLE, AND PLACES

By Linda H. Connor,
Earthscan/Routledge: Abington and New York, 2016, 206 pages, 30 illus.
ISBN: HB, 978-0-415-71853-0; e-book, 978-1-31-586972-8

Reviewed by
Piers Locke, University of Canterbury

Before commencing this review, I was reading about the existential angst of beleagured climate scientists. Some receive death threats, and many struggle to cope with the implications of their findings, which evoke scenarios of apocalyptic devastation. Many despair at the political resistance with which their science is met, from governments, interest groups, and individuals, reminding us how difficult it is to confront climate change and accept the planet-altering agency of humanity and its (arguably maladapted) social and technological apparatus. This is where the obligation and expertise of social scientists comes in – we are well equipped to cast light on denial and complacency, activism and innovation, and on the messy and contested business of coping and responding as it plays out across the world. Linda Connor's Climate Change and Anthropos represents one such instance of illumination; exploring climate change through a project investigating the nexus of capitalist resource extraction, local government, and the attitudes, experiences, and concerns of the public in the coal-rich region of Australia's Hunter Valley.

Linda Connor was a key researcher in a collaborative, multi-disciplinary, and long-term project alongside environmental philosopher Glenn Albrecht and social psychologist Nick Higginbotham. It has produced a formidable data set, yielded numerous publications, and provided valuable insight into the situated understandings and worldviews of citizens in proximity to a source of wealth that threatens health and lifeways in the context of shifting political attitudes toward climate change in Australia. The prospect of a monograph based on this work was most appealing. In some respects this books succeeds, but not without problems.

These begin with readers' reasonable expectations. The book summary tells us that; 'The book offers a new way of exploring the significance of locality and lives in the epoch of the Anthropocene'. Yet, the book itself seems unconcerned with validating this claim, featuring little in the way of conceptual and methodological consideration, even regarding the inter-disciplinary collabora-

tion entailed, and the neologisms its practitioners have coined (with regard to Albrecht's notion of 'solastalgia'). While it certainly represents an intensive investigation of local lives, making impressive use of extensive survey, interview, and media data, it does not evince the novelty it claims. Indeed, at the very time the ecological crisis of the recently named Anthropocene is beginning to stimulate new forms of collaborative and inter-disciplinary research, and new concepts to think with (as with the work of the Aarhus University Reasearch on The Anthropocene [AURA] for instance), Connor pursues a conventionally culturalist approach that disappointingly keeps the ecology of capitalist production and landscape transformation at arms length.

While this approach allows her to document local concerns, opinions, and understandings regarding coal extraction, human health, and climate change (perhaps the greatest strength of this book), it is less adept at conceptualizing the inter-relations of capitalism, environment, and local lives (which its abstract subtitle suggests). The lived landscape tends to function as a passive backdrop in a book whose subject matter demands otherwise. We learn much about what people say and think, but rather less about what they do, which is a shame considering the agricultural livelihoods and the rise of activist groups that feature in this ethnography. The author expends little effort in attending to the material realities of the world people inhabit or the projects they invest themselves in.

The main exception is the second chapter, which provides formative historical and geographical context by combining consideration of the carboniferous geology of the Hunter Valley, the development of a colonial economy centred on coal and agriculture, and disruption to Aboriginal life on the land. Unfortunately Andreas Malm's *Fossil Capital* was released too recently to inform this chapter, as it would have provided a theorised history for thinking about Australia's colonial coal economy in relation to the Anthropocene, the lively discourse of which this book barely engages. Nonetheless, this was an engaging pleasure after a dense introductory chapter overly preoccupied with surveying the ethnography of climate change through a focus on the circumpolar and Pacific regions already experiencing the consequences of climate change. Although valid for its concern to discursively contextualize anthropological engagement with climate change, the purpose and relevance of this chapter was not immediately clear. As an exercise in scholastic orienteering, it certainly provides readers with a reasonable guide to the literature, but with little in the way of authorial voice, and without adequately attending to the book's agenda or to the concepts deployed.

For instance, Connor mentions the idea of 'metabolic rift', but excuses herself from explaining it by placing it in quotes. For this reviewer, this seemed a missed opportunity to consider the energy flows upon which organized social life depends, especially since Alf Hornborg has so productively considered the metabolism of societies in his ecologically-inflected version of world systems theory. Other underexplored ideas and phrases include; extractive capitalism, sacrifice zones, stranded assets, prefigurative politics, naturalist ontologies, anti-capitalism, and 'the excessive individualism of neoliberal thinking' (p.171). These all suggest rich possibilities for engaging the theorisation of capitalism, environment, resistance, and the individual in Western modernity, yet Connor prefers not to pursue them, providing interpretive ethnographic documentation with only meagre anthropological analysis.

The third chapter, *Being in The Weather,* continues this trend, deferring explanation of theoretical ideas (such as the phenomenology of climate change, italicised to suggest the need), events (such as reference to the global financial crisis), and situations (such as the hazard prone environment) – all of which warrant further consideration. Similarly, Connor raises the issue of industries capturing state regulatory regimes without considering what this means, what it entails, and how we might seek to theoretically understand this process she has alluded to. Too much of this discussion seems to rely on tacit knowledge that rehearses understandings the author assumes will be familiar to her readers. One might see this as a failure to make the familiar strange, widely considered a virtue of the anthropological approach.

This chapter, and those that follow do immerse the reader in the worldviews and situated understandings of a diverse range of Hunter Valley residents though. Connor alerts us to the significance of local experiences of weather events for discussing climate change, she documents local responses to the impacts of the coal industry, she reveals the politics of resistance the conjunction of coal and climate has variously engendered, and she also explores the sense of anomie produced by our fossil-fueled, secular modernity. Unfortunately though, while Connor examines her data well, and while a compelling narrative of civic concern, corporate power, and problematic governance ultimately emerges, the book lacks thematic unity, sustained argument, and an overarching thesis. This is reflected in its stylistic approach – chapters tend to be rather crudely sutured together through brief orienting comments in introductory and concluding paragraphs. While each chapter is otherwise well crafted, they articulate together somewhat mechanically, depriving the reader of a greater sense of purpose, direction, and coherence.

Connor has produced a work of exemplary scholarship and detailed ethnographic documentation, and it should be considered a significant work of climate ethnography. However, it is rather disappointing that it does so little to engage with the key theoretical and discursive issues of capitalism, consumerism, governance, and individualism. Furthermore, it is a shame the author does not embrace an approach that is both material and semiotic, and which thereby might better capture the challenge of considering the ramifications of such social phenomena in a living world that functions through planetary biogeochemical processes and ecological relations that we have neglected at our peril.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE AND THE WORLD'S FUTURES: ECOLOGIES, ONTOLOGIES, AND MYTHOLOGIES

By Jonathon Paul Marshall and Linda H. Connor (eds.),
Earthscan/Routledge: Abington and New York, 2016, 286 pages, 13 Illus.
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Reviewed by
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In this edited collection, a broad range of environmental futures discourses, policy, and practices are examined through three interrelated thematic lenses: 'ecologies', 'ontologies', and 'mythologies'. These terms allow for diversity and non-linearity in the analyses, and draw the reader's attention to often supressed local contestations of meaning and modes of practice in global futures discourse.

The sixteen chapters are divided into five parts. The first three, in Part One emphasise diverse ways of thinking about, and predicting, global-scale ecological change. In the first chapter, Hans Baer argues that anthropological engagement with uncertain environmental futures will rely on thought experiments. By harnessing our imagination, we can suggest potential outcomes. These outcomes will emerge from the three current myths of the future: business as usual, reflexive modernisation, and eco-socialism. Baer concludes that anthropology can make a valuable contribution to a democratic eco-socialist world partly because anthropologists have the capacity to see through social constructions of a wide range of societies to imagine alternative futures. In the second chapter, Tom Morton writes about the potential for journalism to create new myths and open up debates about the future of the Anthropo-

cene. This is followed by co-editor Jonathon Marshall's ontologically focussed chapter about ethics and ecological harms. Marshall suggests that the ethical philosophy of Albert Schweitzer is valuable in developing 'a mode of ethical thinking that makes complexity and uncertainty ontologically fundamental to an approach to futures'.

The three chapters in Part Two highlight political action oriented towards alternative futures. Kate Barclay's tuna fishing research highlights the myths of ocean governance when fish refuse to remain within their 'territory'; marine ecosystems are imagined to be in persistent equilibrium; ocean resources are treated as permanently abundant; and where a single-species management approach persists. Ariel Salleh, James Goodman, and Hamed Hosseini employ Another Future is Possible as their point of reference. This document was adopted by The People's Summit and presented at Rio+20 to counter the United Nations' The Future We Want document designed by government and corporations. The authors suggest an alternative future where grassroots eco-socialist movements drive bio-economies. This movement represents an ontological shift from possessive individualism to a relational ontology and ethic of 'being more' rather than 'having more'.

David Boarder Giles' chapter was of particular interest to me as an anthropology of waste researcher. Giles emphasises the inextricability of waste from capitalist economies, the myth of the global city, and the global city as a site of myth-making. He argues that global cities are sites of intense bio-political labour. With this labour, material and immaterial production are ontologically entangled. A brighter future, he argues, lies in rendering visible the currently invisible waste-making labour or shadow economies (a product of these entanglements) through the re-circulatory waste-saving labours of market and non-market economies. For me, while vital, these end-of-pipe solutions may not imply as radical a shift as Giles suggests, certainly not as radical as the pre-production research and design and mandatory product stewardship measures urgently needed if we are to make any advances toward zero waste utopias. The alternative ontological orientations he observes have immense potential for influencing higher level structural shifts, and the creation of new myths and ecologies, including opportunities for waste labourers.

Part Three consists of four cases emphasising specific human-environment responses to environmental change. First, Felicity Prance details ontological divergences between the World Bank and local I-Kiribati to explain the failure of climate change adaptation programs. Sascha Fuller then takes the reader to rural West Nepal to explain how locals' immediate concerns for high rates

of urban migration and agricultural intensification did not match those of the UN-sponsored REDD-plus program's primary concerns for longer term climate change. External concerns for climate change hindered the ability for locals to deal with immediate social and environmental changes. In addition, local men who are externally educated were found to potentially contribute further to the disruption of local epistemologies, ontologies, and imaginings. Australia's Western desert is the site of the final case in this section. In this chapter, Sarah Holcombe describes the colonial construction of the remote Anangu and their hybrid governance responses to neo-colonial structures and processes. As Holcombe explains, this emergent governance approach comes with its own set of contestations. Ute Eickelkamp's chapter provides another window into the ontologies, myths and ecologies of the Anangu. The reader is presented with an extreme cross cultural comparison in which the cosmo-ontological ruptures experienced by the Anangu are juxtaposed against residents of Germany's industrial Ruhr district. Eikelkamp argues that the irreversible changes that both of these people have differently experienced has heightened their reflexivity about their relationships with their natural heritage, and catalysed imaginings of more meaningful futures.

The mind and body are engaged with environmental change in the three chapters of Part Four. Sally Gillespie uses depth psychology to analyse imaginings about global warming and to transform these imaginings into positive responses rather than the more common reactions: denial, hopelessness, and powerlessness. Penny McCall Howard then offers a political ecology of fishing in which mythologies are constructed to cope with fishers' need to fish to support livelihoods alongside government departments' lack of interest in changing the way they govern the industry even though it poses threats to the lives of fishers. She employs wrecked fishing boats as a metonymic device to expose the broader politico-economic systems and ecologies that produce them. The tragedies caused by these emotionally scar those left behind and are embodied into the environment through a seamanship ontology. The last chapter in this section by co-editor Linda Connor brings us back to Australia to illustrate the ways in which weather is differently understood depending on people, place, and time. The study focuses on the Hunter Valley, New South Wales to investigate changing understandings of weather and climate change hazards among those most highly exposed. Connor draws on Descola's human-environment identities and modes of relation to emphasise her participants' cyclical understanding of cosmo-ecological systems. These systems incorporate a relational ontology between humans and non-humans that challenges the dominant naturalist ontology of climate change.

The final section explores the promise of techno-solutions toward utopian futures. Mark Graham explains that until the 2008 financial crisis, Sweden's policy advisors typically projected optimism in the face of climate change threats. This optimism is framed by Sweden's ecological modernisation in which the economy is encouraged to continue to grow while mitigating the threat of climate change through techno-fixes rather than catalysing radical shifts in the culture of consumption, or seeking alternatives to Sweden's economic and governance systems. While ecological modernisation remains the dominant paradigm, Graham notices that since 2008, Swedes are becoming critical of the notion that technological innovations will save them and are starting to seek alternatives to continued economic growth. In the penultimate chapter, co-editor Jonathan Marshall argues that, considering the complex and often unpredictable ontological relationships with the environment, ethics can no longer remain confined to humans. Drawing once again on the work of Albert Schweitzer, Marshall troubles the technological processes, myth and power relationships of geoengineering to offer an ethics that recognises unpredictability, disorder, and disharmony. He concludes that by attending to the repressed (human and non-human), we may imagine previously unimagined solutions for a better future. The final chapter by Jeremy Walker offers insights into the emerging industrial bio-economy which he describes as 'a tangle of ill-defined utopias'. While Walker refers to a vital political materialism with no reference to new materialism nor contributors to its burgeoning body of literature, his chapter makes an excellent contribution to the collection by offering an interesting counter to critiques that industrial biotechnology is merely another neoliberal 'techno-fix.' Here instead, Walker depicts a possible future of a 'pro-social justice, anti-capitalist, and democratic biotechnical commons' where the democratisation of microorganisms contribute to the fundamental transformation of basic industrial processes (such as the production of alternatives to eco-toxic and fossil-fuel based plastics). However, as he points out, this will depend on a radical shift in neoliberal policies and consumption practices.

To catalyse the radical change needed to address the urgent environmental crises of our time, we need an equally radical shift in the way social scientists work. This includes research collaborations that span the arts, and social, natural, and life sciences to more fully understand diverse ecologies, mythologies, and ontologies. These diverse perspectives also require contributions from a wide range of cultural, ethnic, and gender backgrounds as well as a broad range of social and geographically-situated cases. I was somewhat disappointed that the editors' promise of the book's multi-disciplinarity did not extend beyond the social sciences.

This collection is edited by two Australasian social scientists, almost all the contributors are social scientists, and the contributors list is dominated by social anthropologists. The vast majority are based in Australia while the geographic scope of the contributions is broad including environmental futures perspectives from rural Nepal, the Pacific Islands, Sweden, Scotland, North America, and Australia. The gender spread of the contributors is relatively even although gender seldom features in the contributions. Regardless, this text offers a fascinating selection of empirically generated research from a variety of cultural contexts with an emphasis on social lives, imagination, and environmental change. It is an excellent read for those interested in socio-cultural perspectives on environmental futures.

RELATING INDIGENOUS AND SETTLER IDENTITIES: BEYOND DOMINATION

By Avril Bell,
Identity Studies in the Social Sciences; Palgrave Macmillan:
Hampshire, England, 2014, 251 pp.
ISBN: PB, 978-1-349-31480-5; HB, 978-0-230-23742-1; e-book, 978-1-137-31356-0

Reviewed by
Steven Webster, University of Auckland

Avril Bell lucidly 'travers[es] the field of identity theories … highlight[ing] a range of strategies of resistance – and domination – that characterize what is known as "identity politics"' (p.199). Her comprehensive and sensitively balanced study of indigenous and settler identities in CANZUS (New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the United States) could be extended, as she implies, to 'the intersecting privileges and disadvantages of class, gender, education, generation and sexuality that have been bracketed out of this study to bring the settler and indigene into sharp relief' (p.222). While many examples of indigenous perspectives are raised, the analysis is generally focused on key aspects of the colonial and post-colonial settler 'imaginary'or ideology: '… authenticity, modernity, universalism, the lineal relation of past, present, and future, liberalism – that are sedimented into settler ways of thinking… [and that] have also made their way inside the heads of indigenous peoples and inflect the possibilities of what it is to be indigenous in the twenty-first century. Identifying these traces of history is the first step to assessing them and determining what is worth holding on to and what is holding us back' (p.5).

The book is divided into three parts analysing, respectively, the development of settler ideologies, indigenous ideologies of resistance, and alternatives to the resulting impasses. The three parts overlap dialectically, focused on both settlers and indigenes, critiquing primitivist, essentialist, nationalist, and socially liberal preconceptions, and examining contemporary sociological, ethnographic, legal, and fictional commentaries on indigenous identity for their strong and weak points. Bell's own commentary even at these abstract levels is wonderfully clear throughout, usually on first reading. Her examples date from the 1990s and reflect the long effort of her survey. Her brief preview forecasts her own theoretical preoccupations clearly enough: 'Part I traces the impact of ontological or essentialist conceptions of identity, identities as forms of being, as they play out in the settler imaginary. Part II explores identity strategies that resist essentialism in various ways, while Part III looks beyond identity theories to examine models centering on the relationships between peoples, or between identities' (p.18).

I see the first two parts as unfolding a deck stacked against indigenous autonomy at progressively deeper ideological levels, even unto 'the "Ruins of Representation"' (p.93) and the dilemma of signifiers cut loose from anything signified (like Geertz's turtles 'all the way down' but nevertheless holding up the world). Part III attempts to avoid persistent settler victories at these increasingly subtle levels of repressive tolerance by balancing a comprehensive review of legal resolutions (that have failed to different degrees) with an escape to a theory of ethics, 'a new, relational imaginary', that can nurture settler acceptance of the profound autonomy demanded by 'indigenous ontologies and ways of life' (pp.21-22).

For me, as a social anthropologist in ethnic politics, the book was a valuable review of deconstructionist, post-structural, post-colonial, and post-modernist theories, but refreshingly unpretentious and intelligible. Although Bell uses the word 'ontology' frequently, she usually skirts the more recent 'ontological turn' in which social anthropology is often caught in similar solipsisms or nihilisms as were these post-… enthusiasms. But I was taken aback by a conclusion that seemed to resort to such solipsism in a strangely unsociological ethics. However, as I will explain, this may have been my misunderstanding rather than Bell's.

Bell's solution to a persistent 'deep colonising' settler imaginary confronting an equally persistent and rising indigeneity throughout CANZUS is an ethic of openness drawn from the late 20th century philosophy of Emmanuel Lévines. She presents Lévines' ethics as a deontology devoted to respect for the absolute 'alterity' of others, none of whom can ever be understood but toward whom

one must remain open. Like Kant's, this ethic arises rationally from an intuition of moral obligation as an end in itself, rather than to any means to an end – even by means of a Platonic intuition of The Good. At first acquaintance, Lévines' ethics appeared to me to be irretrievably solipsistic, and Bell's adherence to it strangely unsociological (my social anthropology and historical materialism has brought me to understand human species-being as inherently social). Her apparently unsociological moment here aligned disappointingly with her conceptualisation of settler and indigenous identities which, although dialectically appreciative of the oppressive persistence of the former and resourcefulness of the latter, is preoccupied with ideology to the neglect of its historical material determinants. I would want her discussion to stay closer to the social and historical concreteness of real power in the sense I have learned to recognise it from Eric Wolf (1982).

However, I was relieved to find that Bell also skirts this cul de sac, (albeit in a footnote): 'It must be noted that what is being argued in the remainder of this book (pp.186-200) makes a break with Lévines in the sense that Lévines located alterity "beyond being". Here the focus is on the encounter with other forms of being (and ways of knowing) that, I have argued, are not reducible to the notion "cultural difference" that can be encapsulated in knowledge relationships' (p.186 fn12 (221)). Bell explains her avoidance of this notion of culture (apparently equivalent to Lévines's 'alterity') by contrasting it to Foucault's notion of 'episteme', which captures "… the sense of indigenous difference that goes beyond "culture", which is often reified and conceived as product rather than processes embedded in distinctive ontologies. For Foucault, episteme refers to the worldview and way of living – with all the institutional and discursive supports required – that predominate in a particular historical period' (p.191). Except for the suspect pluralisation of the word 'ontologies' (which currently signals 'the ontological turn' in ethnography), Bell's 'break' with Levines at this crucial point in the escape to ethics she recommends is sufficiently historical materialist for me, and I was much relieved.

But I would like to suggest that a fuller understanding of Lévines' philosophy might obviate any such need to break with it. My understanding of it is limited to Bell's account of his ethics, augmented by a brief internet search that emphasised his Judaic philosophical interest. This superficial understanding, along with my aroused defense of my notion of 'species-being' as intrinsically social and historical, sent me to Marx's essay on 'On The Jewish Question' (McLellan [ed.] 1987, 60–62). There I was reassured to find that Marx viewed contemporary Judaism (if I have understood him properly) dialectically as driven historically by Christianity as well as the rise of capitalism from a fuller

sense of species-being centred on practicality ('that makes even the lavatory an object of divine law') to a selfish preoccupation with money, while Christianity 'flew off into the blue' with the rest of it. 'Thus it is not only in the Pentateuch or the Talmud that we find the essence of the contemporary Jew: we find it in contemporary society, not as an abstract but as a very empirical essence, not as the limitation of the Jew but as the Jewish limitations of society'. Marx's commentary here, of course, anticipated his emerging account of human alienation under the regime of abstract labour, exchange-value, and commodity fetishism.

From this point of view, I would like to suggest that a fuller understanding of Lévines' ethics is not the personal phenomenological cul-de-sac in which he appears to present his ontology, reaching out to all others while accepting that they are 'beyond being' of any person in a way that s/he cannot understand. Instead I suspect that, like Marx's account of Judaism under Christianity and capitalism, Lévines' ethics speaks from a dialectical grasp of the specific social context and its history against which we all (indigenous or not) have critically to assess truth or falsity, certainly in its most threatening neoliberal form of universalising commodity fetishism and alienation from one another (Webster 2016; McCormack 2015, 2016). Contemporary indigeneity, as much as the settler imaginary, is as subject to flights of fancy as it to the true pursuit of justice, and must similarly be held to account for itself. Like it or not, we are all in one and the same world.

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