

reproduction of specific context in which meanings are linguistically asserted and acknowledged. Context matters with regard to how nuances of gender and sexuality are specifically produced, embodied, performed, and read.

For example, Barrett pays attention to culturally specific nuances of African American drag queen performances that used white women's styles of speech in gay bars in Houston, Texas, during the early 1990s. At that time, the femininity associated with middle- to upper-class white women was a national normative ideal. Consequently, black drag queens aspired to perform such femininity. Simultaneously, their race-crossing performances cannot be simply translated as aspirations to be white. Mimetic performance here is also a parody of the white women's speech that when experienced through the black drag queen body serves as a potential method of resistance against the heterosexism and homophobia rooted in whiteness.

Performance is similarly revealing among gay male radical faeries at the time of the New Age movement during the sexual revolution of the 1970s. Radical faeries emphasize the intersection of androgyny and spirituality to develop their anti-Christian stances. They borrow stereotypical cultural and religious traits associated with Native Americans and Celtic pagans. Such appropriation can be read as an extension of the white male practice of cultural theft in the historical continuum of postcolonialism. Yet the radical faeries' push toward gender-queer consciousness intersecting with secular spirituality challenges the social constructions of heterosexism and homophobia rooted in Christianity.

Bears are another ambiguous category among gay men. Marked as heavyset and hairy, bears take on normative expressions of male masculinity rooted in the idea of naturalness. Their performative aesthetic is easily read as masculine within a heteronormative working-class orientation. As such, bear masculinity is clearly a reproduction of rural white working-class masculinity. Simultaneously, it can resist the aesthetic of gay men privileging urban white middle- to upper-class masculinity. Bear masculinity is not the norm in the gay community. Thus, context matters concerning how contradictory and multiple aspects of bear identity are linguistically asserted and acknowledged.

Following his analysis of bear identity, Barrett turns to circuit boys—gym-obsessed men who attend parties to have casual sex while taking different kinds of drugs. The performance of becoming and being a circuit boy requires social and economic capital. However, the aesthetic of a circuit boy in athletic clothing emphasizing his extreme muscle tone goes against the effeminate gay male stereotype. Yet the orientation of a circuit boy is based on one's aspirations to travel and leisure rooted in elitism. All gay men are not given equal opportunities to experience such luxury.

At this point, I am reminded that whiteness as an ideology, discourse, and institution materializes the productions and reproductions of gay male subcultures in and across local, national, and global contexts. In fact, people of color experience, identify with, and resist such subcultures differently. Barrett unpacks identity performances of barebackers who seek out unsafe sex that emphasizes the act of semen exchange. Such sexual engagement resists the normative discourses of sexual morality and HIV prevention surrounding gay male subcultures. It is also in keeping with typical heteronormative sexual scripts of desiring not to use condoms that inform heteronormative pornography and sexual practices and may be linked to the heteronormative logic of reproduction. Simultaneously, I am left wondering whether men of color such as African Americans and Asian Americans engage in barebacking as potential mechanisms of resistance against gay sexual morality intersecting with whiteness, heteronormativity, and capitalism. Their barebacking practices are always already racialized, gendered, and classed.

Similarly, leatherman subculture is redolent of nuance and ambiguity. This subcultural sexual practice incorporates bondage-domination and sadism-masochism (BDSM) and fetishism. However, leatherman subculture emphasizes three sexual practices: safe, sane, and consensual. Accordingly, Barrett shows that leatherman subculture demonstrates good citizenship rooted in nationalism. Still, I am left wondering how race play operates through BDSM and fetishism. Do BDSM and fetishism potentially serve as a transformative site of performance for people of color to reshuffle existing power relations?

Overall, *From Drag Queens to Leathermen* advances ways of knowing about the multiplicity of cis-gendered gay male subcultures. Although there remain some unanswered questions with regard to how racial and ethnic divisions complicate layers of these subcultures, Barrett successfully creates an additional reference point for LGBTQ studies to identify and critique the local, national, and global circuits of their performances.

**The Value of Comparison.** *Peter van der Veer.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016. 208 pp.

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**DOUGLAS WILLIAM HUME**  
Northern Kentucky University

Peter van der Veer draws on the approaches of Marcel Mauss (as viewed by Louis Dumont) and Max Weber (as viewed by Shmuel Eisenstadt and Charles Taylor) to formulate his own vision for cross-cultural comparison in contemporary anthropology. He argues that because

it was replaced with a focus on single-cultural descriptions in the 1980s, cross-cultural research is now pursued only at the margins of anthropology by cognitive science and sociobiology, which in their current form are not yet equipped to generalize across cultures. His goal is to revive cross-cultural comparison by showing that it may be made without the use of evolutionary theories, such as cognitive anthropology or sociobiology, although his definition of each excludes much recent North American cognitive anthropology and relies on a dated vision of sociobiology that fails to acknowledge more current approaches to evolutionary theory in human behavioral ecology.

By evoking Mauss and Weber, van der Veer hopes to revive cross-cultural research within anthropology, but without the incorporation of unified theories or grand generalizations. Though he does not support cross-cultural generalizations, he does champion the concept of thematic generalization within individual cultures. To do this, he differentiates generalism (nations as an integrated whole) from holism (society as an integrated whole). He views anthropology as the translation of cultural differences that serve to critique only Western ideas, which should be based not only upon ethnographic fieldwork but also upon other forms of cultural data, such as material culture, historical texts, and visual representations. Van der Veer argues that cross-cultural research must focus on cultural fragments: the intermediate level between micro cultural traits and societal generalizations of the whole. Fragments, according to the author, are extensions of Durkheim's social facts and Mauss's total social facts that facilitate a historically situated Weberian comparison. In other words, he advocates for analysis in the space between micro and macro levels of cross-cultural comparison.

Van der Veer supports the use of comparison without generalization. Since the holistic approach cannot yield a holistic description and the units chosen for comparison are often determined by the anthropologist's Western intellectual baggage, the comparison of fragments, which are historically situated within each culture yet obviously connected through colonization and globalization, relies upon both translation and interpretation by the anthropologist. Van der Veer illustrates how cross-cultural research on inequality, nationalism, and religion has been problematic when approached through the lenses of political science, sociology, psychology, biology, and anthropology when the research is not situated within the contexts of the societies being studied—forgoing cultural and historical contexts for Western notions of what topics and connections are important.

The center of the book demonstrates van der Veer's approach through four case studies: legitimizing civilization through exclusionary practices of Muslims in India, China, and Western Europe; practicing civilization through

the iconoclasm of religious images in India and China; establishing exclusionary practices against marginalized mountain communities in India and China; and effecting exclusionary practices against the poor in India, Europe, the United States, and China. Each short case study illustrates his approach to the comparison of cultural fragments that are contextualized within each area's history, politics, and connection to the West. These case studies are, in essence, cultural sketches that leave the reader wondering if the author chose only materials that would make his point (confirmation bias), rather than taking a more systematic approach toward data collection and analysis. In other words, the case studies, while seemingly rich descriptions of the cultures being described, also fall into the same trap of being just-so stories that the author confronts from an evolutionary viewpoint.

Although van der Veer claims that the purpose of his book is to show how anthropological comparison can be valuable without the use of evolutionary theory, he makes a stronger argument against relying upon any single theoretical approach in the pursuit of cross-cultural understandings. While he appears to dismiss the adoption of a single theoretical approach—that is, cognitive science, sociobiology, political economy, cultural materialism, interpretive anthropology, political economy, and radical ontology—he adopts a single approach himself through creating cross-cultural comparative narratives of fragments of cultural life based upon his reading of Mauss and Weber. The undeniable value of his argument rests on his attempts to critique cross-cultural comparison from emic rather than Western perspectives, leading to understandings between cultures that are somewhere between micro and macro generalizations, cultural fragments situated within historical, material, and political contexts.

**Fertility Holidays: IVF Tourism and the Reproduction of Whiteness.** Amy Speier. New York: New York University Press, 2016. 192 pp.

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**SALLIE HAN**

State University of New York Oneonta

Scholars and individuals who undertake fertility treatments characterize these treatments as quests for conception and journeys to parenthood. *Fertility Holidays* traces the experiences and expectations of North Americans who travel abroad to seek less expensive reproductive care that they perceive to be more caring and thus more likely to succeed. Amy Speier traces their steps from North America to the Czech Republic, which has become a leading destination