

and discussions to follow. Across those eight chapters the reader gets not only street-level ethnographic description but a wealth of conceptual exploration and argument amidst a rich landscape of riot, dirt, eviction, homes and housing, bodies, private property, social death, the Big Society as political program, scapegoating, spatial algorithms, and the rules of roadside parking (for vehicle dwellers). Each chapter is soon enough theoretic, moving swiftly on from description and any local or folk understanding of the logics and vagaries of squatting—no naive sociology here (Bourdieu, again). In consequence, the empirical ethnography is perhaps a little thin; I would have liked more—though in fairness to Grohmann, certain precautions have been taken to protect and conceal her respondents, and these keep her from detailing her fieldwork as fully as she might otherwise. But the theorizing is lively and driven; there is cumulative progression and a satisfying conjectural arc, reaching a climax toward the end of chapter six. It is a long way (and almost a thousand years) from present-day anarchist “breaking crews” browsing Google Street View for “empties” to the Norman land-grab and “the mythological gestalt of a territorial invader, who is legitimized in his claim to power by an essentially premodern ideology of heroic belligerence and property as the spoils of war” (p. 171), but Grohmann crosses the span with confidence.

Throughout and repeatedly—and essentially—*The Ethics of Space* asks and examines who is where and what that might be taken to mean; what it signifies to be down, out, included, surrounded, excluded, remaindered, readmitted; and how such orderings are not only spatial but social, wrapped up in evaluative judgments that impact how people perceive themselves and experience their relationship with others.

This important and powerfully reasoned book ends where it began. Grohmann and Gavin are in conversation again, two years on, fieldwork behind them both: “You were pissed off because I was squatting when I didn’t have to, whereas you had no choice,” says Grohmann (p. 231). “Yes! Yes! Yes!” shouts Gavin, her friend, pointing his finger.

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The New Death: Mortality and Death Care in the Twenty-First Century.

Shannon Lee Dawdy and Tamara Kneese, eds. School for Advanced Research Seminar Series. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2022, 352 pp. \$39.95, paper. ISBN 978-0-8263-6345-9.

The past decade has been a fascinating time to study death. Alongside pandemics, wars, and climate change, we have witnessed significant cultural shifts—at least in the Anglosphere—including the rise of death doulas and #deathtok social media stars, and technological innovations for end-of-life care and body disposal. Death appears

to be “having a moment.” This landmark collection, edited by Shannon Lee Dawdy and Tamara Kneese, makes an important intervention in the field by theorizing the contemporary moment as an emerging age in global death culture, or “the New Death.” They take inspiration from historian Philippe Ariès (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), who traced the evolution of Western death culture from the medieval to the modern period through ages of relative uniformity and radical upheaval. Dawdy and Kneese argue that a comparative, seismic shift is occurring to how postmodern humans understand and respond to mortality. The primary characteristic of this age is heterodoxy: widespread experimentation aimed at reclaiming, remaking, or resisting death that counters prevailing assumptions about death as taboo. The editors propose two dimensions that unite the diverse phenomena of the New Death: “temporal consciousness” and “mediation of intimacy.” The former describes the heightened acceleration and accounting of time under late capitalism, and the latter describes increased technological mediation of relations between the bereaved/carer and dying/dead.

This collection brings together ethnographies of the New Death in twelve substantive chapters, accompanied by a commentary and afterword. At times, the chapters appear to describe conflicting directions of change for death culture: for example, the emergence of humanist funeral services in Britain (Matthew Engelke, chapter 5) and the reintroduction of religious elements into funerals in mainland China post-Cultural Revolution (Huw-y-min Lucia Liu, chapter 11). The most striking example of this productive tension is at the heart of the collection itself, where the first set of chapters (“Mortality”) ponders emerging secular cosmologies including transhumanist, techno-utopian movements that aim to conquer death, and the second set of chapters (“Death Care”) considers the messy realities of death, including the (gendered) labors of caring for bodies. The New Death, then, spans both Jenny Huberman’s fascinating (if disturbing) account of venture capitalists seeking to harvest young people’s blood and Philip R. Olson’s empathetic tale of the women caring for dead family members at home. The combination of these strands is a great innovation of this collection, particularly where it acknowledges their interdependence within shared historical traumas and systems of power.

Indeed, *The New Death* truly shines where it illuminates the dynamics of exchange that transform death culture(s) across disparate fields. As the editors attest, “the new death is a globalized phenomenon” (p. 9), shaped by boundary-crossing phenomena such as social media, funeral corporations, and infectious disease. This is wonderfully illustrated in Ruth E. Toulson’s chapter on new Singaporean mortuary rituals, which both emulate the Japanese encoffining rites made famous by the Oscar-winning film *Departures* (2008) and reinterpret American pop psychology on grief.

Where the collection is perhaps less convincing is in articulating the New Death as a distinctive or cohesive age of death, à la Ariès. Many of the phenomena that capture our attention—cryonics labs, human composting, shooting ashes into space (p. 5)—have existed for many decades without becoming mainstream practice. In a recent address at the “Redesigning Deathcare Conference” (Melbourne, October 2022), John Troyer of the Centre for Death and Society cautioned against recency bias in the story

of death, suggesting that “Death will always be having a Moment,” but such moments are largely “discontinuous and forgotten about.” In the West at least, there is a deeper lineage to the New Death in 1970s feminist and social justice movements, which Philip R. Olson explores in his chapter and which Lyn H. Lofland articulated 40 years ago in her work *The Craft of Dying* (Sage, 1978). Moreover, these movements appeal to very specific populations and locales; as the editors acknowledge, “death itself is changing, at least in the bourgeois bosom of cosmopolitan centers” (p. 3).

Concomitantly, *The New Death* might have done more to parochialize North American death culture. Very likely, the list of authors and field sites reflects the origins of this collection in a 2018 meeting at the School for Advanced Research. It serves as a “belated corrective” (p. 6) to the dearth of ethnographic attention to US funeral culture, placed within a global context. However, although the editors “are interested in facilitating comparisons and tracking flows across spaces,” they also suggest that “the extremes of the American death story sketch the outlines of the profound changes we are witnessing” (p. 7). I am not convinced this can be sustained, nor that the exceptionalism of US death culture represents the best departure point for theorizing the contemporary. And I am left wondering, what model of the “New Death” might emerge if we choose instead to privilege other death stories?

The New Death harnesses the extraordinary energies surrounding the anthropology of death today into a captivating volume. I have no doubt that it will become essential reading for more expansive cross-cultural and interdisciplinary conversations on the future of death.

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Gardening at the Margins: Convivial Labor, Community, and Resistance.

Gabrielle R. Valle. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2022, 240 pp.

\$60.00, cloth. ISBN 9780816547326.

Interactions and interviews with a collective of fifteen home gardeners living in San Jose, California, are woven throughout this ethnographic account of convivial labor and social reproduction. The majority of fieldwork took place in the San Jose communities of Washington and Alma, where gardeners participate in an urban gardening program known as La Mesa Verde (LMV). Residents living in these communities, including several of the home gardeners in this study, emigrated from Mexico, Central America, and Southeast Asia. Community members are disproportionately low income and experiencing the diet-related health disparities of high blood pressure, obesity, and diabetes.