

British society produced particular ways of talking about and with the nation, such as in white native-born participants' "managerial gaze" applied to "undomesticated" internal and external others (mainly Muslims and members of ethnic and racial minority groups).

Skey's subjects often displayed ambivalence between nationalist and racist ideas on the one side and cosmopolitan discourses they saw as enlightened and socially acceptable (particularly among middle-class liberals) on the other. He records in detail his participants' boundary work and impression management strategies as they struggled to articulate cultural racism while maintaining an appearance of reasonableness. For instance, many subjects relied heavily on phrases like "don't get me wrong" to inoculate themselves against charges of racism or intolerance. Importantly, Skey finds that racism and cosmopolitanism were not mutually exclusive—there were both "peripatetic nationals" and "conditional cosmopolitans" (p. 158) among his participants. Skey suggests that the inconsistencies in people's cosmopolitan and nationalist ideals show that having a sense of a national "home" may provide an important ontological foundation for cosmopolitan ways of life.

This book's strengths lie in its lucid argumentation and the elegant presentation of its rich qualitative data. But there are weaknesses too. The book's main arguments would have been better supported with a presentation of U.K. census or other survey data charting some of the demographic and cultural changes alluded to early in the book and to which the study's respondents are allegedly reacting. Survey data would also help to give a sense of how representative these respondents' attitudes toward their nation and its constituent groups might be. As many scholars do, Skey overuses the term "interesting" in bringing data to bear on theory. And he somewhat inaccurately cites Marcel Mauss's work on national differences in habitus (*Sociology and Psychology* [Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979]). But in the end these are quibbles. This book's analysis and argumentation are convincing, and will sharpen many scholars' thinking about the cultural and psychological consequences of globalization. Skey shows that there is, among many Britons at least, a strong desire for community and a sense of ontological security in a globalizing world. Although it is but one recipe among many, living "as a national in a world of nations" continues to be a successful and "tested recipe" (p. 169) for creating a feeling of community and for organizing our relations with others.

Together: The Rituals, Pleasures, and Politics of Cooperation. By Richard Sennett. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2011. Pp. xii+324. \$28.00.

Donald N. Levine
University of Chicago

In a genre sui generis, Richard Sennett's book commingles ethnography, epochal history, primatology, autobiography, and social criticism to mount

a stunning account of the human social condition in our time. In so doing he draws on a lush palette of knowing allusions—Augustine to Rochefoucault, Holbein to Charles Le Brun, Schubert to Stravinsky, Guicciardini to Elias, Frederick the Great to Hillary Clinton—alongside a tapestry of nuggets from trenchant sociologists as well as his own colorful empirical reports. He fêtes you with cameo insights into pregnant historical moments: the 16th-century transformation of chivalry into diplomacy and civility, the 19th-century transformation of inclusive socialisms into the exclusivisms of left-wing party warfare, the shift from Wall Street camaraderies into mindless self-assertions. *Together* also serves up fresh typologies worth the price of admission: five kinds of social exchange (altruistic; win-win; differentiating exchange, where partners acknowledge their differences; zero-sum; and winner-takes-all); three components of ritual (repetition; symbolization; dramatic expression); and, its discursive centerpiece, a triangle of the constituents of informal social solidarity (credible authority; interpersonal trust; group cooperation). The book treats you even to novelistic passages: “[There were] well-dressed people filling out forms, occasionally glancing around in bewilderment . . . [few] had seen the inside of an unemployment office before; now they sat on plastic chairs, bent over clipboards illuminated above by shadowless fluorescent light, surrounded by Latino teenagers, barrel-chested construction workers, and elderly janitors also hunting for work” (p. 164).

What the book does not deploy is polemics. Although Sennett offers lots of pithy criticisms—faulting Elias for missing the pleasurable aspects of civility, teasing “Critique of the Gotha Programme” as “a foundational text of fratricide on the Left” (p. 40), dismissing the current fashionability of Boredom, using Morris Janowitz’s label to score the “cowboy warriors” of the stock market—he exemplifies as well as advocates what he calls “dialogics.” This notion proves central to part 1, which explicates the sources and dynamics of cooperation. Dialogics designates conversations that manifest the skills of listening, empathy (not sympathy), curiosity, tentativeness, and honest openness. Deliberately, he presents a series of case studies designed to enlist the reader’s critical engagement rather than to score points or wrestle them into a particular position: “I want to practice cooperation on the page” (p. 30).

The above ingredients serve not just to entertain, but to advance a penetrating hypothesis: that the human condition rests constitutionally and historically on a disposition to connect socially—a disposition that many features of the contemporary social order have done much to erode. To my mind, the strongest section of the book is part 2, “Cooperation Weakened,” which lays out a battery of secular changes that have weakened the hold of authority, the sinews of trust, and the bonds that nourish cooperative engagement. Extending a theme voiced in *The Corrosion of Character* (1998), Sennett here traces processes that have exacerbated instability. Some are historically specific; for example, the breakdown of the Bretton Woods monetary agreements in the 1973 oil crisis, which unleashed huge amounts

of global capital onto markets that previously had been more national and fixed. That event and other infusions of capital produced a lust for short-term returns rather than commitments to long-term ownership of firms. Other secular processes that shortened attention spans include the ascendance of part-time labor contracts, the rise of consultants with portable skills, the hegemony of computerized screen-work at the expense of talking to one another, and the promotion of isolation through what managers call the silo effect (isolating workers in different units, who then share little and indeed hoard valuable information). Psychological dimensions of these shifts include a growth in narcissism, complacency, ontological insecurity, and heightened dependency on material consumables.

Attentive theorists will object to poetic liberties with a few classic concepts—casual use of Weber’s “legitimate authority” (a cultural form, not a motivational one), Scheler’s “*ressentiment*” (not mere antagonism to a privileged elite, but a transvaluation of values demarking an elite’s evil character), and Simmel’s “sociality” (not a concept the master used, he used “association” and “sociability”) as putative contrast to “*Verbindung*” (for Simmel, equivalent to all forms of association).

But the theory work here appears generally sound, the diagnostic glosses persuasive. What is of particular interest is that the social facts treated consist not of the usual suspects—shared values, norms, and beliefs; institutional, power, or class structures; demographic traits or rates—but frequencies of patterns of social interaction, a Simmelian kind of social fact, to be sure, but one which Simmel himself rarely considered as a historical or cultural variable.

After depicting the decline and fall of cooperative interactions in Euro-American societies, and noting the absence of something here comparable to the Chinese phenomenon of *guanxi*—continuous cultivation of supportive relational networks—*Together* sets forth to examine resources for repairing the situation. Part 3 offers a few suggestions: the multiplication of workshops, the increased use of informal rather than formal meetings, and the rise of activists who take community building, as in the Catholic Worker movement, as a vocation.

The solutions Sennett gamely proposes seem attractive, but none offers compelling grounds for hope. A sort of Durkheimian pathos suffuses this opus. If the latest recension of modernity entails an unprecedentedly fearsome dissolution of social ties, what might be identified to restore the balance—something like occupational guilds? Well . . .

To be sure, the author warned us he had no intention of forwarding a crisp solution. That said, by responding to his invitation to engage in dialogue I shall set forth two ready resources that cry out to be taken more seriously. One is the ethos of a new generation of social entrepreneurs who cooperate rather well, ready at short notice to communicate openly, not needing ten years of association to show their vulnerabilities, as did their parental generation. The other is education. Although in autobiographical asides Sennett reveals his predilections as an engaging educator, he neglects to men-

tion this domain, one so patently germane to his purpose for its capacity to build new reaches of credible authority, new grounds for trust, and new capacities for dialogic cooperation. Perhaps, in completing the third volume of a trilogy on skills people use to sustain everyday life (of which this is the second, following his widely acclaimed *The Craftsman* [Yale University Press, 2008]), he may attend to the novel demands modern cities make on quality education. And indeed, perhaps this book may inspire some proactive community builders to get going on that challenge, in the manner of a new generation of social entrepreneurs, exposed in college to the essential rudiments of dialogics, who have been working to repair financial illiteracy among urbanites.

Laotian Daughters: Working toward Community, Belonging, and Environmental Justice. By Bindi V. Shah. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011. Pp. xii + 201. \$28.95 (paper).

Rebecca R. Scott
University of Missouri

Bindi V. Shah's ethnography *Laotian Daughters* focuses on a youth advocacy project centered on young Laotian women in the late 1990s and early 2000s in Richmond, California. This program was called the Asian Youth Advocates (AYA) and was part of the Laotian Organizing Project (LOP; of the Asian Pacific Environmental Network) operating in an ultramarginalized community of immigrants from Southeast Asia of the first, second, and 1.5 generations. As the author explains, many of these immigrants were refugees from the United States' covert wars in Cambodia and Laos, which destroyed the subsistence lifestyles of rural communities, forcing their relocation to the urban United States. Unlike the more numerous Vietnamese immigrants, many Laotian immigrants had few skills suitable for life in an urban setting, and the historical facts of the United States military's role in the circumstances of their immigration are unclear to many Americans.

Richmond bears a disproportionate burden of environmental risk due to the industrial history of the area. Residue from past industry has left behind toxic soil and polluted water, and ongoing industrial production subjects the community to exposure to chemicals like the sulfuric gases accidentally released by an explosion at the Chevron refinery in March 1999. The population is majority low income and often dependent on the social safety net, and is largely made up of communities of color. Following the lead of the AYA, Shah's book focuses on young Laotian women who were either born in the United States or are from the 1.5 generation (born abroad but raised in the United States) and who became at least temporarily politically engaged through environmental justice activism and other community organizing projects.

For many immigrants in the San Francisco Bay Area, a lack of English or Spanish language skills can increase the risk of exposure to environmental