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The Violence of Care: Rape Victims, Forensic Nurses, and Sexual Assault Intervention

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documentation. I found one oblique reference to hospitalization (p. 101), but it is not clear from the context whether this refers to a hypothetical or an actual case.

However, Atkinson's last chapter is the strongest in the book. Based on research he conducted with his colleague Michael Kehler, he explores boys' P.E. classes as an arena of somatic dominance and humiliation, but also of resistance and resilience. While the other five empirical chapters are plagued by too much theoretical throat-clearing (both of the authors exhibit an encyclopedic knowledge of social theory that too often overwhelms the data), here there is a better balance between theory and data. This chapter also provides the most vivid evidence of embodiment, as the boys speak with surprising candor about their bodies and the strategies they use to deflect ridicule and body shaming from their bullying peers. This is the sort of thing I was hoping to find more of throughout the collection. While several passages earlier in the book acknowledge the still-problematic legacy of Cartesian dualism for embodiment scholars, the analysis from both authors often stays too much in the head. Only rarely, as in this last chapter, do they deliver evidence of the body's peculiar eloquence.

As a general observation, I found this tendency toward abstraction also encouraged some stylistic habits that may tax readers. Especially in the introduction and first chapter I felt overwhelmed by a continuous barrage of parenthetical inserts, italicized text, overuse of the slash, and a surfeit of scare quotes. I also longed for a concluding chapter, wherein the authors could bring the sociological insights gleaned from their many collective years as masculinities scholars to bear on these specific empirical cases. What did they learn from their collaboration? What does challenging these various myths suggest about the future of masculinities and gendered embodiment? Informed readers are likely to draw a variety of conclusions from these stimulating cases; it would be nice to have the authors weigh in as well.

This book is appropriate for graduate-level courses in gender studies, masculinities, and embodiment studies. At this writing it is available in hardback and electronic form.

The Violence of Care: Rape Victims, Forensic Nurses, and Sexual Assault Intervention, by **Sameena Mulla**. New York: New York University Press, 2014. 277 pp. \$26.00 paper. ISBN: 9781479867219.

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The way sexual assault victims are treated in hospitals in the United States changed beginning in the 1970s. In response to a variety of social forces, a specialized expertise known as "forensic nursing" has arisen, and forensic nurses now very often have "jurisdiction"—in the sociological sense—over the medical examination of sexual assault victims.

This development seems at first glance to be a positive one. It arose through a confluence of good intentions. Feminists demanded that sexual assault victims be treated with greater care and dignity and that sexual assaults be prosecuted with greater vigor. Law enforcement agencies saw valuable evidence being lost or discarded. And nursing, a feminized, caring profession, seemed the right fit for the job. "Having witnessed sexual assault interventions in their role as chaperones" when gynecologists were in charge of sexual assault examinations, anthropologist Sameena Mulla notes, "nurses were among the loudest critics of the haphazard response and treatment rape victims received in the health care system" (p. 12).

However, recently a number of scholars, while by no means condemning the rise of forensic nursing, have begun exploring some of the unintended consequences of the institutionalization of forensic nursing. *The Violence of Care* is a contribution to this body of work.

Sameena Mulla obtained training as a rape crisis counselor in 2002, and she performed participant observation at the Baltimore city hospital designated to conduct forensic sexual assault examination. She observed more than 40 sexual assault examinations through 2006. Her observational eye, however, was trained not on her fellow rape crisis counselors—about whom we hear relatively

little—but on the forensic nurses with whom they worked closely.

In this richly detailed ethnography that draws from anthropology, science and technology studies, law and society, philosophy, and literary theory, Mulla subjects the sexual assault examination to exacting scrutiny. She draws ethnographic insights from such details as the wording of the forms the nurses complete, the strategic draping of victim body parts with sheets during the examination, and the offering of emergency contraception. At the same time, she relates a harrowing set of stories about sexual violence in an American city. The reader cannot help but be struck with how “situational” many of the cases discussed in the book are: many of the assaults seem, in retrospect, almost bound, by situational circumstances, to happen; and, indeed, some of the assaults are in fact repeated when the victims find themselves unable to avoid placing themselves in the same situations that led to earlier attacks. The sexual violence described in *The Violence of Care* tends to occupy the end points of longer-running social, economic, and familial ills: lost jobs, domestic violence, substance abuse, incest, and even, notably, poor transportation infrastructure.

Mulla’s principal argument, reflected in the book’s title, is that the cold and often hostile system for treating sexual assault victims that existed forty years ago has been replaced by a system that, well-intentioned though it may be, itself administers a sort of violence to sexual assault victims. Mulla is careful to note that “This violence is born not from the intentions of individual forensic nurses who consciously set out to alienate the victim-patient with whom they are working, but rather from the particular institutional, professional, and historical location of forensic sexual assault intervention” (p. 217). The principal culprit, for Mulla, is that forensic nursing is overwhelmingly oriented toward the law, and, more specifically, toward the trial. This orientation is understandable, given concerns about failures to collect and analyze forensic evidence that have hampered sexual assault prosecutions and reports of appalling backlogs of untested rape kits. But Mulla argues that such negligence has been replaced by a system that treats forensic evidence in general, and DNA stains in

particular, as talismanic—one nurse frequently calls DNA “the hand of God” (p. 39)—panaceas whose recovery trumps all other considerations including the wishes, comfort, and emotional well-being of the victim. “[T]he DNA evidence and not the patient” almost becomes “the object of care” (p. 68). (One curious, and disturbing, unintended consequence of this valorizing of DNA evidence that Mulla documents is its effect on perpetrators, who adopt such measures as stealing bedsheets and forcing victims to shower.) Forensic nurses, enmeshed in this legal orientation, fail to realize that their patients may not share it: “For the nurses, the court of law is the ultimate point of arrival, and for the victims, a return to the everyday is what forms the future horizon” (p. 59).

This legal orientation is particularly perverse because, Mulla notes, “the criminal justice system does not, often, deliver to victims anything that they remotely recognize as justice in a meaningful or personal way” (p. 221). Cases are rarely prosecuted, and forensic nurses with decades of experience have only testified in court a handful of times. Mulla notes, “There is a wide gap between the confidence forensic nurse examiners place in the DNA evidence they collect and the reality of what happens to DNA evidence in the United States” (p. 38). Understandably, then, the obsessive collection of DNA stains and photographing of injuries begins to seem to Mulla, and perhaps to victims, like a ritual.

Less like a ritual, perhaps, and more like an ordeal. The sexual assault examination is not pleasant, but, Mulla shows, victims’ willingness to bear it in the service of a supposed greater good sometimes becomes a test of their victim status; those who resist or, most dramatically, refuse emergency contraception risk being labeled “non-compliant” or being otherwise devalued by the sexual assault intervention system. But not always: one of Mulla’s most memorable cases involves a victim who walked out of the emergency room. To everyone’s surprise, she returned hours later. Having attended to the care of her children, which she deemed a higher priority than the sexual assault examination, she returned to the hospital and calmly cooperated with the procedure—on her own terms, in her own time. As Mulla puts it, this victim “put forensic time on hold” (p. 70).

Though always sympathetic to the individual actors, *The Violence of Care* is critical of what the sexual assault examination has become. While the book certainly does not advocate for a return to the system that preceded it, it makes a compelling case that sexual assault victims need so much more than the forensic-legalistic-medical response the contemporary sexual assault intervention provides.

Upscaling Downtown: From Bowery Saloons to Cocktail Bars in New York City, by **Richard E. Ocejo**. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014. 272 pp. \$35.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780691155166.

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Every generation gets the Lower East Side study it deserves. Richard E. Ocejo's lively ethnographic account of this well-known New York City neighborhood updates us after three decades of gentrification. The Lower East Side, the Bowery, and the East Village are the sites for *Upscaling Downtown*, Ocejo's examination of the explosive growth in bars in downtown New York. The book is filled with thoughtful character portraits drawn from extensive fieldwork and interviews in which we hear from bar owners and customers, police officials, community board members, local activists, and artists. Ocejo dives into the "nostalgia narratives" that motivate these residents and bar-owners, new and old.

This book follows most obviously from Sharon Zukin's (1989) political economic analysis of neighborhood transformations within New York. It can also be placed in a tradition of Lower East Side gentrification accounts, especially those by Neil Smith (1996) and Christopher Mele (2000). As with other recent urban accounts, especially by David Grazian (2003) and Richard Lloyd (2006), Ocejo focuses on culture and consumption as key points of analysis. In this case, shining a light on bars provides a grounded understanding of community and conflict. Readers looking for a predictable political narrative, based solely on the

needs of capital, will not find it here. Instead, Ocejo's micro-sociological focus shows how democracy is an emotionally charged, unsatisfying, never-ending process.

Upscaling Downtown begins in a "dive bar" and moves to outline the unholy trinity of cheap housing, charitable food programs, and cheap booze joints that historically defined the area around the Bowery. The upscale trinity of boutique hotels, expensive restaurants, and themed cocktail bars replaces these earlier institutions. This book's strength is Ocejo's willingness to fully explore the romantic connotations associated with a place, but also to see what is in front of him: alcoholism is real, many of the old-timers are disagreeable drunks, and many of the newcomers are clueless. But everyone cares about this neighborhood as a place to live, work, or both.

The biggest contribution of the book is Ocejo's unraveling of the contradictions in the "nostalgia narrative" where slums are praised but noisy bars are a threat, where punk bands are creative but DJs a nuisance, and where the vices of the past are happy memories. Residents and business owners move ahead based on their early experiences in the neighborhood. The entry point for an individual informs his or her sense of community. Divergent starting points and divergent narratives lead to divergent goals.

Considering the amount of alcohol imbibed by the author, there is reason to initially wonder if this book will be another form of "stunt ethnography," such as joining a street gang. But Ocejo's methods take him out of the bar, following the tendrils linking bars, the state liquor licensing system, and residential discomforts. In stages throughout the book, Ocejo comments on how policing diverges along class lines but also due to a disinterest in nuisance calls. New bars may be fined, but their intoxicated patrons are ignored.

Implicitly, this book raises a difficult policy question: how do cities reconcile successful affordable housing initiatives with radically different commercial enterprises? The mostly Latino residents in public housing and the many early gentrifiers in rent-stabilized apartments are stuck, unable to afford to move, but no longer catered to by local businesses.