

Culture



Alrick CAMBRIDGE and Stephan FEUCHT- WANG, *Where You Belong*, Avebury: Aldershot, 1992

Caroline Knowles

Volume 14, Number 1, 1994

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1083276ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1083276ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Canadian Anthropology Society / Société Canadienne d'Anthropologie (CASCA), formerly/anciennement Canadian Ethnology Society / Société Canadienne d'Ethnologie

ISSN

0229-009X (print)

2563-710X (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Knowles, C. (1994). Review of [Alrick CAMBRIDGE and Stephan FEUCHT-WANG, *Where You Belong*, Avebury: Aldershot, 1992]. *Culture*, 14(1), 96–97. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1083276ar>

Tous droits réservés © Canadian Anthropology Society / Société Canadienne d'Anthropologie (CASCA), formerly/anciennement Canadian Ethnology Society / Société Canadienne d'Ethnologie, 1994

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

Érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

Kong government through its various departments, has influenced the emergence of squatter settlements. Although there is examination of the role of the Housing Department, it might be suggested that expanded coverage could be given to the way in which staff of Squatter Control units work, as they are the representatives of the state with whom squatters interact most frequently.

It is not clear to which readership this monograph is addressed. The rich detail on some issues, which might be confusing for people unfamiliar with the Hong Kong scene, could suggest that this publication is primarily for local consumption there. This is further borne out by the fact that the general background provided on conditions in Hong Kong, although useful, could certainly be fleshed out more if the publication were to be of wider interest. On the other hand there are hints that Alan Smart may have been aiming at non-Hong Kong readers. Why else would he find it necessary to tell us that *mah jeuk* (mah jong) is "a gambling game with tiles" (p.103, 209) or that an *amah* is a servant (p.157)?

Stylistically, readers unfamiliar with Hong Kong might also be confused by inconsistency in presenting place names. The author usually follows conventional usage by indicating place names usually by three words, each capitalized, but on occasion, the three words form one (e.g. Shek Kip Mei, p.48, or Shekkipmei, p.33, 40). It might also be asked why it is necessary to use romanized Cantonese terms for such words as "fierce" (*ok*, translated as "tough and powerful", p.76), or "bustling and festive" (*yit l/naau*, p.105, 210). Other uses of Cantonese terms referring to social relationships (neighbour[hood], adoptive relationships, people from the same village or district) could be further explicated to justify their use by indicating the cultural significance attached to them, and the occasional term which appears in the text but not in the glossary should be added there or dropped (e.g., p.57).

The publication would be greatly enhanced by more and better maps, the presentation of more of the statistical detail in charts or tables, and most of all, by an index. This monograph contains much useful material and will be a valuable record of a particular period in a society that is changing so fast that very soon mid-1980s data will be primarily of historical interest.

Alrick CAMBRIDGE and Stephan FEUCHT-WANG, *Where You Belong*, Avebury: Aldershot, 1992.

By Caroline Knowles

Concordia University

This book is the second instalment in a two volume series. It follows *Anti-Racist Strategies* (1990) which is a critique (prompted by the lack of analytical rigour in the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1982, *The Empire Strikes Back*) of Marxist and sociological constructions of race in Britain. It offers a series of impressively well argued accounts of racism as the denial of "civil capacity" to racially defined categories of the population, and is a timely and significant intervention in the British scene.

The key theme is identity and its articulation in organising claims to belonging, themes which are creatively explored in its various contributions. Feuchtwang uses biography to explore senses of national belonging arising from rival claims to peoplehood. Looking at identities offered by refugees, by "Britishness", by what he refers to as the "internal refugee" (whose sense of belonging is marginalised by social conditions like unemployment) and by the outcast without an ancestral biography (as in the case of the children transported to Canada) Feuchtwang shows how all claims to belonging of national territories are ambiguous, fragmented, negotiated, and constructed in relation to a sense of personal identity.

Eade's account of British Bengali identity is richly textured by negotiations in local political struggles over language, political alliances, and religious provision in East London. It is well complemented by Clarke's discussion of the ways in which a national boundary, which has become a mechanism for the maintenance of a white British identity, operates a system of "legislative racism" through immigration controls.

Cambridge's contributions tackle the politics of black subjectivity and counter assertion to racism as expressions of identity and belonging. He challenges Paul Gilroy's assertion that black music is a cultural discourse in which are embedded forms of representation of blackness encased in political agendas of revolt, by arguing that music (but not musical cultures which are organised presentations to be decon-

structured) is both non-discursive and non-representational.

Cambridge's other target is Gilroy's invariable identities of revolt, particularly rastafarianism which has got itself stuck between agency and structure. Cambridge's analysis of the shifting and ambivalent formation of black identities and subjectivities is contextualised in the dynamic context of cultural processes and their modes of individuation. He thus eschews the notion of an essential black self in opposition to racism. Cambridge effectively develops the self as an analytical concern and as a moving target for social analysis. In this, his is one of the most sophisticated accounts of black subjectivity currently available.

In *Where You Belong*, racism is something to be both revealed and countered. The authors' deconstruction of racism offers both an analytic rigour and some targets for social and political reform. But what is unique about this volume is that it achieves this without recourse to a general class politics or a rhetoric of black insurrection; key devices used in other accounts. It's main point — that human subjectivity and identity focuses on various forms of belonging and exclusion — is an important one which could be more clearly and concretely illustrated in places.

It's main failing is the density of much of the writing. Each chapter has the substance of a separate book. There are also some issues which deserve further attention. What is the relationship between personal and social identities? And between this and political agency? There is also room for a further clarification of the self as an analytic device. What, for example, is its relationship to psychoanalytic discourse?

Daniel SEGAL (ed.), *Crossing Cultures: Essays in the Displacement of Western Civilization*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992; xix + 270 pages, U.S. \$39.95 (cloth).

By Robert B. Klymasz

Canadian Museum of Civilization

Handsomely produced and beautifully edited, this compilation of six essays offers a wealth of insights into the dynamics of cultural encounters

(identified here as "crossings"). Each essay is a superbly crafted case study, provocative and sometimes even haunting. Trendy and vaguely apologetic, the book's focus rests on colonial encounters, "the reciprocity of moral regimes" and on the West vis-à-vis "the rest". Eight of the nine contributors teach at universities in the United States (the odd person out teaches at the University of Alberta); all seem pained by the insidious nature of the West's role in these encounters, and this factor inevitably sweeps into the book's warp and woof.

Half of the encounters analyzed here take place in North America during the colonial period. Some of the by-products of these "crossings" (such as syphilis, black slavery, captive Europeans, and multicultural rebellion) are featured in the first three essays written by Mary B. Campbell, Pauline Turner Strong, and Peter Linebaugh jointly with Marcus Rediker. These are carefully constructed and richly documented as are the remaining three essays. The latter focus on encounters that are removed both spatially and temporally from the North American colonial setting (Algeria, India, and Bali); and, in addition, each of these three essayists uses expertise to produce an approach that is distinct and distinguished at the same time: Derek Sayer as sociologist, David Prochaska as historian, and James Boon as anthropologist. (Boon's style of exposition is especially original albeit somewhat self-indulgent.)

Researchers attuned to the nitty-gritty of fieldwork will find this volume thoughtful but perhaps unusually tidy since it lacks the immediacy of raw and unrefined field data. But, after all, most of the findings in *Crossing Cultures* are based on written documentation ranging from archival matter to *belles-lettres*, predominantly if not exclusively west European in origin with English as the language of expression. To correct this bias, a companion volume is needed that will avoid such strictures — one that will enrich the perspective on "crossings" by engaging voices emanating from other sources. Nonetheless, this remains a strong collection enhanced by an eloquent introductory statement (by Harry Lieberohn and Daniel Segal) as well as a useful index.