

following ways. As a healer and psychotherapist, Andersen addresses one of the fundamental dimensions in patient assessment as a pre-requisite to treatment, which is by and large missing in so-called orthodox approaches to treating illnesses and disease and it concerns the role of black magic or haunting against a family or individual who might have had a spell or curse put on them, and subsequently, caused injury.

The short but informative contribution from Sigvald Persen who uses cupping, which is a healing technique administered consisting of releasing impurities from the blood, outlines the value of the clients own involvement in the healing and recovery process and the role and function the Sámi healer plays in helping to both facilitate and support and some of the mechanisms as such, involved during consultation, treatment and thereafter.

The contribution from Trine Kvitberg in chapter six – *Suffering in Body and Soul: Lived life and experience of local food change in the Russian Arctic* – make another important contribution to the study of Sámi health and healing illness and disease. The material is presented through a case study of women on the Russian Kola Peninsula, northwest Russia. The core of the research examines the background to the changes that have taken place as a result of Russian dominance and destruction of Sámi culture, ways of life; with particular emphasis placed on reindeer herding and food as a livelihood and source of nutrition, well-being and nourishment, and how this has changed dramatically.

The contribution from Mona Anita Kiil in chapter seven brings into focus Sámi health practices as drawn from participant observation from a clinic in the municipality of Nordreisa, which is in northern Troms, Norway, that are by and large unknown outside the culture. Emphasis is placed on what has been adapted as a cultural practice in relation to Laestadianism, known as 'Reading' which when further defined is also represented by the terms 'curing' and 'blowing' according to Kiil. This activity relates to the use of prayer and spoken word as a method, which has significant value with regard to the 'inner society' of society in relation to identity and culture; meaning its application highlights the critical function a home plays concerning security

during the healing and recovery process through a support network.

Chapter eight by Randi Nymo is titled *Keeping the doors open: Everyday life between knowledge systems in the Markebygd area* .... This was encompassing and like the previous chapters, a delight to read. Moreover, it is a thoroughly interesting and important contribution, which was skilfully compiled and presented through a series of interviews with Sámi persons. Like the former contributors and concerning the background to the study, Nymo reflects on the influence colonialism has had on Sámi ways of life, concerning healing practices, customs and the use of traditional knowledge in everyday life for health and well-being, and the consequences of these forces, which has manifest as violence and racism, are covered within education, medicine, agriculture and religion.

The last chapter, nine, titled *Gifts of dreams: Connecting to Sámi epistemic practice* by Britt Kramvig brings the scholarly publication to a close with a fascinating chapter about the important role and function dreaming plays in health, healing and well-being in different setting in north Norway. What makes the chapter of particular interest is how the discourse is presented through participant observation with various subjects sharing their stories about truth dreams and other forms of dreaming that heal and bring forth premonitions and answers to future events and directions for living.

To sum up the review of this new book, I would say that the positive experiences of reading the book was the amount of new information within the chapters, which I found to be of much interest and value concerning Sámi studies. Engagement with Sámi healers provides different examples of how the culture is opening up in order to document and preserve traditional knowledge. The downside of the book was that some of the written composition of a number of themes in chapters went off in different ways in order to discuss other subject matter and then returned to the original themes, which blurred the focus. Other sub-chapter headings would have been needed in order to emphasize this, thus at times, avoiding getting lost in the text. (Francis Joy, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland, PO Box 122, 96101 Rovaniemi, Finland ([francis.joy@ulapland.fi](mailto:francis.joy@ulapland.fi))).

**Heroic failure and the British.** Stephanie Barczewski. 2016. New Haven and London: Yale University Press. 267p, illustrated, hardcover. ISBN 9780300180060. £20.00.

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*Heroic failure and the British* is Stephanie Barczewski's most recent treatment of British polar exploration. Barczewski's first work on the topic was *Antarctic destinies*, a commendably thorough dual-narrative of the changing reputations of Robert Falcon Scott and Ernest Shackleton (Barczewski 2007). In a subsequent article Barczewski expressed her wish that future polar history should concentrate, not on 'the feats or failures of individual explorers' (Barczewski 2014: 226) nor on 'the human focus' (Barczewski 2014: 228), but instead on 'the environmental history of the Antarctic' and 'what the history of environmental change in the Antarctic means for all humanity' (Barczewski 2014: 228). However, in her new book Barczewski evidently still believes 'the human focus' is worth examining:

here she tackles the feats and failures of historical individuals, some of them polar explorers.

This book's hypothesis appears to be that, from 1800 until the end of the British empire, British failure, military and expeditionary, was publicly promoted as 'heroic' as a specific strategy to provide public distraction from the supposedly shameful existence of the British Empire. The book, however, lacks evidence for a concerted propaganda campaign at the highest levels. As Barczewski has hypothesized a direct link between the celebration of 'heroic failure' and British shame arising from imperialism, it is a pity that she does not identify any individual or organization whose specific aim was to use the concept of heroic failure to 'help the British feel good about the uglier aspects of imperialism in the nineteenth century' (page ix). Furthermore, Barczewski's underlying hypothesis of generalized guilt for the Empire's existence more properly belongs to the twenty-first century, not the nineteenth. Previous to the First World War, empires and colonialism had been the global norm. Almost every European nation possessed

foreign colonies: France, Germany, Spain, Belgium, Portugal, Italy, the Netherlands, even Denmark. Outside of Europe, the United States had the Philippines and Puerto Rico, whilst Japan had Formosa (now Taiwan) and Korea. It is therefore difficult to reconcile these facts with Barczewski's hypothesis of nineteenth-century British shame at their possession of an empire.

Ultimately, Barczewski's approach to the topic is quite nebulous, and appears to consist of the exposure of flaws and imperfections within certain acts of British heroism and within the people involved, followed by the contrast of these often private flaws against contemporary celebrations and tributes. (Given that era's respect for the age-old custom of 'speaking well of the dead', the fact of such tributes was hardly unusual.) Generally, the methodology of seeking problems within any human venture will inevitably harvest results; however, too great an emphasis on fault runs the risk of producing a skewed portrait where objective merit goes unremarked. Such unintentional skewing can be seen in this book's treatment of the 1854 Charge of the Light Brigade. Here the emphasis is on the immediate losses for the British, but this approach does not take into account the Charge's eventual military effect, which was to drive the Russians away from the British Balaclava-Sebastopol supply route (failure to do so would have led to the British either having to raise the siege of Sebastopol or surrender outright). Nor does it consider the Charge's psychological impact on the Russians, who were stunned by their opponents' evident courage. Ten days later came the Battle of Inkerman, a Russian defeat by British and French forces: after that, there were no further major attempts by the Russians to defeat the British in the field.

Another example of this unintentional skewing occurs when Barczewski erroneously dismisses Captain Scott's scientific programme on his 1910–1913 *Terra Nova* expedition as a failure, quoting at length a single letter from Hugh Robert Mill on its insufficient new geographical discoveries. This approach disregards the rest of the expedition's wide scientific programme (zoology, glaciology, geology, meteorology, oceanography, magnetic observations, etc.). Given the recommendation in Barczewski's 2014 article that more attention be paid to 'the history of environmental change in the Antarctic', it is a great pity that in this book she does not mention the vast amount of scientific data from Scott's last expedition (not least the extensive meteorology) which has been so useful to present-day scientists studying that very topic. The scientific successes of Scott's expedition have been evident for decades, and should have been noted for the sake of accuracy.

Barczewski argues that Britain is rare amongst nations in choosing to celebrate 'heroic failure'. However, other nations besides Britain have their equivalent of the posthumous Victoria Cross; they too have erected statues to, or named locations after, courageous people who did not have luck on their side. Paying tribute to fallen heroes appealed to nineteenth-century idealistic sensibility, and one such example was G.F. Watts' 'Memorial to Heroic Self-Sacrifice', proposed in 1877 and unveiled in London's Postman's Park in 1900. This wall of plaques immortalized rescuers, largely working-class civilians, who died during their efforts at life-saving. Even unsuccessful rescues were commemorated on Watts' memorial, reflecting the sensible awareness that 'self-sacrifice' did not always lead to a successful outcome. In this vein Captain Scott was celebrated in 1913 as a leader who stayed with and supported his debilitated men, instead of abandoning them to save himself. This required

no external political 'spin'; Scott's staying with his injured team members was documented fact, and even today many would find a leader's 'leaving no man behind' to be commendable. (On the theme of polar exploration, it is somewhat harsh to address Scott's or Franklin's deaths in terms of 'failure' considering the countless explorers and mountaineers who have died during ventures into obviously hazardous terrain. Even the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen, who is commended for his south pole expedition in Barczewski's book, ultimately perished in the Arctic ocean with his five-man crew in 1928.)

The book's narrowly-focused interpretation of certain events as British propaganda and nothing else sometimes leads to a crucial disregard of other key elements. For example, Barczewski writes of the battle of Omdurman that Lord Kitchener 'understood that Omdurman was about confirming Gordon's nobility, not about crushing the Sudanese' (page 189). However, it is unrealistic to suggest that Britain would have sent an army of 25000 men along the Nile for the sole purpose of 'confirming Gordon's nobility' as late as 1898, a full thirteen years after Gordon's death in 1885. Omdurman is more realistically viewed as a pragmatic exercise in geo-political strategy, allowing the establishment of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (adding a million square miles to the British Empire) and stopping the French colonial empire's advance into the Sudan.

Further unintentional skewing occurs whenever Barczewski criticizes British policy in isolation, without reference to the wider global context which would result in a fairer perspective. For example, she stresses British culpability for the fate of the Australasian aborigines (which is entirely correct), but unusually conflates this with the fate of the Native Americans when she accuses the British of 'killing off large numbers of American Indians and aborigines' (page 35). Whilst there were bloody conflicts between the British and the Native Americans during the initial settlement, the British protected Native American rights in the 1763 Treaty of Paris by forbidding colonial settlements west of the Appalachian mountains. By 1776 the British had reached a peaceful settlement with the Native American nations: the real killings and displacement of Native Americans occurred after the British had departed from America, between 1783 (the founding date of the American Republic) and the 1890 Battle of Wounded Knee. If Barczewski condemns the treatment of Native Americans, her target should be the USA, not the British. Similarly, Barczewski briefly mentions slavery in the British Empire in order to condemn it, finishing with the statement that 'slavery was not abolished until the 1830s' (page 225): however, a wider contextual view would also note that the British Empire was the first of the Western world powers to abolish slavery, and that the British subsequently attempted to atone by setting up, at some expense, the West Africa Squadron of Royal Naval ships to prevent the slave trade from Africa to the rest of the world.

In conclusion, this book is provocative and unashamedly partisan; however, a more objective approach, careful to include context and merit as well as fault, would have been preferable for a work of reference. The book also has a habit of placing harsh moral blame on individuals for outcomes, which can sometimes result in a disregard of the role played by chance and happenstance within wars and exploration. (When examining such events, historians must be careful to bear in mind the slender margin by which such ventures may sometimes succeed or fail, and thus avoid the 'just-world fallacy' of judging purely on outcome.) Barczewski's best work to date has been *Antarctic destinies*, which was distinguished by the balanced

and informative presentation of copious evidence. Here, her hypothesis of a direct link between the celebration of 'heroic failure' and contemporary guilt for the British Empire is somewhat anachronistic, and some of this book's conclusions are weakened when outside evidence is introduced. (George Lewis and Karen May, ([georgelewis233@gmail.com](mailto:georgelewis233@gmail.com))).

**Russia's Far East: New dynamics in Asia Pacific and beyond.** Rensselaer Lee and Artyom Lukin. 2015. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. 276 p, hardcover. ISBN 978-1-62637-389-1. \$68.00.  
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This book by Lee and Lukin is timely, accessible, and essential for both Russian Far East (RFE) and Asia Pacific Rim (APR) policy specialists, as well as those readers with a general interest in contemporary Sino-Russian relations. This is a highly analytical and uplifting read and concludes with some thoughtful, evidence-based, and practical scenarios to improve and develop international relations in the APR/RFE, which hopefully will be read and reflected upon by respective government policy makers as well.

The book is divided into 12 stand-alone chapters, but with a common methodology throughout of exposition, supporting data, subsequent analysis, and possible future outcomes; the major themes of economic linkage, societal cooperation, and the development of a political architecture and framework(s) to support the RFE's resurgence - and facilitate possible Sino-Russian regional integration, is also apparent across all subject headings.

Chapters include, amongst others, a definition and history of the RFE, Russia's evolving policy towards the region(s), potential Sino-Russian alliances, Russian sovereignty versus Chinese infrastructure build-out/globalization, and potential economic integration of NE China with the RFE; the account of the geopolitics/economics of the region, including other Asian countries' interests as well as those of China, Russia, and the U.S. is particularly thought provoking, well-balanced, and unambiguously frank. Associated footnotes, economic statistics and references, are both informative and comprehensive.

Most refreshingly - and critical, is the continuous juxta positioning of both Moscow and Beijing's stated policies for the RFE/NE China, and the reality of such policy administration and implementation at the local level(s). This is where the rubber really hits the road in all human affairs, and Lee and Lukin have to their credit, identified and filled in this often missing "reality check" in academic accounts with copious interviews, news stories, and data from local practitioners of all kinds: legislators; financiers; economists; business people; and local as well as regional administrators.

Population demographics, (on both sides of the Sino-Russian border), migration out of the RFE by Russians, and the growing problem of access to fresh water for the NE Chinese population (compounded by a stunning and wilful indifference to the polluting of Chinese rivers in NE China), are sobering and game-changing facts, and the authors rightly emphasize the centrality of seeking solutions to these issues before any economic integration of the two regions can realistically take place.

Unsurprisingly, a lot of attention is reserved for discussion of major oil and gas activities between the two countries, regional

## References

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infrastructure development, and the general capacity and will to finance both related activities, via provincial, regional, state, and PPI initiatives. The politics, economics, and commercial wrangling of the RFE's mammoth \$400Bn oil/gas deal signed recently between China and Russia is for example, well covered and exposes much that is both hopeful and depressing about the Sino-Russian relationship. The whiff of cultural mistrust and towering commercial corruption is well researched from local sources, and its negative effects are not discounted by the authors.

For Arctic specialists there are plenty of small nuggets of information and policy statements to be found that elicit hints about possible further Sino-Russian integration between the RFE/NE China and the Arctic in the future. Major oil and gas developments, infrastructure, and shipping, to name but three industries (Arctic river waterways are another), all have Arctic aspects to them in terms of their respective relationships to the routing and destination(s) of the NSR along the Russian Pacific coast. Moreover, a following of the money trail outlined by the authors (regional investment funds, OBOR, Silk Road Fund, Russian RFE Fund, etc.), suggests the possible funding mechanism for future Sino-Russian Arctic/APR integration as well.

One of the scenarios painted by interviewed Sinologists is that with their spectacular resource wealth, Arctic NSR-bordering territories, and positioning on the sensitive RFE Pacific coast (not many miles from the U.S.), the northern RFE's Chukotka Okrug, Sakha Republic, and the Kamchatka and Magadan Oblasts, may be China's next step northwards in the RFE, toward the Russian Arctic coast, and further economic integration of the RFE/NE China within the APR.

The NSR is a potential new maritime trade route for Asia as a whole, and also represents for China connectivity with Russian Arctic gas supplies, as well as affording strategic freedom from the U.S. Navy as the world's guarantor of safe passage/navigation of all other maritime trade routes, but not significantly, the Russian dominated NSR. If Chinese/U.S. relations deteriorate further with regard to the Malacca Straits, and disputes over UNCLOS rulings in the South China Sea, the NSR will become of more strategic interest to China over the coming years.

Furthermore, Chinese equity ownership in RFE oil and gas upstream projects, increasing ownership in the Arctic's Yamal LNG project with Russia's Novotek, and a joint venture between Rosneft and Statoil (but using a Chinese oil field services group) in the Sea of Okhotsk continues apace. Other commercial indicators of intent include a joint undersea construction project for an optic cable linking Chukotka, Kamchatka, and Magadan, and a rental agreement to jointly develop the Russian Pacific port of Zarubino in the Sea of Japan. Taken as a whole, these developments would seem to suggest an increasing strategic Chinese interest in northern/coastal RFE, and its physical linkage with the Russian Arctic (via the NSR), and thus the possibility of a widening economic role for China in a more broadly integrated and perhaps Chinese dominated, APR.