

heit), oder in einer Irreduzibilität auf andere Quellen von Macht und Prestige bestehen (dann aber möglicherweise nur zu einer Theorie von Liminalität, nicht aber von "Religion" als ihrer Gestaltung führen würden), scheint dabei notwendig. Ein Problem aber ist, dass unter der Hand der eurozentrische Begriff von Religion durch die Klassiker-Referate (von Frazer bis Agamben) wieder eingeführt und aufgrund der Verfahrenslogik selbst dort, wo Kritiker zu Wort kommen, normativiert wird. Anders müsste die Studie tatsächlich von den Dingen, vom Materiellen, ausgehen. Dies würde dann aber eben nicht einen Zugang über "Religion" implizieren, sondern vielmehr über jene Praktiken, durch die Heilkraft oder das, was Hocart einmal "Lebenskraft" genannt hat, in verschiedenen Kulturen angeeignet oder zirkuliert wird. Damit sei keineswegs behauptet, dass man geläufigen Aporien komparativer Betrachtung ganz entkommt, bei denen ein heuristischer Ansatz dazu führt, alles mit allem zu vergleichen, während ein typologischer Ansatz häufig mit Typologien operiert, die nur wenig mit lokalen Ausprägungen und sozialer Praxis vor Ort zu tun haben. Dennoch scheint der Weg über Konzepte, wie etwa den "Segen", die rituelle Praxis, soziale Bewegung und Personen- bzw. Bildkult zu vereinen, vielversprechender, weil hier die Materialität von Religion nicht das evolutionistische Problem einer idealiter vergeistigten Ambivalenz der "Anthropogenese" bezeichnet, sondern die medialen Bedingungen von Religion bzw. Religion als Medium, das einige seiner Bedingungen hervorhebt als auch andere zum Verschwinden bringt, durchsichtig gemacht werden können.

Ulrich van Loyen

Fernando, Mayanthi L.: *The Republic Unsettled. Muslim French and the Contradictions of Secularism.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2014. 313p. ISBN 978-0-8223-5748-3. Price: £ 16.99

Mayanthi Fernando's "The Republic Unsettled. Muslim French and the Contradictions of Secularism" is a kind of dual ethnography. On the one hand, it is an empirically rich ethnography of those she refers to as "Muslim French." A purposefully awkward moniker to reflect the awkward fit of Muslim French in dominant national narratives, this category includes "women and men committed to practicing Islam as French citizens and to practicing French citizenship as pious Muslims" (13). On the other hand, "The Republic Unsettled" is an ethnography of secularism and the contested notion of Frenchness. Fernando interrogates dominant French political narratives by studying them obliquely, looking at their forceful enactment on the Muslim French who resist, question, and reimagine the limits of the Republic. The result is a masterful analysis of the inconsistencies and tensions that live at the heart of secularism and dominant articulations of French national identity.

Moreover, Fernando's anthropological approach – open-ended interviews, the inclusion of gripping and deeply meaningful field notes, even direct participation in public French education and Muslim French organizational life – anchors sometimes slippery postmodern

discussions about neoliberalism and governmentality in the concrete predicament of Muslim French in today's France. The result is a happy marriage of generalizable conclusions about secularism and context-specific thick description of contestation over the meaning of Frenchness.

Drawing on critics of secularism like Hussein Agrama and Talal Asad, Fernando focuses on tensions within the logic of secularism. It is grounded in bounded understandings of the nature of religion that are derived from the Christian experience and the particular history of Europe; it claims to sweep religion from a public sphere that has supposedly been severed from the private, but it actually aims to identify religion and regulate the behavior of its practitioners in both public and private; and far from limiting state power, secularism actually enhances the governing power of the state.

Chapter one introduces the reader to the Muslim French. Fernando observes that Muslim French are "self-confident" in their claims to Frenchness and their belief that it is possible to be both French and Muslim (53). Chapter two examines Muslim French claims for "indifference" and offers a critique of the politics of recognition: according to Fernando, it continually reproduces an insider/outsider dichotomy. Fernando writes that "the polity envisaged by many Muslim French refuses any stable, essential, or unified political formations ... they imagine France as a future-oriented space where politics is the domain of the unpredictable" (98f.). This is not the politics of Rawlsian overlapping consensus, but of an Arendtian embrace of creating anew.

Chapter three traces state efforts to simultaneously be open to difference and to "Frenchify" Islam. Fernando powerfully demonstrates that there is a politics of recognition at the heart of secularism, but such recognition is often for the purposes of regulation. What is more, Fernando suggests that attempts to recognize difference within secular societies may merely serve the majority's desire to be recognized as good, tolerant liberals.

Chapter four interrogates Muslim French understandings of freedom and autonomy, which involve "turning obligation into desire through self-discipline" (158). Productively drawing on the trope of legibility, Fernando notes that this is a vision of freedom and autonomy that literally cannot be read within European human rights law, which imagines freedom and autonomy as the products of purely voluntary association by atomized individuals. After identifying how these narratives clash, she then deconstructs the European legal narrative: highlighting the disciplinary edge within Durkheim and Locke (and Rousseau, who is explored to a lesser extent), Fernando observes that "These parallels make the common secular-republican critique of Muslim French piety – the critique of submission to normative authority – somewhat confounding" (178). Of course, we should not be completely confounded: foundational ideas profoundly shape the parameters of debate, but we must always attend to how they are interpreted, reworked, and selectively remembered in order to endorse contemporary political values and projects.

