

## BOOK REVIEWS

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Richard Jones. *Mosquito*. Animal Series. London: Reaktion Books, 2012. 216 pp. Ill. \$19.95 (978-1-861-89923-1).

Richard Jones, a fellow of the Royal Entomological Society of London and the Linnean Society of London and a former president of the British Entomological and Natural History Society, has authored a short, charming book titled *Mosquito*. It appears in the Animal series, published by Reaktion Books, with companion volumes such as *Ape*, *Moose*, and *Wolf*.

The Animal series is designed to reach a popular audience, and toward this end the volumes are lavishly illustrated. *Mosquito*, printed on heavy glossy stock paper, is adorned with scores of images, of which approximately half are high-quality color reproductions. If not for its very modest dimensions (7.5 inches × 5.25 inches), it might well be considered a general-interest “coffee-table book.”

The primary goal of the book is to entertain and thereby to educate. The author has adopted a breezy, conversational style that indulges digressions into popular culture, and he is not committed to a chronologically ordered presentation of information. With cheery British wit, he imparts interesting facts about the mosquito, the development of mosquito studies within the field of entomology, mosquito-borne disease, and representations of the mosquito in Western popular culture.

*Mosquito* is thus not a book of academic scholarship, and few readers would situate it within the field of the history of medicine. That said, there are fascinating facts and tidbits of information to be gleaned—indeed savored—from the text. Richard Jones lucidly explains the biological classification of mosquitoes, the mechanism by which female mosquitoes suck blood, and the mysteries of mosquito flight. He makes the point that *Anopheles gambiae*, the most efficient mosquito vector of malaria, is the most dangerous animal in the world. Focusing principally on malaria, he devotes three chapters to mosquito-borne disease, in which are reproduced eloquent public health propaganda posters and postcards. He discusses the evolutionarily rapid emergence from *Culex pipiens* of *Culex molestus* in the underground tunnels of London during the Second World War.

The text is steeped throughout in popular culture references, and this reader was impressed to learn of the myriad of mosquito themes in popular films, Gary Larson cartoons, and rock band lyrics, including those of Pearl Jam and Queens of the Stone Age. He devotes an entire chapter to the “mosquito brand,” by which he means the attachment of the term “mosquito” to warplanes, ships, stamps, and toys.

Readers of different ages and educational backgrounds will find pleasure in perusing this short volume. Some young adult readers may find themselves drawn thereby to entomological studies. For readers within the academy, the book with

its rich illustrations may stimulate interest in the popular culture of public health messaging and encourage further reading in the history of vector-borne disease.

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Marcia C. Inhorn and Emily A. Wentzell, eds. *Medical Anthropology at the Intersections: Histories, Activisms, and Futures*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2012. viii + 342 pp. Ill. \$25.95 (978-0-8223-5270-9).

Taking the passing of three pathbreaking medical anthropologists as a moment for reflection, in this volume prominent medical anthropologists take stock of their discipline and its relationships with others. The first section, "Histories," traces the intellectual genealogies of medical anthropology and its largely productive associations with the fields of feminist technoscience studies, medical history, and international and area studies. The second section, "Queries," explores medical anthropologists' engagements with global public health, mental health, genetics, and genomics. These encounters often meant turning an anthropological lens—at time critically—on these disciplines and their impact in broader social contexts. Finally in the third section, "Activisms," the long-standing concern of using anthropological research to improve living conditions is considered in tandem with the contributions of disability studies, public policy, and gender, LGBT, and sexuality studies.

Throughout, the contributors employ a productive reflexivity to reflect critically on the subjects of concern in medical anthropology. For example, in his chapter, "That Obscure Object of Global Health," Didier Fassin interrogates the concept of "global" to "unveil the dialectic of spatial expansion and moral normalization" and "health" to highlight the "tension between the worth of lives and the value of life" (p. 96). Carving out a critical space between scientific detachment and moral involvement is a central theoretical and political challenge rather unique to the subdiscipline of medical anthropology, Fassin claims. After all, political anthropologists, he suggests, would not aim to be "missionaries of democracy" (p. 114), but medical anthropologists often are concerned with improving medical care, biomedical and otherwise.

The contributors have seriously pondered the future of medical anthropology, and their prescriptions are a thread that runs throughout the volume. In particular, all have suggestions for how medical anthropology can have a larger influence on other fields and health concerns writ large. To synthesize many complex arguments and contexts, they argue that medical anthropology's most important contribution is its commitment to achieving a deep knowledge of how local conditions and concerns filter global processes shaping health.