

survivors reclaim moral agency within the health care system? Given her ethnographic data, which documents the prolonged failure of one such attempt at Horizons, this choice makes sense. Another ethnographer, Elizabeth Davis (2012), has skillfully attended to similar questions in Greek Thrace, focusing on the moral achievements of some of her interlocutors outside of the clinic. The subtle redemptive notes at the end of *Recovery's Edge* are tempered through reference to complexity, contingency, and the need for the state's material and moral investment in chronic mental illness. The author proposes Annemarie Mol's (2008) "logic of care" as a potential framework for reaching a real and lasting moral shift where meaningful sociality is a possibility from the outset. However, it remains to be seen how such innovation will avoid the "logic of choice" that Mol has theorized as care's antithesis in her analysis of diabetes treatment in the Netherlands. It is also unclear whether the two logics can really be disentangled in the case of mental health. As Myers's book so eloquently demonstrates, psychiatric treatment is deeply enmeshed with some of the most fundamental aspects of political, social, and ethical life. What does it mean for the logic of care that psychiatric patients' choices are about far more than psychiatric efficacy?

Recovery's Edge imparts several lessons about institutional power and mental health status that medical anthropologists will need to understand the future of peer support movements, as well. An intriguing aspect of more recent recovery discourse has been the emergence of a paraprofessional class of certified mental health peers, a trend that Myers identifies at the beginning of the book and touches on again at the end. How are the professionalization and standardization of peer support—the stricter interpolation of what more people like Myers's main interlocutor, Vera, represents—reshaping the landscape of moral agency for people involved in mental health systems? Furthermore, how does the presence of mental health care providers who are also peers with a mandate to value peer input reshape this moral order? One interlocutor's wry identification of "paid friends" foreshadows just one possible outcome. The diffusion of power and expertise once held exclusively by clinicians to peer support harkens back to 1970s power-sharing programs in psychiatric hospitals in the United States and Canada. Myers's text provides her academic, psychiatric consumer-survivor, and clinician readers with a grounded corrective to some of the self-justifying rhetoric required for the survival of mental health policies in a neoliberal environment.

Although it may be tempting to dismiss the question of "recovery" as hollow rhetoric in lives already overdetermined by medicine, law, and poverty, ethnography that approaches the intricacies of its failure can remind social scientists of all that is caught up in the idea of alleviating or escaping the chronic. Furthermore, Myers's focus on a few key theoretical trajectories, the accessibility and emotional weight of the writing, and the wide social relatability of the subject matter mean that *Recovery's Edge* would fit well on introductory medical anthropology, psychological anthropology, or social work syllabi.

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In the Crimino-legal Fuzzy Zone

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The Truth about Crime: Sovereignty, Knowledge, Social Order. By Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.

At the turn into the twentieth century, when traditional forms of social solidarity gave way, Durkheim came upon the simple yet powerful sociological insight that criminal acts serve the essential function of helping to trace boundary lines between unruliness and order. In this infinitely repeating social process, crime counterintuitively creates coherence in collectivities. Alas, as the world forges into the currents of the twenty-first century, the boundary lines are dashed at best. From nation-state to neighborhood, globalized forces have destabilized many cherished geo- and sociopolitical assumptions. Governmental and corporate actors in the highest echelons flirt in crimino-legal fuzzy zones while attempting to wall themselves off from the violence that endangers sentient life. This is the terrain of exploration and explanation in *The Truth about Crime*. In their new book, Jean and John L. Comaroff frame this global predicament as a scalar down-shifting into fragmented battles for sovereignty in which national states are increasingly unreliable and safety seekers increasingly resort to buying private fixes. They use the metaphor of tectonic or seismic shift to emphasize the dramatic unfolding of forces that incite crime and its narrative expression.

Part I unravels the conditions for and implications of crime's role in the "phenomenologies of fear [and] metaphysics of disorder" (xiv). There is much to be learned from their textual analyses of crime's representational forms. The authors offer a sweeping overview of criminal enactments in which ensembles of perpetrators and victims circulate as technologically animated kin-strangers. The encyclopedic gathering of published vignettes spirals repeatedly around an always racially coded ambivalence: people who fear police and who protest law enforcement's lack of commitment or ability to protect at the same time hold on to expectations that the state should

provide effective police protection. What else can one do in these times?

The authors argue that this ambivalence—this global “dialectic of im/possibility” (38)—is driven by neoliberal states abdicating responsibilities. Sovereignty, once knitted into state institutions, is now unraveling. In the fractious terrain of potential and remnant sovereignty, corporations, communal associations, and crooks duke it out. Crime becomes profitable at front and back ends. Even Foucault would be depressed by the devolution of public institutions, and perhaps too by the authors’ unfortunate adoption of the term “criminal anthropology,” which Foucault used to refer to the disciplinary practices and discourses of penal institutions and the authors renovate to refer to a twenty-first-century anthropology of crime (-control) writ large (xiv).

The cultural narratives cross back and forth across the Atlantic and condense in particular local configurations. The heart of the authors’ contribution lies in the way they doubly situate criminal tropes in global media and in the unique betrayals accompanying the transition from apartheid to postapartheid South Africa. The transition paired liberation with liberalization and “truth-and-reconciliation with a hardening commitment to market-led development,” thereby increasing unemployment, casualization of labor, and inequality (221). As life becomes more precarious, the actions, figures, events, and stories of crime and the lack of crime control emerge and proliferate. Although most of the book focuses on South Africa, the authors plant a flag in the United States first, which allows them to present stories that, for many readers, may function both as familiar touchstones and cross-cultural stepping-stones (e.g., Omar from *The Wire* appears). The comparative framework, though thin, encourages the idea that media analysis can be used to create a sense of relationship among groups of readers who may be unfamiliar with each other’s iconic crimes.

Part II applies these arguments in “Five Uneasy Pieces” culled from South African crimino-legal landscapes. Thematic case analyses intertwine machinations of police investigations; anthropological quests for deeper knowledge; traditional divination rituals; television, film and news dramas; personal experience narratives that spread to wider communicative spheres; and crime stats. They include (1) detectives/detection; (2) zombies/frauds; (3) myth/numbers; (4) private security, “community” policing, and rogue justice; and (5) private property protection. The fifth piece ends the book with an afterimage that brings a sense of domestic menace into chilling relief.

I imagine the Comaroffs writing their carefully crafted, prolific, but inevitably partial unraveling of crime(-control) stories by roaming through a specially made archive of paper clippings, digital links, 8-tracks, cassettes, DVDs, and digital recordings organized in layers by place over time. No one crime or criminal matters: it is the pulsating but perennial stream of everyone’s pain and storytelling that holds attention.

This is not an ethnography. Despite the Comaroffs’ deep personal and professional roots in South Africa, they assume

an odd, almost nineteenth-century rhetorical distance from the material they present. But even if they had a top-notch archival team collecting and processing the data on which the book is based, they could not possibly have displayed the book’s knowledge and dedication to detail and synthesis without their strong life historical attachments to people and places that populate the book. A detective could decipher clues tucked into various paragraphs as gestural references to a conversation here, an interview there, each with its own connection to crime: God’s Detective, in his private police museum (107); a family victimized by a witch familiar (118–120); a female prison warder (138); a Tswana family with a daughter away at college (171); a 72-year-old Tswana woman (172–173); a 50-year-old hairdresser (204–205); a flash of participant observation captured by a video technician (210). These and other tidbits anchor moments in the fusion of the un/real that clearly tempt ethnographic pursuit. Yet, in accompanying text, the un/real seems to rise out of a superstitious chaos wherein present confusions seek resolution by incorporating floating pieces from Africa’s traditional pasts. (Or did I miss something?)

Crime is notoriously difficult for anthropologists to study. Fieldwork is logistically and ethically fraught. For this reason, my coeditor Phil Parnell and I asked our contributing anthropologist-authors to revisit their fieldwork or personal experience of crime—whether or not it was their original intent—to write reflexively about forms of crime that arose in the context of going about their business. The result was *Crime’s Power: Anthropologists and the Ethnography of Crime* (Parnell and Kane 2003), a volume that explores the same conceptual terrain discussed here but situates the anthropologists in the scenes of crime or their aftermath. Analysis itself can thereby become vulnerable to shifts in circumstance and, in some cases, to violence—which, as the Comaroffs point out, although cruel may at least offer a sense of certainty. Between 2003 when *Crime’s Power* was published and 2017 when *The Truth about Crime* came out, anthropologists of crime have written a body of vibrant work (see, e.g., articles in *Political and Legal Anthropology Review*; *Crime, Media, Culture*; and *Theoretical Criminology*). I wish more of this work had been recognized in this book’s 40-page bibliography. And I wish that I could recognize the Comaroffs—not as renowned Harvard professors—but as ethnographers of violence talking to people in the streets and hamlets of South Africa and as traveling coauthors negotiating the truth about crime.

No one work can possibly begin to settle the matter of truth when it comes to crime. *The Truth about Crime* intentionally leaves the reader unsettled yet more knowledgeable. This book is a coauthored performance drawing on prodigious data collections, textual analyses, and historical and cultural insights. Readers will discover a wide-ranging and unusual view of South Africa today as a national staging ground for the global circulation of crime’s productive powers of expression and exploitation. In it, the Comaroffs make a substantial contribution to the anthropology of crime.

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Too Fast, Too Laborious?

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Accelerating Academia: The Changing Structure of Academic Time. By Filip Vostal. New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2016.

Vostal's *Accelerating Academia: The Changing Structure of Academic Time* claims to contribute to the study of acceleration in the academy in two ways. It places acceleration within broader theoretical analyses of speed in modernity, and its interviews show that, contrary to common perceptions, speed is not necessarily experienced negatively by academics. In the former, he succeeds brilliantly. Vostal's work positions the speed experienced by academics within an intellectual tradition—almost exclusively drawn from the twentieth century—more so than the mostly idiographic studies that are intellectually ahistorical. However, his claim, countering the literature on acceleration in the academy and which runs against many of our daily experiences, is supported by limited data.

Regardless of the strength of his second assertion, *Accelerating Academia* can benefit even the most skeptical reader as a type of therapy in which the horrors of our professional experience—email, metrics, bureaucracy, marketing jargon, and so on—are explained within the larger cosmos that created them. This does not make them less real, but in their demystification, they lose some of the psychic intensity that transforms bad things into supernatural monsters. This therapy is especially effective for academics because they have devoted their careers to conceptually understanding things. This passion for knowledge can become a coping mechanism for some of us.

The first chapter explores and clarifies the concept of “acceleration.” As the book should be read by academics who are trying to understand the unpleasant conditions of their professional lives and not specialists in acceleration studies, this chapter is necessary for setting up the rest of the book and is enlightening in itself. One does finish the chapter with a sense of a unifying theory of acceleration in society but also with a series of insights. The nonexpert reader will learn how “speed” is not “acceleration” and that rates of change have been blamed for devaluing experience over several centuries. Not surprisingly, acceleration has often been attributed to technological changes in information communication technology, but such generative changes took place within other developments within Western society. Key figures in acceleration studies, such as Harmut Rosa, illustrate its connection with economic and so-

cial ideologies, particularly capitalism, in becoming a defining aspect of modernity.

The connection between speed and capitalism is further developed throughout chapter two. Academic debates between Hobsbawm, Harvey, and Tomlinson are woven through the social analysis of Marx and the capitalistic doctrines of Ford and Taylor—an ambitious project held together and made accessible by Vostal's focus on their work's relationship to acceleration in modernity. Following the structure and superstructure dichotomy within Marxism, the chapter turns to the qualitative changes in life as observed by intellectuals and artists in the twentieth century. From Benjamin to Chaplin, uneasiness and, in many cases, dread arose from experiences with the speed of machines and capitalism. One of the major exceptions was the Futurist movement, which is briefly discussed. Given its significance as a cultural celebration of acceleration and Vostal's later argument for the perceived benefits of speed, further elaboration could have linked and contrasted contemporary academic acceptances of speed.

The association of speed with the academy and postindustrial economies has been partially understood through the development of knowledge economies and the discourses around them. This also constitutes one of the shifts from nineteenth- and early twentieth-century notions of speed to the academic experience of it. Chapter three examines this change and how the narrative of knowledge, science, and industry was produced by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. This institutional history provides one glimpse into the origin of the knowledge economy, but Vostal is careful to also trace changes in the conditions of knowledge within the larger intellectual community. In his petite archaeology of knowledge, Vostal again takes an expansive array of philosophical and social thought in the twentieth century and produces an engaging and readable summary around the theme of acceleration.

For readers who want to understand the most vacuous part of the new university, the rhetoric of “excellence,” chapter four will likely prove the most therapeutic. Terms such as “engage,” “apply,” “boost,” “launch,” “catch up,” “best practice,” “world-class,” and “leadership” are put into the new university's semiotic matrix. Foucault, actor-network theory, and cultural political economy are used to show how this rhetoric is more than epiphenomenal but affects the lives and work of academics. These constellations of values stem from systems outside of the academy. Vostal focuses on the speeches and rationale of major and minor governmental figures in the United Kingdom as examples; the degree to which this public-academic connection can be expanded beyond its borders is unclear.

Chapters six and seven turn to speed and acceleration within the contemporary academy. Vostal's literature review concludes that most studies of speed in the academy show that it has negative consequences for the quality and integrity of intellectual work and the lives of academics. A key assertion is that although individuals may critique acceleration, it does not mean that it is rejected as a lifestyle. Interviews with twenty