Zoë Crossland and Rosemary A. Joyce (eds), *Disturbing Bodies: Perspectives on Forensic Anthropology* (Santa Fe, School for Advanced Research Press, 2015, 234 pp., \$39.95 paperback).

Forensic anthropology has sustained remarkable academic growth in recent years. Advances can be measured in new methodology, more rigorous research designs, strong student interest and new applications. The traditional focus on skeletal analysis of recovered remains and reports on individual criminal cases has expanded dramatically to include search and recovery projects following mass disasters and humanitarian and human rights investigations. The field has attracted professionals in human skeletal biology and archaeology who want to use their science to contribute in positive ways to the legal process. Interest in forensic anthropology is also registered among those in related fields who are concerned with the impact and context of this work.

Disturbing Bodies: Perspectives on Forensic Anthropology presents a collection of ten essays from colleagues with highly variable training and experience but who share a strong interest in the ethics, theoretical orientation and context involved in the practice of forensic anthropology. The volume follows from a School for Advanced Research advanced seminar conducted during March 2012 in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The seminar brought together anthropologists engaged in forensic applications with others who have an interest in this aspect of the legal arena. Essays reflect the diverse nature of the field, including perspective on humanitarian and human rights investigations, issues related to standardisation (or lack thereof), ethics of practice, complexities in establishing the biological profile and assessing collections. The volume does not address detail of methodology but, rather, provides meaningful discussion of the social and academic context of forensic anthropology activity. One thoughtful chapter focuses specifically on the impact of mass media representations of forensic anthropology, including fiction, non-fiction and the hybrids that have emerged in print and on television.

The book provides abundant perspective and stimulating discussion on the myriad of issues relating to forensic anthropology. The diverse opinions and experiences related reveal the complexity of this field and its context. While some

standardisation is apparent in methodology and training, the global applications are very diverse, both in the problems addressed and in their social, political and legal contexts. Some casework is done in the laboratory, with an informational firewall constructed to isolate the practitioner from other aspects of investigation that might taint objectivity. Cognitive bias is a central issue in the forensic sciences today, with many laboratories and procedural initiatives attempting to limit outside influences. In contrast, workers in some world regions and socio-political situations are immersed in case context, including active participation and input from the public, especially impacted families. Professional ethics rest at the heart of these discussions. While the chapters of this book do not provide clear-cut answers or guidelines to many of the questions raised, they do stimulate important thought-provoking discussion. All should agree that it is important that those engaged in the practice of forensic anthropology thoughtfully consider the issues raised. As noted in the chapter by Argentine anthropologist Luis Fondebrider, all who undertake international work in a country other than their own need to familiarise themselves with the cultural/historical/political context. While forensic anthropologists likely will vary in the extent to which they incorporate that context in their work, they at least need to be cognisant of it and to understand its ramifications. The proper ethical conduct of the forensic anthropologist in casework must consider context and defined roles within complex investigation efforts. While these roles may be shaped by others with larger organisational responsibilities, ultimately all forensic scientists must follow personal professional ethics in doing their work.

I recommend *Disturbing Bodies: Perspectives on Forensic Anthropology* to all those engaged in the practice of forensic anthropology and those with interest in this endeavour. Clearly, discussions on the key issues did not terminate with the end of the Santa Fe conference in 2012. This book extends those discussions to the general professional audience. I congratulate the editors of this volume, Zoë Crossland and Rosemary A. Joyce, for their effort and look forward to additional stimulating conversation that the volume likely will generate.

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Richard C. Keller, *Fatal Isolation: The Devastating Paris Heat Wave of 2003* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2015, 244 pp., \$35.00 paperback).

What can a historical researcher looking in from the outside tell us about an event in France that was simultaneously a natural catastrophe and a healthcare crisis? Richard C. Keller recalls how these contexts remain acid tests for the political field and reveal economic and social fractures peculiar to any society which are also characterised by blind-spot vision.

Referring to two initial anthropological observations, the work opens with a detailed description of the way in which the heat-wave was handled by the French authorities. In a context of this kind it is typical to try not to alarm the public, even if that means denying the facts. In this instance that involved under-estimating the

Book Reviews

number of deaths caused by the unprecedented temperature highs in Paris – even as citizens found themselves thrust into an unspeakable situation: confronted by a great number of bodies, some of which had burst open or started to rot. It then becomes a matter of allocating blame – in this case, to the selfishness of the French who had forgotten and abandoned their family members or elderly neighbours.

The remaining chapters of the book then aim to reveal the limits of official discourse. That of the health minister, for example, when he emphasised that deaths among the elderly population were unavoidable. However, Keller also analyses the work of constructing the event, including in the media. He does this through reference to another collective tendency: simplifying the complexity of causality so as to exonerate oneself from any responsibility. And the fact that he chooses to focus his research on the minority whose bodies were not claimed is interesting for two reasons. Most of them lived a very precarious existence in Haussmann garret rooms, which contributed to their social isolation and the ‘deadly charm’ of which (p. 86), particularly for the elderly, has been recognised since the 1950s. When neighbours were questioned, they retrospectively presented these victims as in many ways responsible for their own deaths, or even as ‘collateral damage’ (p. 175): as ‘false victims’ of the heat-wave, especially when they were young, refused help when they were alive, consumed alcohol or were already in poor mental health. This also applies to friends and families who at the time felt a sense of loss and guilt: the anecdotes about the dead continue to operate as an expiatory defence, despite the passage of time.

In his last chapter and epilogue, Keller finally moves from a ‘microgeography of vulnerability in Paris’ to broader analyses, explaining how and why the apparatuses that have been put in place since the heat-wave once again side-line those most at risk. At the same time as noting the partial urban renewal and a more technological public response, the author dwells on the strategic bias or blind spots of quantitative approaches (demographic or epidemiological), before raising a central cultural problem. The forgetting of the most vulnerable – thereby increasing the risk of mortality and morbidity – is encouraged in France by the Republican universalist model of integration: they are effectively considered as marginal, judged impossible to assimilate (something the author could have dwelt on,¹ rather than the negative representations of old age).

So, what Keller gives us here is less the memory and history of these people than what the heat-wave exposed in society: the continuation, since the middle of the nineteenth century, of social inequalities with respect to death, especially in the capital, and the limits of French citizenship, which is to say, the tendency to invert cause and effect in health matters, depending on where in society the individual is situated. In this sense, the underlying message of this book seems to be the social inequalities of mortality² and, more precisely, the cultural and political obstacles to thinking of health in terms of social inequalities. While in 2003 the (elderly) isolated poor died in greater numbers and suffered the most in the heat-wave, since then, the difference in mortality rates at either end of the social spectrum has remained at a particularly high level in France when compared with its European neighbours. This is attributable to overlapping causes, identical to those we find

throughout Keller's book: poor living conditions, situations of familial breakdown and relational isolation, the loss of social and emotional resources – which can be reinforced by values of autonomy or endurance and the incorporation of subjugation.

Because the author also draws on transnational comparative approaches, his book invites us to go beyond the French context. We might set off, for example, from the following observation: in 2013, most European governments were still not tackling 'systematically the problem of inequalities' and, although 'environmental dangers are a significant factor in health', environmental policies have been slow to get going.³ On the other hand, in Europe as in North America, there is now a tendency to make individuals responsible for their own health, particularly those who do not conform to health norms, rather than delegating this responsibility to their close relatives (as is now the case every summer in France) and/or charitable organisations.

With respect to the unequal (judgements of) value attributed to the early deaths (and so to the lives) of the poorest and most isolated, the reader can continue writing the book's epilogue: how do the thousands of migrant deaths by drowning in the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean sit in the collective imagination? And how about the treatment of other nameless bodies exhibited in the media, like in American movies?⁴ They produce the same effects: vomiting, indignation and then forgetting. In other words, when we 'die to our humanity, while remaining biologically alive', in sociologist Aurelien Cintract's words, the mechanisms by which violence is obscured – in ourselves as well as in our institutions – remain to be examined.⁵

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Notes

- 1 On this subject see D. Lapeyronnie, 'Le social ignoré ou le point aveugle de la République', in S. Beaud, J. Confavreux and J. Linaard (eds) *La France des invisibles* (Paris, La Découverte/poche, 2006), 521–31.
- 2 On this subject see P. Frédéric, and F. Didier, 'L'espace politique de la santé. Essai de généalogie', *Politix* 15:59 (2002), 197–207.
- 3 *Santé 2020, 2013, Cadre politique et stratégie*, OMS, Bureau régional de l'Europe (2013), 178 and 60.
- 4 For example, D. Villeneuve (dir.), *Sicario* (2015).
- 5 A. Cintract, 'L'inégalité devant la mort : approche socio-anthropologique de la mortalité différentielle en France' (Université de Franche-Comté, 2013), <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-00942716/document>, p. 184.

Book Reviews

Benjamin Madley, *An American Genocide: The United States and the California Indian Catastrophe, 1846–1873* (New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 2016, 692 pp., \$38.00, hardback).

Early twentieth-century California was the site of the excavation of thousands of Native American gravesites, a plunder of artefacts and human remains that benefited museums around the world and provided anthropologists with what they hoped would be evidence for the superiority of European civilisations and inferiority of lesser races, ‘predestined to extinction’. The ease and speed with which this happened was facilitated by genocide.

Sad to say, some of my fellow academic historians are ambivalent about whether or not the catastrophic experiences of California Indians during the nineteenth century meet United Nations legal standards of genocide: ‘acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group’. Benjamin Madley, an Assistant Professor of History at University of California Los Angeles, responds to this challenge as a prosecutor might, building his case on a mountain of evidence until the verdict is undeniable: what happened in California during the thirty years that followed statehood was a genocide ‘more lethal and sustained than anywhere else in the United States or its colonial antecedents’ (p. 358).

You need a strong stomach to get through *An American Genocide*, as it relentlessly excavates atrocities and cruelties from the historical record, piling high the corpses until they are made visible even to those who choose amnesia over remembrance. For doubters, more than one-third of the book consists of appendices that document every known massacre and military expedition against California Indians. Madley’s extraordinarily comprehensive research leaves no source unexplored: state and federal archives, legislative reports, memoirs and manuscripts, and library collections. This is the definitive account of California’s genocide on which all future studies will be based.

Keeping an optimistic heart about human nature while reading this book requires considerable effort. Madley persuasively illustrates how California’s best and brightest government officials, legislators, political leaders, judges and businessmen were active and enthusiastic architects of genocide. Governors authorised twenty-four state militias to operate as a ‘killing machine’ (p. 354); and when militias ended their involvement in the slaughter, the US Army became a ‘major killing force’ (p. 14). Law makers transformed California Indians into easy targets by reducing them to rightless subjects; made the prosecution of anti-Indian crimes almost impossible; and refused to ratify federal treaties. And the legislature colluded with landowners and ranchers to sell thousands of surviving California Indians into ‘state-sponsored servitude’ (p. 159).

An American Genocide sets the record straight on the perpetrators who engaged in ‘direct killing’ (p. 11). But there is a great deal more work to be done. ‘That California Indians survived is remarkable’, briefly notes Madley in his conclusion (p. 348), but the story of guerrilla warfare, strategies of resistance and endurance, and political–legal struggles by California Indians remains to be written.

Moreover, I wonder if Madley’s chronology from 1846 to 1873 is too constricting.

While he recognises what happened prior to American colonisation under Spanish, Russian and Mexican rule as 'harrowing and catastrophic' (p. 40), he sees this period as a *prelude* to genocide. Here Madley, at least implicitly, endorses the widely held view that attributes the decline of California Indians under Spanish and Mexican rule to diseases that shredded Native immune systems throughout the Americas; and the decline under American rule to human agency and policies of extermination. I prefer to understand the epidemic of premature death resulting from disease and malice as interrelated, just as Holocaust scholars regard the estimated 20 per cent of Jews who died in the camps from malnutrition and exhaustion as victims of genocide.

Also, I would extend California's genocide beyond 1873 and well into the twentieth century, as social death supplanted the killing fields with land grabs, economic and sexual exploitation, efforts at cultural annihilation through boarding schools, desecration of gravesites and perpetuation of myths about 'disappearing Indians'. Unlike the leaders of the Nazi regime who were defeated at the end of the Second World War and convicted in Nuremberg, the leaders of California's genocide were rewarded for their crimes, enshrined as founding fathers and applauded for bringing Progress to the Golden State.

Readers of *Human Remains and Violence* will not be surprised by this book's conclusion: 'Genocidal acts perpetrated against California Indians indicate a broad-base, state-supported project aimed at their physical annihilation' (p. 178). Yet, we very much need this account of California's genocide, as it will make it much harder for deniers and amnesiacs to dominate the state's public history.

Well into the twentieth century, architects of the California Story built a cultural firewall that insulated generations of young people from the horrors of the bloody past. Instead, students were drilled in a catechism that portrayed Native peoples as biologically inferior and complicit in their own demise. A widely used, state-authorised textbook for elementary schools (William White's *Our California*, 2006) side-steps the challenge of teaching the history of genocide by pretending it never happened. In 2012, when I attended the Third Global Conference on Genocide in San Francisco, during three days of panels and presentations my talk was the only one that included California as a site of genocide.

Not surprisingly, California's public history echoes public education's amnesia. There are no official, civic memorials to the victims of mass injustice, such as the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin, Memory Park in Buenos Aires or the African Burial Ground National Monument in New York; nor educational centres devoted to learning about the motivation, psychology and organisation of perpetrators, such as Berlin's Topography of Terror.

California continues to be shaped, culturally and socially, by bitter legacies and divisions. Doing justice to the past means speaking the unspeakable, rehearsing the bad, making human-made tragedies a matter of public recognition, creating histories that speak to all the diverse populations of the region and recognising that the United States is not exceptional but one among many nations, that we too – just like a Germany, a Rwanda, a Cambodia – need to come to terms with our sorrowful past.

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Book Reviews

Béatrix Pau, *Le Ballet des morts. État, armée, famille: s'occuper des corps de la Grande Guerre* (Paris, Vuibert, 2016, 362 pp., €21.00, paperback).

Béatrix Pau's doctoral thesis, now turned into a monograph, addresses a topic which has so far remained largely overlooked,¹ namely, and in her own words, the 'demobilisation of the dead' (*la démobilisation des morts*); that is, the exhumation, identification, placement in coffin, transport and re-inhumation of French soldiers who died for their country, on French soil or abroad, for an honourable burial and for their families to mourn and get some sense of closure. This vast operation began in the very first months of the First World War and lasted until 1924. It allowed for the restitution of approximately 250,000 to 300,000 corpses (soldiers, members of the navy, civilians), which is to say between 25 and 30 per cent of all losses. As a minimum, it is estimated that the financial cost for this operation as borne by the French State was 26 million francs.

After favouring collective graves when the war broke out – even if officers could benefit from individual graves – July 1915 saw the French state starting to care for its dead and their identification. The great headquarters (*grand quartier général*; GQG) recommended the abandonment of collective graves in favour of individual ones or trenches of ten, not only to avoid the co-mingling of bones but also for sanitary and economic reasons. With the law of 29 December 1915, the French State granted a permanent gravesite (*sépulture perpétuelle*) to French and allied soldiers who died during the war, thereby de facto excluding enemy soldiers. The French state thus acted in place of the bereaved families, both during and after the war. In spite of this effort, the identification of the dead and of the first graves remained a difficult enterprise. The violence of the conflict, the extreme weather conditions, the presence of animals (such as wild boar on the Western front or jackals in the East), as well as the resort back to the 'war of movements' in the spring of 1918, all heavily contributed to damaging, erasing or removing traces of burial sites. Further, in the very aftermath of the war, farmers rapidly returned to cultivating their land. The transport of coffins, the travels of families who wanted to attend the exhumations for re-inhumations, epistolary correspondence or even the dubious trade of dead traffickers all generate an intense '*ballet*', which is at the core of this book.

Comprising sixteen chapters, this study relies on numerous archives: Archives nationales, Service historique de la défense, Secrétariat des anciens combattants et des victimes civiles, Archives départementales et municipales, private funds, periodicals and certain Italian sources. It follows a chronological structure to take the reader on the path of this 'demobilisation of the dead', from the facing of losses by families, whether following the announcement of the 'messengers of death' or the receipt of a simple note with the place and date of death, through to official or clandestine exhumations, to the hazards of transportation and of the logistics put in place by the state or by private firms, and finally to the warriors' final rest accompanied – in the best of cases – by an official or private ceremony. Once the corpse was returned to the family, the state considered the responsibility of maintaining the grave to be that of the family, itself bearing responsibility for only military necropolis *ad vitam aeternam*.

Beatrix Pau, by putting greater emphasis on numerous extracts from documents and testimonies, presents a very clear and vivid picture of the regulations which have been gradually put in place by the French government and the military authorities, of the practices adopted by the families and the private sector and, more generally, of the materiality of the soldier's death and of the iconic status acquired by his personal belongings (letters, wallet, military book, medals, artefacts) if they have remained safe from pillage. One criticism which could be made is the lack of comparison – even if succinct, considering the extent of such work – with the policies and regulations adopted by the other belligerents during the First World War, and notably the United Kingdom and Germany, as well as during of the Second World War. The different research works which address the issue of the fate of corpses after mass deaths (genocide, gulag, ethnic cleansing, political terror)² could also have been used as interesting points of comparison, or at least as useful differing perspectives, even if the context and impact of the deaths differ significantly. Indeed, in occurrences of mass violence the aims of the political and military authorities are to make the corpses disappear, to erase all traces and to ultimately make mourning impossible. Still, this criticism does not in any way alter the quality of this monograph.

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Notes

- 1 See in this respect the pioneering research by J. Ch. Jauffret, 'La question du transfert des corps, 1915-1934', in S. Caucans and R. Cazals (eds), *Traces 14-18* (Carcassonne: Les Audois, 1997), pp. 133-46.
- 2 We here refer to the works of Elisabeth Anstett and Jean-Marc Dreyfus, notably *Cadavres impensables, cadavres impensés. Approches méthodologiques du traitement des corps dans les violences de masse et les génocides* (Paris: éditions Pétra, 2012).