

**Annabelle Sabloff. *Reordering the Natural World: Humans and Animals in the City*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001. Pp. xiv, 252. Photographs. \$55.00 hard, \$22.95 paper**

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ages of modern living and as participants in national financial networks, and in the following contribution, David D. Buck uncovers an uncelebrated legacy of Japanese “high modernist” urban development in the northeastern city of Changchun, formerly the capital of Manchukuo. Next, Kristin Stapleton focuses on a year (beginning in 1924) in the life of Chengdu, capital of Sichuan, during which a controversial militarist leader, enamoured of everything “new,” promoted ambitious urban reforms and achieved mixed results. Though each of the contributions is wonderfully illustrative, serious attention to the theme of modernism is fitful in Part One.

In Part Two, “Tradition and Modernity,” three contributions fit together cohesively to reveal how conscious constructions of modern urbanity could be in various locations. In Hangzhou, as Liping Wang makes clear, a lakeside “garden-city” was promoted as a tourist attraction for visitors, mainly from Shanghai. Tourists were encouraged to believe that appreciation of the West Lake was a well-established practice of Hangzhou’s local elite, despite the fact that a massive wall long separating city from lake had just recently been demolished. Madeleine Yue Dong next recounts how in Beijing—the name for Beijing during the period when it was not the national capital—China’s dynastic heritage was recycled in forms, such as public parks in sites where Emperors had performed ritual ceremonies that were consumable by visitors for their pleasure and as instruction for citizens. Meanwhile in Nanjing, as Charles Musgrove shows, planners aimed to strengthen the nation by building an impressively “international” modern capital during the 1927–1937 decade. Despite progressive planning of the new capital, however, old habits were difficult to shake off, as when protective walls and gates were added to enclose new government buildings that had been designed to unite state and society spatially through rows of large windows.

Two temporary national capitals are treated in Part Three, “City and Nation.” Stephen MacKinnon is succinctly authoritative on the sprawling tri-city of Wuhan, focussing on the moment in 1938 when the city, it seemed, housed the vanguard of left-leaning nationalism and showcased how effectively such talent could defend China against the Japanese invasion. In her treatment of the more isolated western city of Chongqing, wartime capital from 1938 to 1945, Lee McIsaac captures the atmosphere of an interior centre suddenly flooded with refugees and bustling with government functionaries. The purpose of her discussion is to argue that an opposition between civilized sojourners from “downriver” (especially Shanghai) and the uncouth natives of the western hinterland was constructed and became embedded as a permanent part of Chinese national ideology.

Like the remarkably self-sufficient locations in China to which they refer, the ten contributions mentioned above are strong enough to stand alone, requiring little attention to the broad sweep of Chinese or urban history. However, three additional contributors enhance the volume, integrating the treatments of individual cities by relating them to the title themes of nationalism and modernity. In his introductory chapter, Joseph Esherick outlines the significance of these themes and offers a typology distinguishing seven types of city—namely treaty port, capital,

interior, tourist, railway, industrial, and frontier. In Chapter 12, Jeffrey Wasserstrom discusses at length how to fit Shanghai, both anomalous and representative, into analysis of Chinese history and modernity, stressing that it is difficult to avoid the city’s importance in scholarship, literature, and film, as a “represented object.” Finally, a concluding commentary by David Strand closes the book with its most intriguing point about how urban modernism has shaped Chinese history: China’s communist leaders, known for their “rural” revolutionary origins, were inspired by a vision of urban modernity that could soon be realized in every village in the nation.

With this excellent volume for guidance, there are two directions for researchers to choose in exploring Chinese urban history. For some, the next step might be to recognize that each city has its own peculiar history, so choosing immersion in locally specific sources without assuming a heavy burden of national-level history. Others might choose to develop further the questions about Chinese urban modernity raised in *Remaking the Chinese City* by paying closer attention to the lives and thoughts of individual citizens.

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This erudite study hunts for metaphors that will help realign human thinking and behaviour toward nature so as to overcome our hubris as the dominant ones in the great chain of being. Her pursuit is not altogether successful—the metaphors are still “missing”—though Edward O. Wilson’s term “biophilia” comes close. But Sabloff believes there is hope to overcome the “Great Divide” through social and physical studies, especially anthropology—owing to past work on the significance of totems—if we were to take the step of recognizing that human beings are only one of the species, that we are inside nature. That, I think, is what her work is about.

We should be concerned to align ourselves with nature because of “... the threat of collapse of some the planet’s major ecosystems through human activity”. Our western urban culture has given rise to a “poverty of discourse” on relating to nature. Therefore we “seem unable to arrive at a world-view, not to mention a practice, that can encompass both human desire and the earth’s needs” (p. 9, 11). The task is urgent.

We deal with animals in three different fashions: as pets, as food and clothing, and as objects to be saved, or put more eloquently, “companion animals like coddled children, livestock farming operations structured like assembly lines [and] animal rights promoted as a struggle for the rights of citizenship” (p. 13). The first two clearly suggest human dominance over nature, the latter perhaps an indication of more positive attitude. Many human beings enjoy pets with whom they converse. Dogs are

trained to fit into the human world of work and pleasure. Besides, pet shops have no trouble selling them as commodities. As for food production, only a few people—vegetarians—deny themselves meat. A few more may decry assembly-line output and ask for “free-range” chickens and the like. But the vast majority of human beings have no qualms about industrially raised and slaughtered beasts.

As for the third way we deal with animals, societies advocating the prevention of cruelty to animals, groups demonstrating against seal hunts or decrying the penning of dolphins and orcas for amusement, and still others protesting inhumane treatment of laboratory animals receive media attention, usually, of course, when they dramatize conditions. (Zoos are not discussed). Perhaps these concerns reflect a society that can now afford to be nice to animals, compared, say, to the early settlers who saw wild beasts as competitors on the land and as threats to human survival.

I do not think the author has gone far enough in space and time, however. The western city as such is not the problem and our culture runs historically much deeper than western capitalism about which she often decries as the culprit. First, the ten proffered photos of sculptures of animals and people in Toronto are interesting. Yet the bronze cows resting in the Toronto-Dominion Plaza in Toronto are only a step away, as it were, from the cows chewing their cud in a fenced pasture. Such a pastoral scene is also an artifact of human invention. Also consider that before there was a Jerusalem, the ancient Israelites, while still camping en route to the promised land, brought down Yahweh's wrath by worshipping the golden calf image. So the city is secondary, and no more of an artifact than much of the work of agricultural people in the past. In fact, their work through the ages has contributed to the making of the modern city.

The author thus has a problem of continuity. Why blame capitalism? As we know our predecessors in early post-glacial North America quickly hunted to extinction several of the megafauna of the period. Paleolithic people domesticated dogs capable of obedience. Neolithic folk domesticated cattle and a few other animals that can be herded owing to their hierarchical social structure, and also domesticated plants.

What we have seen over the past almost half a millenium does not represent a clear cultural separation from earlier periods but an *intensification* of economic activity. Through technological improvements, aided greatly by the burning of inanimate fossil fuels, modern societies, at least in the rich world, have raised the exploitive ante a notch higher than that of earlier times. So the assembly, or rather more precisely disassembly, lines in abattoirs are speedier and more refined. Besides, capitalists are hardly a new phenomenon; think of the Medicis or investors reported in biblical stories.

Does the rising tide of concern about liberating animals from human constraints signify a new grand era in world history? I would not hold one's breath. The odds favouring widespread meatless dining are virtually minuscule, that is unless people kill off all the beasts and are forced to forage for plants. Nor will people treat pets as equal citizens; we will eat them, too, if des-

perate. Human beings have indeed put enormous stress on habitats. But I doubt whether we as the dominant species possess enough virtue to follow what Annabelle Sabloff advocates.

Besides, if humans are so stupid as to foul our nest so mightily as to ensure our demise as a species, and if we take with us the squirrels, raccoons, skunks, mice, rats, even cockroaches and the like with which (whom?) we cohabit in the city, the bacteria will likely still survive beyond what has been referred to as the “fifth great extinction”.

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André Raymond. *Cairo*, trans. by Willard Wood (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 2000. Pp. 436. Illus., maps, photos, bibliography and index. (Originally published by Fayard in Paris, 1993, as *Le Caire*.)

André Raymond, distinguished scholar of Arab pre-modern cities, has published in *Cairo* a remarkable portrait of one of the most storied cities of mankind. Mummies, pharaohs and pyramids most often spring to mind when the word Cairo is uttered. For Raymond, Cairo, (for *Qahirah*, the city of the tenth century Fatimids), evokes the Citadel, the Ibn Tulun mosque, or the hospital of Mamluk Sultan Qalawun. His is the Muslim city, beginning with its foundation in 642 as Fustat, the garrison capitol of the original Arab conquerors. Raymond has spent more than two decades in the study of the great Arab cities of the Middle East, first with his major work on the crafts and tradesmen of pre-modern Cairo (*Artisans et commerçants au Caire au XVIIIe siècle*, published in Damascus in 1973–74). A second important work, *The Great Arab Cities in the 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries: An Introduction*, was published in New York in 1984. Both titles have had a tremendous influence on the way urban and social historians have viewed and written about the “traditional” Muslim city.

Apart from the impeccable credentials of its author, and an immensely readable translation by Willard Wood, this is a work that has also been given very handsome treatment by the press. Each of the four parts is illustrated with period drawings and photographs and black-and-white urban plans of the city for the period under discussion. Thus, it is possible to observe the evolution of the city as represented in contemporary histories (mostly Arabic before Napoleon's invasion in 1798), and as excavated or plotted in more recent times, when that has been possible.

Raymond chose to organize the history chronologically, which in the Cairo example, means a division by the major dynastic influences on the city. Part One: Foundations (642–1250) starts with the Arab conquest and ends with the crusades. Part Two: Medieval Cairo (1250–1517) encompasses the era of the Mamluks. Part Three: The Traditional City (1517–1798) treats the Ottoman period, which Raymond acknowledges has “long been spoken of as a foreign rule, tyrannical and obscurantist, responsible for the decline of Egypt and Cairo” (p. 189). His will be a different