paradoxical and complex amalgams of certainty and uncertainty that shape people's perceptions, understandings, and practical responses to death and dying, as articulated thus: "Sure as death." This idiom refers to the quality of inevitability of a certain phenomenon. In this sense, certainly, death is a sure thing. However, beside the fact that as humans we all share the condition of a limited lifespan, beyond the datum of inescapable annihilation at some point in our lives, death remains distressingly ambiguous.

Here is liminality writ large and it comes as no surprise that Victor Turner emerges as a key figure throughout many of the chapters. Divided into three parts: Part I: Rituals; Part II: Concepts; Part III: Imageries, the book seeks to navigate the ethnographic, theoretical, and imaginative properties of liminality and its relationship to death and dying. Beginning with Eric de Maaker, a number of the book's chapters attend to the symbolic and material presence of the corpse in all its visible and sensorial dimensions, not least the problem of impurity and the dramatic challenge to society and religion posed by the body after death. Building on his classic ethnographic case study, "Dialogues with the Dead" (Cambridge 1993), Piers Vitebsky describes the mutually constitutive worlds of the living and the dead among Sora people in India. The dead remain active agents in the lives of the living, while the living experience something of the pain of death through illness so as to create shared forms of liminality and communitas. For Pieter Nanninga, the condition of liminality becomes attached to the figure of the suicide bomber or martyr who in many instances leaves behind no corpse and as such there is no body for ritual burial. Instead, death rites and rituals are often conducted in advance and form part of the preparation for death. Afterwards, they are remembered as a perpetual and circulating presence in graffiti, posters, audiocassettes, photos, and videos. Antonius C. G. M. Robben, whose own edited collection "Death, Mourning, and Burial. A Cross-Cultural Reader" (Malden 2004), has become a key reference point in the anthropology of death, makes use of liminality in relation to state terror practices and to understand the enduring presence of "disappeared" political actors, activists, and others. Liminality, for Robben, is a condition of social indefinition in which social categories and identities are held in abeyance and challenged. Like "matter out of place" liminality produces ambiguous dead and ambiguous living who do not fit into existing sociopolitical classifications. Roland Hardenberg's chapter on Kyrgyz death rituals argues for an ethnographic approach to liminality based on three areas: namely, the emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions, in which the disruption caused by death is mediated through mourning, sacrifice, and the sharing of food.

The book ends with a series of historical and literary accounts. Nina Mirnig explores how Shaiva tantric death rites incorporate a tension between worldly and transcendental factors, and as indicated by the chapter's title asks a critical question concerning the status of departed persons as whether they are hungry ghosts or divine souls. Justin E. A. Kroesen and Jan R. Luth consider the afterlife, and define the period between a person's death and divine judgement as a highly liminal space, including the idea of purgatory and the idea of soul entering into a state of "deep sleep" or one of "vigilance and anxiety" in anticipation of the Second Coming. Jan N. Bremmer is likewise concerned with the fate of the soul and considers how the Ancient Greek understandings of the soul and the psyche are connected etymologically to the idea of breath. On death, soul and psyche leave the body and are "breathed out" so as to escape the body's demise and decay. Yme B. Kuiper's final chapter offers a fascinating and informative account of Guiseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's first and only book "The Leopard," which he started writing shortly before his death. Liminality for Kuiper can be understood in part in relation to the state of mind evoked by the crossing of temporal thresholds such as old age, incurable illness, or the approach of death. In di Lampedusa's case, a dull and calm life was transformed by becoming a writer late in life. His only novel was published posthumously and offers a fusion of fear, tragedy, playfulness, and humour, reminding us that the encounter with mortality is situational and takes place in many different moments: when drunk, listening to music, when confined to bed, during long walks, and in laughter.

It is in the same spirit that "Ultimate Ambiguities. Investigating Death and Liminality" seeks to challenge static accounts of death and dying, including those that presuppose notions of fear, dread, and anxiety, and instead focus on the personal, social, and existential repercussions of ambiguity and liminality. It is certainly possible to take issue with the claim in the introduction that liminality is a neglected or marginal subject in the literature of death and dying. Likewise the assertion, from the perspective of a collective "we," that death entails ambivalence or is best defined in terms of ultimate ambiguity does not always hold. In some situations death can be quite straightforward and does not provoke uncertainty, and sometimes it is life and its continuation that is more troubling. But these minor quibbles aside, the book offers an engaging and timely account of the complexity and diversity of death and dying. Andrew Irving

Berman, Nina: Germans on the Kenyan Coast. Land, Charity, and Romance. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017. 269 pp. ISBN 978-0-253-02430-5. Price: £ 29.99

Using the case study of Diani area in Kenya, Nina Berman's book, "Germans on the Kenyan Coast," allows readers to inhabit the world of small cosmopolitan town of Diani: a microcosm of Kenya's ethnically and religiously diverse population. It gives a foretaste of how local Digos interact with members of ethnic communities from upcountry and European residents, who live and work in the study area. Berman's findings primarily draw from seven years of ethnographic fieldwork as well as interviews with 150 individuals from different ethnic groupings, varying ages, and diverse religious and social groups. This longitudinal study challenges assumptions that circulate, both in and outside the academy, about the exploitative nature of interactions between local populations and foreigners,

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tourists and settlers, in light of the combined economic effect of romance and sex tourism in general.

Chapter 2 documents the history of land ownership; and describes socio-economic and demographic changes resulting from the massive tourism and real estate development in the region. This helps the reader to understand the nexus between migration, tourism, and global economic development. A timely example is how the Diani real estate market was shaped by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) "Structural Adjustment Programs" of the early 1990s. Berman reports that this policy forced villagers out of their traditional land as they were unaccustomed to a profit-oriented economy. This saw German entrepreneurs, settlers, and tourists of all shades of colour taking over Diani's real estate market. Within a short period, Diani metamorphosed from a conglomeration of communally-owned, self-sustaining villages into an urbanised area hallmarked by increased rates of poverty, crime, sex trade, drug-dealing, and human-trafficking.

Chapter 3 notes that the culture of charity shapes almost all aspects of local socio-economic relations in the area. With the use of detailed case studies, Berman dissects transnational humanitarian interactions in the region. She concurs with the previous researchers who have concluded that the effects of neoliberal charity are to blame for systematic degradation of indigenous systems of solidarity and self-help (121). Its paternalistic nature makes the locals to be passive rather than active players in their destiny. To address this anomaly, Berman advocates for strict guidelines on humanitarian operations from both the receiving and donating countries. She feels this is the only way to deal with "contraband" humanitarianism, which serves the needs of the giver, not the receiver.

Chapter 4 confirms that sex tourism is a thriving business in Kenya's coastal region. It is a showcase of how the locals use romantic relationships to address their limited economic options. Subsequently, the overall effects of these relationships is profound as they affect between ten to twenty members of each local family involved. Without any scientific explanation though, Berman curiously puts a figure of one to two million Kenyans as direct beneficiaries of such relations (17). The sex phenomenon, is however taking a different twist in Diani as romance tourism becomes the preferred vehicle for north-south migration by European retirees. Berman does a formidable job linking these romantic relations to the history of gentrification in Diani. Overall, she finds that Germans enter these relationships to "escape loneliness" (165) while Kenyans want to escape economic hardship. Thus, foreigners value love while locals value money. Nonetheless, she fails to scientifically support her assertion that the Germans (foreigners) are the push factor while the Kenyans (locals) are the pull factors. For, oftentimes tourists/settlers initiate such relationships – see for example page 131.

The book provides new insights into gentrification theory through its consideration of the long-term effects of tourism development in Diani. It successfully shows how poorer and less powerful members of the Digo community are "forced" to give way to the global neoliberal economic order. To this end, Berman reveals a winning-losing dichotomy in the competition over resources. Identifying three players: the local Digos, upcountry immigrants, and expatriates, she provides sufficient evidence to support her claim that indigenous Digo people have been subjected to a massive gentrification as they control only 20 percent of their traditional land. Berman creatively ties the inherent socioeconomic precarity to overdependency on global economy and the associated political-driven policies. Ironically, this precarity is now being addressed through humanitarian projects that are wholly funded and operated by expatriates. Berman's analysis, therefore, opens avenues for those interested in humanitarian education to explore questions such as: How does humanitarianism affect the receivers? Are these effects different in developed and less developed communities? Does humanitarianism lead to complacency?

Berman suggests that Diani's experience is similar to other tourism destinations in the world, discussed as second-home tourism, residential tourism, and time-share ownership. However, the book is more concerned with highlighting the connections and tensions between global, national, regional, and local humanitarian efforts and less concerned with detailing the ensuing catastrophic impact on the local people's identity. For the locals have a profound spiritual relationship with their land. Thus, loss of land is loss of identity and dignity. Nonetheless, "Germans on the Kenyan Coast" notes that the local people have designed two coping mechanisms: international humanitarianism and transitional romantic relationships.

Given its aim, the book most centrally contributes to social studies – successfully elucidates the ways in which locals cope with the fallout of (in)action at the (inter)national levels of politics and economy. It problematises the processes in tourism destinations throughout the global south, in particular with regards to the effects of colonialism, the role of humanitarian assistance and transnational romance. Berman laments the way that both the precolonial laws and the ensuing rule sowed the seed of gentrification of the Diani area. Tourism and the real estate development only precipitated this processes.

Thus, Berman contributes to tourism studies by illustrating how romance tourism converts a "win-lose" into a "win-win" situation. Towards this end, she focuses on three phases of transformation of Diani area: colonial period, independence era, and tourism age.

Further, Berman has succeeded in applying the concept of gentrification in Diani, a locality that espouses rural-urban characteristics. This is a major breakthrough as the majority of studies of gentrification focus on urban spaces.

Overall, "Germans on the Kenyan Coast" deepens our understanding of the effects of international socioeconomic and political processes on a tourism-oriented Kenya's coastal region. Its revelations of how the concerns of large constituencies are side-lined in favour of the interests of a few powerful voices are similar to other tourism destinations in the world. Foreign investors gang-up with local opinion shapers to rob local people their source of identity and dignity – land and inherent resources.

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However, the book also reminds us that some amiable interactions also develop between the visitors and the visited; locals and foreigners. Leading from the foregoing, therefore, Berman has succeed in demonstrating that Diani area like elsewhere in the Kenya's coastal region, is a case of "opportunities and oppression," of "resilience and exploitation." A story that helps us understand the complexities inherent in world socioeconomic and political transformations rooted deeply in the morbid colonial structures and fluid global capitalist system.

In conclusion, therefore, Berman has done a wonderful job of providing a balance between detailing observations and personal stories from the ethnographic fieldwork and offering academic analyses. Thus, this is a suitable book for undergraduate and graduate level courses in tourism studies, social development, migration, urban development, humanitarian studies, and qualitative methods. Additionally, this book will no doubt contribute to a rethinking of the need to balance the power in the core-periphery relationships. Wanjohi Kibicho

Bertelsen, Bjørn Enge: Violent Becomings. State Formation, Sociality, and Power in Mozambique. New York: Berghahn Books, 2016. 332 pp. ISBN 978-1-78533-236-4. (Ethnography, Theory, Experiment, 4) Price: $ 110.00

"Violent Becomings" is an extremely welcome and timely book on the ongoing violent Mozambican postcolonial state formation and its relations with *uroi* (sorcery) and "traditional" forms of sociality. It is welcome as it is rare to see monographs emerge on the central and northern parts of Mozambique that have not been controlled by the postcolonial "Frente de Libertação de Moçambique" (Frelimo) party-state. It is timely as it goes some way toward understanding the continued force and legitimacy of the postcolonial state's foe, "Resistência Nacional Moçambicana," not least after its renewed electoral success in 2014 and return to the bush to fight a low-intensity civil war from 2013–2016. The monograph is welcome and timely in yet another manner. "Violent Becomings" is an experimental attempt at theoretically renewing the conceptual language through which we understand processes of state formation – not as a thing or being with a clear end point, but as an ongoing emergent mode of societal ordering where different forms of violence are not at the fringe of the processes, but indeed central to emergence and becoming. This is obviously not the first attempt in social science and anthropology at creating a process language for societal formations. Most prominently, Norbert Elias comes to mind with his attempt to establish a process language that did not center on structure. Instead, he introduced his concept of social *figurations* – or what is today studied as networks and assemblages – which explains the emergence and function of large societal structures without abandoning the aspect of agency. Theoretically, Bertelsen aligns himself not with the British sociological tradition of process thinking, except for some referencing to the Manchester School of Gluckman and Kapferer, but to the French philosophical tradition of chiefly Deleuze's work on *agencement*, emphasising the constant processes of arranging, organizing, and fitting together. As such, the book, in Bertelsen's own words (14), attempts to "capture ongoing and changing empirical configurations of the traditional field and state formation with the term *becoming* – a term underscoring their dynamic and manifold aspects not retained by the (static) *being* (Deleuze and Guattari 2002 [1980])."

Maybe the biggest achievement of the book is how it takes on this process language and stays true to it, particularly in chap. 3 (titled: Spirit. Chiefly Authority, Soil, and Medium); chap. 4 (Body. Illness, Memory, and the Dynamics of Healing), and chap. 5 (Sovereignty. The Mozambican President and the Ordering of Sorcery). The same is true for chap. 6 (Economy. Substance, Production, and Accumulation) although a little less so. The key here is to understand that conceptual figurations like *uroi* (*feitiço*/sorcery, witchcraft, or black magic), *aridzi wo nhika* (owners of the land/territory), *dzindza* (kin group, enlarged family), and many other conceptual formations, or more generally, "traditional" forms of sociality are never something in themselves but first give meaning and become developed within the complex of such conceptual figurations. Here the Deleuzian inspiration is strongest, pointing to the specific connections with and between other concepts, where it is the arrangement of these connections that gives concepts like *uroi* their specific sense. The above-mentioned key empirical chapters are where this particular approach comes to fruition as concepts, descriptions, and stories never operate in isolation but reveal their full meanings only in connection with other concepts, descriptions, and stories. This "unstable while still telling" ethnographic approach is like unfinished business – and, as with all good business, it is both creative and destructive, and operates in often-unpredictable ways. Violence in this reading is creative destruction – always already in the process of becoming, instead of being common instrumentalised ways of conceiving of violence, state building, and democratic engagement.

In praising "Violent Becomings" I have also hinted that there are chapters I think work less well, in part because they try to fix, and because they are scholarly on terms other than the way ethnography operates. The framing of chap. 1 (Violence. War, State, and Anthropology in Mozambique) and chap. 2 (Territory. Spatio-Historical Approaches to State Formation), as well as chap. 7 (Law. Political Authority and Multiple Sovereignties), end up doing exactly the opposite of the core ethnographic chapters, as meaning and conceptual figurations become fixed and repeated endlessly as some*thing*. In the framing exercise Bertelsen (39) sets up, Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis (1986, 2002 [1980]) on the "war machine" as "rhizomic" (as a case in point for Renamo and the traditional more broadly) is in contrast to the "territorialization" of a Frelimo party-state that tries to expand its control of territory and people as "'[o]ne of the fundamental tasks of the State is to striate the space over which it reigns' (Deleuze and Guattari 2002 [1980]: 385)." While probably a handy organising approach, it is somehow at odds with the ethnographic folding undertaken in the key chapters where

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