

process though which the world and people are co-constituted in a bidirectional spiral of mutual becoming.

This position is compatible with Wiley's idea that a variety of influences come together to shape the self, yet it is the dialogical process itself that matters—if the dialogical process is expansively understood as a productive world-forming and history-making process beyond, though encompassing, dialogues. To conclude, Wiley's major contribution is perhaps in his broad orientation to theorizing inclusive of various approaches, dialogism, and omniscopic vision. This is what researchers typically working within the confines of their home-grown traditions and habitual methodologies can learn from Wiley.

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*Black Gods of the Asphalt: Religion, Hip-Hop, and Street Basketball*, by **Onaje X. O. Woodbine**. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016. 204 pp. \$30.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780231177283.

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*Black Gods of the Asphalt: Religion, Hip-Hop, and Street Basketball* is not a book I would have expected *Contemporary Sociology* to commission for review—nor, truth be told, that I probably would have chosen on my own. The author, Onaje X. O. Woodbine, is not an academic sociologist, much less

a professional social scientist. Though obviously versed in cultural theory, qualitative research methodologies, and sport sociology, Woodbine, according to the dust jacket, teaches philosophy and religious studies at Phillips Academy. And the book isn't really a scholarly study or a research monograph, at least not in a conventional sociological sense. Writing in the first person, Woodbine draws upon an eclectic array of sources and cuts across many of our usual conventions and subfield distinctions.

None of this is to suggest that *Black Gods of the Asphalt* is unworthy of sociological interest and attention. To the contrary, the creative ways in which Woodbine brings religion, sport, and race together powerfully reveal the deep meaning and larger social significance of street basketball and hip-hop for urban, African American communities. Indeed, its unorthodox, idiosyncratic approach makes this book a uniquely engaging and rewarding read for sociologists.

Woodbine draws his immediate inspiration from Nancy Ammerman's notion of "lived religion" and her emphasis on the role of the body and popular culture in the study of spirituality in everyday life. To this mix, Woodbine adds race or, more specifically, the cultural experiences of the young black men who live in American cities. As he puts it, "By drawing from theoretical tools within cultural sociology, scholars of lived religion have been able to provide rich analyses of the ways alternative communities construct ultimate meanings through their experiences, expressions, and rhythms, often on the margins of authority" (p. 10). Sociologists will see a good bit of Bourdieu in the book as well, especially its attention to habitus and practice, culture and ethnography, and symbolic violence. However, Woodbine's primary interest is not in theoretical elaboration but rather in telling about the deep, spiritual meaning he sees in basketball and, to a lesser extent, hip-hop among young African American men. For Woodbine, these popular cultural practices are sites of agency, meaning-making, and resistance to racism and dehumanization—in short, a profoundly religious experience.

Woodbine—who himself was a star high school player and one-time stand-out for

the Yale basketball team—observes carefully and listens closely. He gets his subjects talking about their lives, their histories, and how basketball is such a central and redemptive part of their identities and experiences. In focusing on the lives of young black men in and around this playground game, Woodbine opens lifeworlds to us into which social scientists rarely delve; worldviews that are more complicated, subtle, and touching than we are exposed to; and understandings and experiences that are real and pervasive, often beyond the pall of standard sociological accounts, focused as they are—as we are—on grand social forces, abstract statistics, abysmal conditions, and associated assumptions of dysfunction and pathology.

The book consists of six substantive chapters, elegantly organized into three main parts, respectively titled “Memory,” “Hope,” and “Healing.” The first pair of chapters are, as the title suggests, historical and set the stage for the interviews and fieldwork that are the core of the volume. The first of the memory chapters situate the origins of black basketball in the muscular Christianity movement of a hundred years ago and Harlem’s black churches. The basic argument is that playing basketball (and other sports) provided a mode of resistance to white supremacy. The second chapter of this initial set focuses on how basketball courts and, in particular, street tournaments have come to serve as memorials that embody the violence of the streets and legacies of the dead. It is here that Woodbine’s emphasis on the agency and subjectivity of African American playground ball players begins to emerge, the meanings that they endow to the practice and what it reveals about their lives, their hopes and dreams, and their means of dealing with the death and despair that surrounds them.

In the “Hope” chapters (Part Two), Woodbine presents what are essentially two case studies in order to give life and voice to the ballplayers he has met on and knows through Boston’s courts. Chapter Three is centered on a young man he calls “Jason.” Woodbine reveals how basketball functions in Jason’s world as a way to give witness to his grandmother’s spirit and in order to break the cycle of violence and pain in his family. The next

chapter, Chapter Four, explores how C.J., a childhood friend of Woodbine’s, searches for a second life through basketball after his release from prison. In addition to deep cultural analysis, these chapters exhibit a sophisticated life history approach, exploring how a life is carved out from conditions of poverty, violence, and racism—and the crucial role that cultural practices like basketball play in finding hope, reclaiming one’s own humanity, and being back in the world.

The final chapters, organized under the theme of healing, show Woodbine at his most poetic and lyrical. These chapters are marked by extensive interview quotes, anecdotes and photographs, and song lyrics that both capture and accentuate the significance of basketball and music for the young men who engage in them. While the researcher in me would have liked to see a bit more interpretation (perhaps with respect to masculinity, for example), Woodbine mostly chooses to let the rich material speak for itself, food for analytical thought and reflection.

In the introduction Woodbine is critical of standard social science writing on black basketball (and African American involvement in sport more generally) for being overly deterministic and positivist, dominated by views that reduce black participation in basketball either to a strategy of avoidance or the result of white supremacy and conditions of poverty. I wouldn’t dispute this critique. In fact, I would probably add that the scholarly obsession with professional sports and racialized media coverage (important as these contributions are) can even unintentionally serve to intensify these one-sided, agency-challenged views even further.

*Black Gods of the Asphalt* is, above all else, a counterpoint to those tendencies. In penning this pushback, Woodbine joins forces with a new generation of sport scholars of color who, in recent years, have been working on more complicated, agent-centered visions of sport and race in contemporary American culture. For basketball alone, I’m thinking here of scholars like Scott Brooks and Reuben May, Stanley Thangaraj, Nicole Willms, and Kathleen Yep. (I’d like to include the ethnographic chapters of my own book on midnight basketball, though I’m white and not so young anymore.) I’m

not sure how aware of these scholars and this emerging body of work Woodbine is, but his book is best read in common cause with them. If this happens, *Black Gods of the Asphalt* will not only expand our understandings of the experiences and lifeworlds of young men of color, it will help bring the burgeoning field of sport studies to broader visibility and influence in mainstream sociology itself.

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*Making Morocco: Colonial Intervention and the Politics of Identity*, by **Jonathan Wyrzten**. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015. 334 pp. \$45.00 cloth. ISBN: 9781501700231.

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*Making Morocco: Colonial Intervention and the Politics of Identity* offers a historical analysis of national identity-making in Morocco. In order to understand the construction of national identity, we need to revisit what author Jonathan Wyrzten calls the “colonial political field” and its symbolic, social, and institutional techniques of legitimation since the 1912 Fes Treaty of Protectorate was signed. Throughout the book the author outlines the competing logics of “legitimation” and “legibility” deployed by multiple actors: colonial residents in Morocco, nationalists, women, Jews, and the Sultan (king). The author draws on Bourdieu’s field theory in his rereading of secondary historical writings to show how the competing logics of these actors have shaped the formation of identities and the type of state that emerged at the aftermath of independence (1955) and how they have contributed to the consolidation of power around the person of the Sultan and the Alawite Dynasty.

The colonial past of Morocco is complex since the country was divided between two types of protectorates and two different yet interacting colonial political fields. The 1912 treaty authorized Spanish control over the northern part of Morocco and the western-southern parts and French control over the rest. The “international” status of the northern city of Tangier and the older presence of

Spain in the cities of Ceuta and Melilla challenge any simplistic or homogenizing readings of the Moroccan political colonial field. Wyrzten makes two main points: first, “colonial intervention represented a fundamental historical rupture” (p. 7) that cannot be bracketed should we want to understand the political and social dynamics in play in independent Morocco. Second, understanding this rupture requires an “interactional” (p. 7) rather than a top-down or a bottom-up historical analysis.

The nine chapters of the book help us revisit historical sources or rather “write new colonial histories” that interrogate the interactions among different elites and non-elite groups and individuals as they construct logics of legitimation for colonial intervention and pacification or anticolonial struggles. Particularly important is the author’s effort to highlight the way in which ordinary men and women responded to the colonial intervention through cultural production of songs and through forms of resistance that acquired gendered and sexualized dimensions. Despite the book’s reliance on secondary sources, this part offers a fascinating reading of oral sources documented by colonial writers or by historians of Morocco.

Chapter One revisits the long history of state-building in Morocco through several Arab and Amazigh dynasties. Before the colonial intervention, a variety of state and non-state actors competed for control and domination over the spaces of political action. The spaces of state and non-state power were constantly in flux. The protectorate created a rupture in existing societal and political arrangements by fixing power around newly created state institutions, planting the seeds for political centralization and shifting power away from tribal leaders and ethnic collectivities. Total pacification of Morocco, which took several decades, transformed state space, creating a “colonial political field” with “new forms of territoriality and new modes of legibility” (p. 61).

Chapter Two explores the contingent factors that helped determine the “entwined logics of legitimation and legibility” (p. 91). The protectorate justified its intervention in a political imaginary that held traditionalization and modernization in tension.