

simplistic, smoothing out emotional rhetoric, and favoring passive, soft-edged verbs like “sharing,” “reporting,” and “asking.” By contrast, school board members’ speech was tied to action in the minutes: “supporting,” “agreeing,” “discussing,” “dissenting.” While some of these rules and linguistic short-cuts are no doubt needed for ordinary democracy to function, the biased and hierarchical ways they were made manifest in Tracy’s case turn citizens into spectators rather than co-participants in public processes.

Challenges of Ordinary Democracy posits “reasonable hostility” as the appropriate communicative ideal for local deliberative forums such as school board meetings. This ideal captures the give and take of speech as it actually occurs in these settings, where emotion and criticism of people’s actions are mixed, but where discourse is still regulated by norms of civility such as proper forms of address. Passionate expressions of dissent are to be expected in functioning democratic politics, Tracy concludes, rather than avoided and neutralized. In advocating realism over idealism and by paying close attention to details, Tracy rightly directs those interested in understanding contemporary democracy to the sometimes messy everyday practices in the unassuming places all around us.

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Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism by Michael Barnett.
Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2011. 312 pp. \$29.95.

At first glance, pairing a study of global humanitarianism with the concept of empire may seem an unlikely strategy for advancing knowledge. Hardly so. Not only is it an honest and forthright approach, it is also a much-needed corrective to enhance our understandings of the humanitarian system and the way in which its key actors understand both themselves and the impact that their actions have on others.

Indeed, and with few exceptions, the self-affirming history of humanitarianism treats moral progress as a given and aid workers as champions of the downtrodden and vulnerable. Michael Barnett throws a spanner in the works here, revealing through careful historical investigation and analysis humanitarianism’s increasingly public, hierarchical, institutionalized, and paternalistic nature—an empire of good. He deftly addresses key dilemmas whose roots run deep throughout humanitarianism’s history but which are often attributed to contemporary emergency relief and development, including the tensions between humanitarian principles and politics, the effects of market influences on humanitarianism, and the nature of humanitarianism’s power over others. The latter dilemma, in particular, finds ample treatment throughout *Empire of Humanity*. Paternalism, which Barnett (p. 34) describes as “the interference with a person’s liberty of action justified by reasons referring exclusively to the welfare, good, happiness, needs, interests, or values of the person whose liberty is being violated,” is a recurring theme in his analysis.

Empire of Humanity's lucid narrative is the product of years of research and dialogue with the subjects and objects Barnett sets out to examine and critically assess through each of three formative "ages" of humanitarianism: imperial, postcolonial (neo), and liberal. He further interweaves humanitarianism's past and present through an analytical framework, emphasizing how forces associated with destruction, production, and compassion have converged across time to shape and craft the contours of these various ages. The central actors constituting the humanitarian system are distinguished by the range and scope of their operations and the degree to which they embrace or reject the politics of the very empire they have helped create: emergency and alchemical humanitarians. Emergency humanitarians provide life-saving assistance and strive to remain outside politics, while alchemical humanitarians tackle root causes of vulnerability and suffering, and most view engagement with politics as part and parcel of being effective. The difference is not academic—it fundamentally affects individual agencies' perceptions of the humanitarian landscape and visions of their place within it.

Alongside the innovative organizational framing, Barnett retains a keen focus on the highly complex nature of the humanitarian's "lived ethics" (p. 6), particularly in his treatment of the growth of the new moral order from the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century development of a doctrine of sympathy and compassion for others, to the Enlightenment belief in improving the human condition, to nineteenth-century Evangelical reformism and the legacies of Henry Dunant. He complements this with sharp analysis of wartime and post-war humanitarianism of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, including the rise of a system of humanitarian governance that includes actors like the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Committee of the Red Cross, Save the Children, and Médecins sans Frontières. These explorations are complemented by brief but fresh reviews of classic humanitarian crises like Biafra, Cambodia, Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Kosovo.

Ultimately, *Empire of Humanity* reminds us that while faith in the humanitarian imperative is crucial to realizing moral progress, the power of compassion can result in colossal failings. These failings, however, do not mean that humanitarianism is a hapless enterprise. Rather, they are the turning points that mark incremental advances, reform, and innovation that will enable humanitarian actors to not just *be* good but also to genuinely *do* good.

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Feminist Policymaking in Chile by Liesl Haas. University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010. 216 pp. \$64.95.

Chile provides a puzzle for scholars of public policy. While Chile possesses a number of factors identified as providing a positive political climate for