

### **NO GO WORLD: How Fear Is Redrawing Our Maps and Infecting Our Politics**

Ruben Andersson. 2019. Berkeley: University of California Press. 360 pages. ISBN: 9780520294608.

A beautifully written essay, *No Go World: How Fear Is Redrawing Our Maps and Infecting Our Politics* tells “the story of a political world gone wild” (257). It takes the reader at a blistering pace on a journey from the complex mapping process of dangers, risks, threats, and fears (real or imaged), to the resulting political, humanitarian, and military interventions that shape the world and transform people’s lives, within and without the “danger zone.” It shows how the “economy of risk” and the “politics of fear,” and their mutual entanglement, often reinforce the allegedly dangerous phenomena they are supposed to result from, by dividing the world and labeling parts of it as danger zones—danger zones that people in “the rich Western world” seek to keep at a distance, hence know less and less, and fear more and more. This whole system can be considered a “self-reinforcing feedback loop” (188), for the heterogeneous benefits of various groups and actors, ranging from humanitarians to jihadists, journalists to smugglers, governments to armies, NGO members to UN agency staff.

In order to understand where this “loop” comes from, how it works, and how it is possible to get out of it, Ruben Andersson, an anthropologist, chose not to conduct classic

multisited fieldwork (partly because his employing university would not let him go to the *No Go World* he talks about), but instead to mimic “the narrative power of our global mapping of danger, . . . to ward off threats by locating them, drawing them, and so enabling a certain hold on them” (19). From Bamako to the UN headquarters in New York via Lampedusa, he conducted interviews in many places, with military officers, aid workers, NGO volunteers, and adventurer journalists. He also uses a wide range of reports, children’s fairy tales, and personal anecdotes to build a counternarrative to the mapping process of danger, to demonstrate the systemic production of fear, in various fields, locally and globally, and how they interact. For Andersson, “danger is not geographic but systemic, and it is fundamentally entangled with our fears” (6).

The first part of the book, “The Story of the Map,” shows in various contexts how danger is perceived, constructed, and mapped, often from afar, in order to divide and control. Andersson explains how the Sahara, and especially Mali, has been turned into a no-go zone since the 9/11 attacks. How the map of danger produces—and at the same time is the result of—the global war on terrorism. How, to avoid risk, everything is done to keep the “danger” far from the military (via remote intervention, using drones, etc.) or the actors of the “aid world” and “peaceland,” for who “remote programming—including ‘flash visits,’ teleconferencing, phone calls, and e-mails to local staff and partners—had become the

norm” (37), instead of going to the field and talking to people. Too risky, not allowed. But this management of distances, this “global distancing” (6), says Andersson, tends to create more danger, not less. But not for the same people. Andersson presents, for instance, the case of the AMISOM, the African Union “peace operation” in Somalia, as exemplary in this regard. “Financed and supported by Western powers and the United Nations” (99), the African forces of AMISOM are used “to man the front lines” (103). The book quotes “peacekeeping chief”: “Only Uganda in AMISOM has lost more than 3,000 men in Somalia. I don’t see the UN [having] the stomach to lose 3,000 men in a peacekeeping operation” (107). Andersson implies that wealthy countries pay in money, and poor countries pay in blood. Surely, more could be said about this.

The second part of the book, “Contagion,” brings us toward the southern borders of the EU and US and delves into the ways border management draws on a logic of infection. Take, for instance, the revealing rhetoric of a former US general, who, having accepted a position at Yale University, wrote with a colleague health scientist that “the opportunism of Ebola and ISIS in many ways mirrors that of the opportunistic infections that prey upon people with AIDS, exploiting their long-weakened systems” (195). In one way, “contagion must threaten the Homeland” in order to legitimize the “need of virtually endless investments” (171) in border management. Meanwhile, on the other side of the border, in the “no-go zones,” other actors do their business too. For some, constituting themselves as threat, through the use of internationally projected labels, might be their best hope to benefit, ever so slightly, from this new resource, fear.

*No Go World* explores times and spaces of our “dangerized world” (252), reveals “resonances between the danger zones of today and those of the colonial era” (239), and demonstrates that “the more efforts the powerful put into walling off the dangers, the nearer

those dangers seem to draw” (241). As Andersson puts bluntly: “The danger zone is not out there: it is already with us” (248). This is why his book helps to name and better understand the daily experiences of people within and without the *No Go World*. If one would sometimes have wished for some more in-depth description, more proximity with the people and places mentioned throughout the book, the project here is rather to “experiment with the narrative form” (258) in order to draw another kind of picture, another map. Ruben Andersson is convinced that academics should not simply roll their eyes at how “intellectual entrepreneurs capture public and political attention while our own Great Reports go by unnoticed,” but should “learn from them to tell [their] *own* stories, however rough around the edges they may be.” (260) ”

This is what he has done with *No Go World*, convincingly.

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## THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF SOUTH-SOUTH RELATIONS

Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, and Patricia Daley, eds. 2019. Abingdon, UK: Routledge. 448 pages. ISBN: 9781315624495.

This timely handbook comprises an impressive array of chapters, demonstrating the depth and breadth of South-South relations and thereby filling a disconcerting hole in current debates. By assembling 30 chapters, editors Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Patricia Daley aim to situate, conceptualize, and pluralize “the South”/Souths and its relations within a global context (Introduction, p. 4). Utilizing decolonial, postcolonial, anticolonial, indigenous, or Southern theories, while also pointing to their respective contradictory and complex inner workings, they assert that a “commitment to challenging and resisting all forms of