

campaign, took the Jewish and Christian ideas in Gorman's "sacred ecology" and expanded them to include Native American, feminist, and Islamic thoughts on eco-spirituality. Gore wanted this new greening of religion to help promote global environmental regulations and restoration projects. Gore became vice-president in 1993, and his book sold over half a million copies.

Right-wing evangelical leaders launched a sustained counter-attack. Pat Robertson argued in his numerous books and on his daily television show that in treating parts of the earth as sacred, environmentalists committed the sin of idolatry. Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins thought the environmentalists did much worse—they spread Satan's influence. The embrace of landscapes as spiritual was in reality the worship of demons. LaHaye and Jenkins's novels about Christian paramilitary groups fighting the Antichrist after the Rapture, the 16-volume *Left Behind* series (published between 1995 and 2007), sold some 65 million copies. The Antichrist wraps himself in a new religion, the Great Enigma Mystery Babylon One-World Faith, and it looks similar to Al Gore's green spiritualism.

Not everyone who watched Robertson or read LaHaye and Jenkins simply absorbed their lessons like zombies. But surely when Ellingson interviewed his 60-plus REMO leaders and they emphasized the need to distance themselves from the paganism and New-Age influences they thought permeated both the secular environmental movement and liberal REMOs, demons lurked in the shadows.

What Is a Human? What the Answers Mean for Human Rights, by **John H. Evans**. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. 260 pp. \$36.95 paper. ISBN: 9780190608071.

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"I want to ask you a few questions about what it means to be a human." The answers that people gave to this question anchor John H. Evans's *What is a Human? What the*

Answers Mean for Human Rights. Evans's concern is not with "contested humans" but rather with humans by any definition, and his main interest is human rights—people's views about how imagined others should be treated. Among academics, it has been a familiar refrain with high stakes and no empirical foundation until now: that the way in which everyday people think about humanness will directly affect how they treat imagined others. Evans decided to test these ivy-tower certitudes. This book is the result.

As a well-established sociologist of religion and science, Evans comes to the question of "What is a human?" with answers already in mind. He uses his sense of the academic terrain to identify the main frameworks that (academics claim) people would use to answer the question, "What is a human?" He then develops the vernacular versions of these frameworks and tests their connections to people's views on human rights through a public opinion survey of 3600 Americans and 92 in-depth interviews.

Evans calls these frameworks "anthropologies," and he outlines four main anthropologies in circulation. First, the Christian theological anthropology holds that a human is made in the image of God and, importantly, that a human uniquely can communicate with a higher being. Second, the biological anthropology asserts that a human is its genes and that genes drive behavior. Third, the philosophical anthropology defines a human by traits that confer moral worth: whether one has self-awareness, for example. These three frameworks turn up in Evans's reading of the scholarly literature. For Evans's purposes, these "academic anthropologies" are useful because they are stripped bare and mutually exclusive; they are "pure," meaning easy to recognize and fairly consistent, so they function as hypotheses against which Evans can test Americans' actual definitions of a human.

Evans's in-depth interviews, however, dealt him a wild card—a fourth framework that was absent from the mainstream academic debate. This fourth framework, which Evans calls "socially conferred" humanness, defines a human in subjective terms. If you have a relationship with a being you regard

as a human, then that being is a human; no need for inter-subjectively verifiable criteria. According to Evans, this conception of socially conferred humanness has no established home or predicable mouthpieces in academic debates and instead is “diffuse,” generally lurking around the hallways of humanities departments. (Some academics, however, will likely recognize this framework as a consolidated, respected academic framework—but a framework that is, unfortunately, consolidated at the margins of academia: in programs such as women’s and gender studies, critical race studies, or postcolonial area studies, to name a few.)

Academics, as it turns out, get a lot of things right. In scholarly debates, professors typically point their fingers at the fields of biology or philosophy for the moral demise of Americans. A quarter of the public holds the “core components” of academics’ biological or philosophical anthropology, and this group would act in ways that Evans (following the academic debate) defines as maltreatment: buying kidneys from poor people, supporting torture, and so on. Professors of biology and philosophy have no intention to directly teach or subtly imply a position on human rights—and they themselves claim there is no connection between how their fields define a human and normative implications of how to treat people. But using mediation analysis, Evans shows that the younger, better-educated people who most consistently and completely define a human in terms of academic biology or philosophy also have a mental image—what Evans calls a “general depiction”—of actual people they would be willing to treat poorly by standards of human rights.

Still, academics get crucial details wrong. First, publics are not purists. Few people use a single framework to define a human. This magpie approach is unlike that of academics, who hold mutually exclusive definitions of humanness, and this approach is outside of academics’ moral imagination of publics’ views. In addition, the mainstream academic debate entirely misses the fourth framework: socially conferred humanness. To be sure, few members of the public define a human relationally, either. But Evans’s analysis of socially conferred humanness is

instructive and invaluable given that academics care about public definitions of humanness because, they claim, they might lead to maltreatment of others. This framework is outside of academic debate, absent from public discourse, and yet adopted by a rare few precisely to safeguard against the very maltreatment of others that worries academics.

Second, few people learn their definition of humanness in the classroom. Instead they learn it in church, if anywhere. Although it is unclear where most people learn to define humanness, the importance of Evans’s study is to show that higher education, especially in biology, is nothing for humanitarianism to fear.

Third, there is no consistent connection between most people’s definition of a human and their attitudes toward human rights. Most Americans support equal treatment of uncontested humans, regardless of their views on what defines a human. This finding is contrary to academics’ claims that a person’s way of conceptualizing a human will lead to maltreatment.

Language really matters in such an intricate and sensitive empirical study. For example, Evans used the term “human” as opposed to “person” in his survey and interviews, on the logic that personhood is freighted with philosophical debates. Yet “human” is far from a neutral term, rooted in the field of biology. Likewise, it is a perennial challenge to operationalize “ordinary Americans” and “average citizens.” Evans forthrightly and convincingly justifies his choices in three robust appendices, where he provides his research instruments and explanations of his methods. In doing so, Evans’s book exemplifies how a thoughtfully designed, mixed-method, comparative study can empirically describe social cognition and relate it to tooth-and-fang politics.

In all our accuracies and illusions, academics continue to claim a causal connection between how people learn to define a human and their actions toward others. These discussions affect universities’ curricular decisions as well as state and national funding priorities, since they are, at root, about where and how people learn to be citizens. Evans’s book is bracing because his

main finding—that there is an independent relationship between people’s way of defining a human and their position on human rights—underscores a few academic claims but disabuses us of many others with empirical evidence, the first such study that has been done. Implicitly, the book suggests how we learn *falsely* to believe that biology is the culprit—namely, through the rehearsal of old academic debates in familiar yet unsubstantiated terms. *What is a Human?* is poised to change the very terms of this debate.

Austerity Blues: Fighting for the Soul of Public Higher Education, by **Michael Fabricant** and **Stephen Brier**. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016. 310 pp. \$29.95 cloth. ISBN: 9781421420677.

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The contours of the story are well known: neoliberal logic is infiltrating higher education, accompanied with market solutions, public disinvestment, and a push toward efficiency. While everyone is familiar with the general argument, in *Austerity Blues: Fighting for the Soul of Public Higher Education* Michael Fabricant and Stephen Brier do a masterful job of moving from the abstract to the everyday. Instead of decrying amorphous “neoliberal forces,” *Austerity Blues* is filled with actors: those who built higher education systems in California and New York, those whose best intentions had unintended consequences, those who fought and either won or lost. The account provided in *Austerity Blues* is as refreshing as it is detailed and thoughtful. It also recognizes that public higher education—and, in particular, the funding of public higher education—is a consequence of policy decisions: there is nothing preordained about the current state of affairs, which gives *Austerity Blues* a hopeful ending.

The first three chapters of the book provide the political and economic context of higher education. The first chapter outlines the overall argument of the book, depicted through six propositions about the

restructuring of higher education; and the second two chapters, in addition to providing the national context, offer an engaging account of the higher education systems in California and New York (primarily CUNY, but also SUNY) from the Second World War through the 1970s. These chapters highlight the role of leadership, the influence of broader economic and political forces, and the importance of coalition-building.

The story of the struggle at CUNY to maintain free tuition as well as enact open admissions is quite telling. When Governor Rockefeller was almost certain that he had won the battle to abolish free tuition at CUNY in the early 1960s, the CUNY Board of Higher Education, along with alumni associations and New York City’s economic and political elites, joined forces in opposition to the plan. They won. Yet it was a bittersweet victory, as they lost the battle for state investment in building additional campuses and hiring faculty to accommodate the rapidly growing student population.

A similarly bittersweet victory for open admissions opened doors to many New Yorkers who were previously denied access to higher education; yet without adequate funding, including funding necessary to compensate for a lack of preparation in the city’s K–12 system, the system struggled financially and over time succumbed to both more stringent admission standards and to charging tuition. While it is clear whom the authors support, they provide a balanced account of these events. Moreover, even though they in many ways laud the time before the neoliberal era, they do not romanticize the past—they acknowledge the relentless challenges in the economic and political spheres and great inequalities among students and institutions even in the “golden era.”

The next three chapters take on central issues in neoliberal public universities: privatization, inequality, and technology. Privatization has many dimensions, from decreasing public investment to growing tuition and debt, the rise of for-profit institutions, growing attention to patents and other research-related sources of revenue, and online education. As a stratification scholar, I was particularly eager to read the chapter