return to tradition, royalism and Confucianism — all the while guzzling "hygienic" new rice wine and standardized fish sauce from industrial byproducts.

I have only a handful of minor critiques to make. The archives of the Institut Pasteur in Paris — in particular, the Fonds Calmette — might have been consulted by the author. Furthermore, it would have been good to see some engagement with the work of Erica Peters (2010), whose doctoral dissertation dealt in part with rice wine in nineteenth-century Vietnam. Finally, although Fontaine had been deceased for a decade by then, the virtual autarky in which Indochina found itself in 1941, and its sudden swing into the orbit of Japan a year prior, might have provided an interesting postscript for this study which essentially ends in the 1930s.

In the final analysis, this is a fascinating book. Its many ramifications will make it of interest to scholars in several disciplines. Sasges depicts a colonial state as addicted to alcohol revenue as it is torn by the challenges involved in collecting the revenue in question.

Eric Jennings
Department of History, University of Toronto, 100 St George Street, Toronto, Ontario M5S 3G3 Canada; email: eric.jennings@utoronto.ca.

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Violent Neoliberalism: Development, Discourse, and Dispossession in Cambodia. By Simon Springer. New York: Routledge. 2015. xi+219 pp.

Violent Neoliberalism explores the implications and, more specifically, the negative externalities of global capitalism, drawing on Cambodia's experience with dispossession and turbo-capitalist development as a

relevant empirical "frame" (p. 16). Using a critical and radical post-structuralist and anarchist lens, Simon Springer presents a rich and timely collection of, mostly revised, previously published papers. The aim of this book, Springer states, is to generate "a critical political economy-meets-poststructuralist perspective on the relationship between neoliberalism and violence" (p. 16). The book is highly relevant for scholars of human geography, political economy and to some extent peace and conflict studies, and brings together the author's fields of expertise: geographies of neoliberalism, geographies of violence, and the geography of contemporary Cambodia. Analogous to its subtitle, it is divided into three parts: development, discourse and dispossession. Although well-assembled, the thematic discussions in the sub-chapters overlap too much at times.

The introduction provides a brief outline of Cambodia's history, politics and how neoliberalism has unfolded in the country's post-war years. Springer calls neoliberalism the "malevolent harbinger of death" (p. 2) and distinguishes exceptional from exemplary violence; both types of violence are closely intertwined with processes of neoliberalization in as much as they also create social division and inequality. In the first two chapters, Springer explains how key political figures and local elites are co-opted by and, at the same time, tailor neoliberal processes to their benefit. Well-embedded in the critical neoliberal debate, the first chapter reads rather like an introduction to the second chapter, which unpacks the patronage system and the role of local elites in Cambodia. In the third chapter, Springer argues that neoliberalization is a discursive continuation of colonialism and modernization, each of which can be seen as a "civilizing enterprise" (p. 78). The following chapter adds a discursive Foucauldian perspective in its discussion on the shortfalls of good governance that Springer sees as the "key component of the neoliberal development paradigm in Cambodia" (p. 83). In the last section, the author introduces two illuminating conceptualizations that shed light on the complex entanglements between neoliberalism and violence in Cambodia. First, Springer outlines what he calls the "dark matter of the trilateral of logics … that celebrates the

monetization of daily life [and] places social justice on the auction block" (p. 129). He shows the entanglement of the logics of capital, law and civilization by using the example of the Cambodian land titling system. Second, the author differentiates between property, with its basis in law, and possession, with its basis in actual use, and he demonstrates the relationship between proprietorship and the violence of the law.

In contrast to popular orientalist assumptions about Cambodia's struggle to consolidate peace and institute democracy, Springer offers a refreshingly alternative view — often mistaken as "grim" by other scholars. The author's focus lies in developing a conceptual framework that brings together Marxist, anarchist and post-structuralist readings. As much as this is a major strength of the book, it appears overly ambitious every now and then. At certain stages the reader might feel overwhelmed by the sheer number of concepts discussed on a fairly abstract level that the author endeavours to coalesce in the book. However, despite making similar points, Springer does not engage with Derek Hall, Philip Hirsch and Tania Murray Li's *Powers of Exclusion* (2011) or Saskia Sassen's *Territory, Authority, Rights* (2006). Literature on the geographies of contestation — which Springer considers "a shared sense of betrayal" (p. 38) serving neoliberalization — would have benefited the book and the conceptualization of agency in particular which remains underdeveloped (p. 102).

The book largely stands out because of Springer's extensive empirical knowledge on the lived post-war experiences of Cambodians and the country's politics. Throughout the chapters, he skilfully zooms in and out of the Cambodian case using a global ethnographic approach. Although the author presents insightful empirical examples, some of them lack contextualization and a more nuanced discussion. In fact, the evaluation of some of the Cambodian experiences found in the book are too "black and white" or superficial. To be sure, while the injustices and current political situation in Cambodia somewhat resembles a "David versus Goliath" story, there is also evidence of official resistance within local authorities or ministries; for example,

elites siding with communities affected by dispossession. Springer turns a blind eye to these stories and uses selective empirical data to support his line of argument.

Overall, *Violent Neoliberalism* reads as an engaging critique of contemporary neoliberalism. With his energetic and occasionally bold style, Springer draws attention to hidden injustices and various shapes of violence caused by the much-celebrated neoliberal post-war development paradigm.

Anne Hennings
Department of Political Science, University of Münster, Scharnhorststraße 100, 48151 Münster, Germany; email: anne.hennings@wwu.de.

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Challenging Malaysia's Status Quo. By Lim Teck Ghee. Kuala Lumpur: Strategic Information and Research Development Centre, 2018. xxiii+476 pp.

Lim Teck Ghee has for some years enjoyed a reputation as one of the most perceptive observers of Malaysian politics, religion and society. In many respects, this current work may be viewed as an update of the comprehensive volume *Multi-Ethnic Malaysia: Past, Present and Future* (2009) which he co-edited with Alberto Gomes and Azly Rahman. *Challenging Malaysia's Status Quo* is a thematically organized and wide-ranging series of critical essays grouped under eleven sections which examine the many, and increasingly urgent, issues which will impact upon Malaysia's economic and political future.