

(Malay, Tamil, Chinese, and English language press). And if all that was not enough, add to it a “nationwide stratified survey of popular understandings of the Islamic legal tradition” (10).

As for the obligatory book-review quibble, I have only one to share: The book starts with Moustafa cautioning his readers not to conflate the “judicialization of religion” with your run of the mill “judicialization of politics.” I am not sure if the distinction is convincing, and he elaborates on it only briefly in an immediate footnote (2. fn 5). I would have loved to learn more why he thought the distinction useful to begin with?

So do not let the small size of this book fool you. At 158 pages, the scope of work behind it is as meticulous as it is immense (the footnotes alone are a gold mine to pilfer and embezzle). And for such a serious often heavy subject, the book is laced with a subtle sense of humor to belie it all. On Islamic law for example, Moustafa wryly observes that the “shariah courts did not drop from the heavens. Rather they are creatures of state law” (15). Appropriately, the book closes with the ironic observation that liberal litigation may itself be responsible for the expansion of illiberal legal precedents—a predicament for progressive activists who are “damned if they do and they are damned if they do not” (154).

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Gender, Alterity and Human Rights: Freedom in a Fishbowl. By Ratna Kapur. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2018.

Reviewed by Margot Young, Allard School of Law, University of British Columbia; Visiting International Professor, Faculty of Business, Economics and Law, University of Gothenburg

This book begins and ends with stories—parables of the trapped “other” and the opening of previously unimagined “windows”

through which there is escape to freedom. In the epilogue, it is the snake—“pulchritudinous and supple”—seeking exit from Kapur’s own living room. Later on, in chapter 7, we are told of Rudra, subject of the Indian film *Chitrangada: The Crowning Wish*, who struggles with gender and sexual legitimacy: “the recalcitrant who refuses to comply.” Both are stories of freedom won in alternative registers. The first, the snake’s escape, sets up the animating premise of this work. The second, Rudra’s pursuit of freedom in relation to gender and alterity, provides a more concrete political focus for Kapur’s thought.

Across the book’s stories and theory lies the central metaphor of the fishbowl. This image makes visual the closed system of liberalism in which human rights advocacy and its connection to freedom “swim”. Liberalism’s free individual is the subject whose pursuit of rights accumulation advances a good life. But, this liberal project is a façade, beneath which lie the hierarchies that instantiate, first and then again, the subordination and marginalization that rights proclaim to defeat. Human rights are not freedom realized, but, instead, are part of a governance project. They are the tactics of liberal governance in an era of globalization and neoliberal marketization. Recognition, hard won through rights claims, simply reinscribes the subject back into oppressive regimes. Successful claims may unsettle, disrupt but they will not dismantle or transform. The answer is to leap out of the “fishbowl”: to move beyond liberal freedom into the realms of not illiberal but *unliberal* freedoms.

In chapters 6 and 7, we see glimpses of where such a leap might take us. But before those chapters, Kapur illustrates the complicity of human rights struggles in continued hegemony. She does so with reference to three “precarious desires”: LGBT alterity, sexual security, and women’s equality. In chapter 4, for example, Kapur argues that the veil, public manifestation of Muslim religiosity, is treated as either false consciousness or attack on liberal democracies. Freedom for veil wearers is bounded, contained by the governance regimes of colonialism and neoliberal marketization of the subject.

Kapur examines three theorists—Costas Douzinas, Boaventura de Sousa Santos, and Wendy Brown—all critics of human rights. But, Kapur continues, these theorists each return to rights, too anxious to let go of such a cherished project. This recursion is a “jagged” effort at “programmatically reform, renewal, and reinvestment in human rights.” The theorists dive back into the fishbowl, continuing progressives’ endless circumambulations within it. On offer is “cruel optimism”: the hope that rights will manifest freedom in the face of evidence that they cannot.

The last chapters of the book explore imaginary possibilities for nonliberal freedom. Here, Kapur steps into full gear and her

arguments are most thought provoking. Chapter 6 discusses Michel Foucault's work on political spirituality and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's intellectual shift to nondualist epistemology. These are examples of thinking beyond liberal forms of personal and political transformation, providing insights into alternative inscriptions of human flourishing.

Chapter 7 takes the idea of freedom beyond liberal thought into reflection on subcontinental intellectual traditions. The shift to interiority and emotion that marks affect theory is amplified. A discussion of Advaita (nondualism), as it is expounded by Indian scholar Adi Śaṅkara, expands our understandings of time, subjectivity, and freedom. Kapur provides examples of nonliberal freedom reached through ecstatic dance, spiritual poetry, and ascetic renunciation. Self-conscious, self-reflective practices are central to this freedom. This discussion is challenging but provocative and gives weight to earlier promises of nonliberal spaces to inhabit. However, this last chapter reads as philosophical exegesis and this makes matching its discussion to the first chapters of the book challenging. It is a divide that the book does not quite span successfully. One is challenged to revisit the beginning chapters and retell the struggles they portray in ways that reflect nonliberal, nondualist (internal and self-reflexive) aspirations of freedom.

This review ends by noting two things. First, this is a highly literate work—its range of reference and depth of understanding are impressive. It is a book for scholars who wish for both a review of key theories of rights critiques and either an introduction to, or a revisiting of, scholarship that promises to push us beyond what we already think. The writing is rich; Kapur's sentences are powerful and evocative. And, Kapur's metaphor of the fishbowl is clever: helpful in a conversation involving high abstraction. But, as one scholar has written, "metaphors inevitably distort or shape our perceptions in the sense that they hide some dimensions of the phenomenon they refer to and highlight others" (Kwan 2002: 329).

Kapur's book ends on a more complicated note than it begins; the fishbowl metaphor is less useful as her argument develops. Kapur retains an ambivalent stance toward human rights. Recognition through rights claiming is preferable to nonrecognition despite a continuing attachment to a coercive normative order. But, she writes, the more esoteric registers of nonliberal thought bring "humility" to the project of human rights, allowing escape from the cycles of unfreedom to which the singular pursuit of rights has condemned liberal politics. The future figured is a "postliberal human rights future," one in which human rights combine with nonliberal understandings of freedom and

happiness. Tension between such incommensurate systems—“thrusting against and abrading each other like tectonic plates” (232)—allows double consciousness, revealing nonliberal freedoms. Kapur amends Gayatri Spivak: human rights *cannot* give us what we want, although, they are also that which we cannot *not* want (190). One wonders, then, must we be in, or out, or both in and out, of the fishbowl? This is the challenge of the book.

Reference

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How to Be Sort of Happy in Law School. By Kathryne M. Young. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018.

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Kathryne M. Young’s *How to Be Sort of Happy in Law School* provides steadfast advice on surviving and thriving in law school. Young encourages the reader to think critically about themselves and their approach to law school. Young draws on over 1000 interviews with current law students and alumni. *How to Be Sort of Happy*, while intended for law students, could serve a range of students in higher education.

How to Be Sort of Happy has nineteen chapters, divided into five parts. The first part analyzes the challenges of law school, such as the workload, imposter syndrome, and unmet expectations. Part Two centers on maintaining an identity in law school, encouraging readers to pursue their passions and desires amid the pressures of law school. Next, in Part Three, Young delves into the important issue of student wellbeing, emphasizing finances, sleep, suicide, and drugs. The fourth part focuses on developing and maintaining relationships despite the unique strains law school will have. Chapters 15 through 19 make up the final section of the book, presenting strategies and techniques aimed at providing success in law school.

A key strength of *How to be Happy* is the consistent theme of balance. At the outset, Young acknowledges the difficulty of law school. A constant point of reference is how law school can often