

left hanging at the end of the book, without further elaboration of how we could make sense of such claims in relation to the Human Genome Project itself, or to many other areas of the contemporary life sciences that attract significant investment and political attention.

Finally, I cannot but help reflect on the knowledge-control regimes of contemporary academic life when I read this book. Seeing that the author's research in this field started more than three decades earlier gave me pause. Among a younger generation of scholars there is concern with just how "slow" academic publishing can be: it can take years for writing to make it into books or journals, when the events they describe can change rapidly. How can academic work make a timely contribution to public understanding given such time frames? Relatedly, "slow scholarship" has been embraced by others to resist the neoliberal managerialism of academic life. Taking the time to think, to write, to publish in more considered fashion has found a new value. Hilgartner's book might therefore be read as exemplary of slow scholarship, of the benefits that come from a long immersion in a particular field of study.

The Mindful Elite: Mobilizing from the Inside Out. By Jaime Kucinkas. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019. Pp. x+231. \$34.95.

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At some point in the past few years you may have been told by a well-intentioned person in your life that you should try meditating. You may have noticed that bookstores now contain shelves full of books touting the benefits of "mindfulness." You may find it curious that your boss, your doctor, and Oprah are all peddling mindful meditation as a kind of modern cure-all. If you are interested in how we reached this cultural moment, then you should read *The Mindful Elite: Mobilizing from the Inside Out*, by Jaime Kucinkas.

In *The Mindful Elite*, Kucinkas takes readers inside a close-knit network of spiritual entrepreneurs that worked over decades to bring Buddhist-inspired meditation practices to the masses. By the time Kucinkas completed her research, these practices had spread far beyond the control of the "mindful elite" whose efforts she had tracked. This represents a stunning success for a fringe spiritual movement. Yet it also raises complex questions about what success means. Can success be measured exclusively by tracking the *diffusion* of mindfulness practices, or does it matter to what *ends* the practices are being used? Would the movement's Buddhist leaders consider it a victory that some corporations are encouraging mindfulness to extract more productivity and compliance from their employees; that the military is using mindfulness to train and treat soldiers; that many individuals are using mindfulness as a tool of inner perfection rather than social activism; or that people around

the world now embrace mindfulness with little knowledge of or interest in its Buddhist roots?

This contradiction between apparent success (mindfulness is everywhere!) and apparent failure (but it is being used in ways that are inconsistent with Buddhist principles) becomes the core puzzle of the book. As Kucinkas notes in the conclusion, most portrayals of the movement have been “Janus faced,” concluding it is either a success or a failure, either good or bad. But she attempts “to show the story of the movement from multiple angles in an effort to eschew overly simplistic portrayals” (p. 191). On this count, she succeeds, and I finished the book feeling both sympathetic with the movement’s leaders yet pessimistic about the movement’s likelihood of achieving its original goals.

The book also offers theoretical tools for asking more general questions about movement success and failure, which will be useful beyond this case. For example, the case of the mindfulness movement illuminates challenges faced by all movements that posit that social transformation flows from personal transformation. This theory of change requires a long-term, multistage strategy in which movements seek to change individuals’ ideas or practices, in the hopes that those individuals will transform their institutions or perhaps even society at large. This case shows where this process can short circuit. But it also raises questions about when to conduct the final analysis of such a movement; perhaps we are only now in the middle of this lengthy process, and the changes this movement originally sought may eventually come about.

The book also provides insight into a mobilizing strategy that receives relatively little attention from social movement scholars: the noncontentious dissemination of ideas and practices through high-status insiders within elite institutions. This lack of attention is likely rooted in the fact that the strategy is relatively uncommon—indeed, social movements often mobilize precisely because they *lack* the elite connections and credentials that make this strategy possible. It is also far less visible than, say, street protests, and research on it requires access to elites who are willing to openly discuss their goals and tactics. Yet it is a potentially powerful strategy and is thus worthy of much greater focus.

It is a testament to Kucinkas that she was able to gain access to the “mindful elite.” Through her research we learn that although these leaders loosely coordinated their efforts, they also had a great deal of leeway to make decisions about how to package and sell mindfulness within their respective institutions. It was up to each of them to decide whether the trade-offs they made to disseminate mindfulness were “worth it.” For example, to counter stereotypes that mindfulness was a feminized, “soft,” “woo-woo” practice, it was often rebranded as a more masculine tool of personal success and “high performance” (p. 65). Another significant trade-off involved decoupling mindfulness from its Buddhist roots. In some contexts, the Buddhism was “camouflaged” (p. 106), while in others it was downplayed at first and revealed only once people had reduced their guard. The book retraces how movement leaders confronted and justified these trade-offs in the moment.

Yet it also provides readers with the benefit of hindsight, and the resultant ability to evaluate the intended and unintended consequences of these aggregated choices.

I would have appreciated further critical reflection on these efforts to camouflage the religious dimensions of mindfulness to gain adherents. Although this is perhaps beyond the scope of the book, I could not help but wonder how observers would respond if the same tactics were used to encourage thinly veiled Christian practices or ideas within secular spaces (e.g., prayer within public schools or intelligent design within science). There are of course differences between these examples, linked in part to the disparate cultural power of Buddhism versus Christianity within American life or variation in the threats each movement poses to secular authorities. Still, this case offers a useful opportunity to reflect on these similarities and differences, and I would encourage Kucinskas or others to take up this question in future research.

To conclude, this book introduces readers to a social movement that exerts outsized influence within American society today. The book does not draw simple conclusions about whether that is ultimately a good thing but rather provides a complex portrait of how we got here. This surprising, if ambiguous, “success” story will be of interest to students of religion, social movements, and social change, as well as change agents themselves, who will each benefit from the insight and balanced perspective that Kucinskas provides.

Gone Goose: The Remaking of an American Town in the Age of Climate Change. By Braden T. Leap. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2019. Pp. ix+256. \$99.50 (cloth); \$34.95 (paper).

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Braden T. Leap’s *Gone Goose* shows the resiliency of one white, rural Missouri community in response to the sharp decline of the Canadian goose population that visited the area between 1937 and the 1990s. In 1977, nearly 270,000 geese overwintered in the Swan Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) area, making the town of Sumner, one mile from the refuge, a prime location for goose hunting. At its peak, tourism associated with goose hunting generated \$4 million for the local economy annually. *Gone Goose* is the product of more than 1,800 hours of participant observation and 21 interviews with refuge staffers and Sumner residents.

A combination of climate change, fluctuations in commercial corn and soy production, and suburban development in northern Midwest states and Canada moved migration patterns so geese no longer travel south to Sumner. As goose populations declined, residents drew upon their shared identity as the Wild Goose Capital of the World to maintain community cohesion