



The Will to Predict: Orchestrating the Future through Science

Rindzevičiūtė, Eglė. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 306 pp., \$59.95, ISBN 9781501769771, Publication Date: May 2023

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The last country to be discussed—and perhaps for some the most anticipated—is Germany. Williams and Niven nuance our understanding of Holocaust memory in Germany by demonstrating how the Kindertransport has been used to upend some of the common assumptions scholars have about Germany’s “absolutist understanding of the Holocaust’s uniqueness” (here they reference Michael Rothberg), as well as its perpetrator-focused memory. To do so, they present how rescue has become an important strain of German Holocaust memory, especially as it has been discussed alongside contemporary events like the Syrian refugee crisis. As in other chapters, they highlight transnational influences on German memory. They demonstrate British-German collaboration through a discussion of an exhibition they helped create in partnership with Andrea Hammel of Aberystwyth University and Norbert Wiesneth of PhotoWerk Berlin. Titled “At the End of the Tunnel: Kindertransport from Berlin 80 Years On (*Am Ende des Tunnels: Die Kindertransporte vor 80 Jahren aus Berlin*),” they present Kindertransport memory by bringing attention to “the pervasive antisemitism in Germany prior to the rescue of the Kinder,” as well as the Kinders’ experiences in Great Britain, which “were not always positive.” This section was a highlight of the book, as they discussed the content and presentation of their exhibition in a depth not always matched by other sites they consider.

National and Transnational Memories of the Kindertransport has much to offer regarding the evolution of Kindertransport memory, but the sheer number of examples makes the book feel like a travel guide. At times, it feels as if their emphasis is on the quantity of sites visited, over an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of any given site. As an example, when the authors introduce the idea of an online memorial network within the chapter on Great Britain, they do so in a cursory manner, failing to consider the changing dynamics of an online memorial space in any depth. Adding to the sheer volume of sites visited, the authors even extend their study briefly to Israel and Russia within the conclusion, wrapping up the book in a way that leaves more questions than answers about what role Kindertransport memory has played in these vastly different states. Meanwhile, it seems as if several of the six countries included in the main survey do not have enough sites or commemorations on the Kindertransport to warrant comparisons with Great Britain, the United States, or Germany. For Canada, there was little Kindertransport commemoration, no Kindertransport memorial, and only one permanent exhibition that mentioned the topic. There was a similar dearth of sites in New Zealand. With such a limited presence in these countries, is it indeed possible to draw larger conclusions related specifically to Kindertransport memory and its influence on the larger memorial cultures of Canada and New Zealand?

Critiques aside, Williams and Niven push us to consider one vein of Holocaust memory in a new way. They convincingly present the centrality of Kindertransport history for understanding a broader picture of rescue during the Holocaust, while reminding us of the contemporary importance this history has for current day refugee crises. One quote speaks to the activism that underlines their research, as they note: “the more aware we are of this history, the more urgent the call to treat today’s refugees with respect, and to act to prevent future refugee crises.”

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Rindzevičiūtė, Eglė. **The Will to Predict: Orchestrating the Future through Science**. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 306 pp., \$59.95, ISBN 9781501769771, Publication Date: May 2023.

Prediction of future developments, whether scientific, quasi- or pseudo-scientific, can take many different forms and levels. As Eglė Rindzevičiūtė, professor at the Department of Criminology, Politics and Sociology of Kingston University, London, explains in the introduction, historical ideals of scientific predictions have been changing and included astrological or mantic divinations, medical conjectures from accumulated experience, precise mathematical calculations based on astronomical models, conclusions derived with certainty from positivistic, empirically verified natural laws, probabilistic expectations grounded in statistical data and regularities, cybernetic pattern recognition flexibly adjusting to incoming information, complex computer modeling with ability to cope with significant knowledge uncertainty, and probably many other types.

The reviewed book describes examples of scientifically inspired models with predicting potential that belong to the areas of expertise typically claimed by social and economic sciences, broadly understood. To narrow the selection further, the choices dealt not with specific and pointed predictions, such as short-term market trends or opinion polls, but with more general, macro-level, prospective visions of the future society writ large. The authors lived during the turbulent twentieth century and came from the Soviet cultural sphere. There, as in other countries and cultures, attempts to make very broad predictions about future necessarily involved intentionality and elements of wishful thinking, reflecting, anticipating, while also trying to influence mass behavior and choices of large groups of human actors. An important question

for Rindzevičiūtė, therefore, is not so much the accuracy or inaccuracy of such predictions, as the models' role in shaping the collective creation of human future, the process which she calls orchestration. "I approach the history of scientific prediction not as a trajectory of attempts to control future outcomes, doomed to fail," explains she, "but as an open epistemological experimentation that feeds into the orchestration of the future, which is productive of new subjectivities and modes of action" (9).

The cases are all important and revealing, each deserving a special analysis in its own right. In the 1920s, building upon the advanced tradition of statistics in the late Russian Empire, French sociological thought, and providing theoretical justification for the Bolshevik's New Economic Policy in agriculture, Nikolai Kondratiev developed a theory of market prognostication and introduced his famous model of long-term periods in global business activity. From the late 18th-century industrial revolution to his time, Kondratiev counted three major cycles (each approximately half-century long) of technological innovations leading to a snowball market expansion and then succumbing into a deep economic crisis. In the 1930s USSR, Stalinist industrialization got rid of most of the economic market and its quantitative theories, but even in those conditions, mathematical economists such as Leonid Kantorovich developed models for optimized use of resources and transportation networks resulting in the invention of linear programming methods (and the 1975 Nobel Prize in economics).

A huge boom in quantitative predicting models started in the mid-1950s, inspired by the popularity of Norbert Wiener's cybernetics and first electronic computers. Meanwhile, a new discipline of futurology attracted intense public attention, while empirical sociologists, such as Igor Bestuzhev-Lada, were trying to identify emerging trends and foresee how social life would be fundamentally transformed within a generation. A group of unofficial philosophers, the Moscow Methodological Circle, developed alternative approaches to social analysis guided by the concept of prospective reflexivity, which during the 1970s evolved into Georgii Shchedrovitskii's organizational activity games, a methodology of collectively brainstorming logistical and managerial problems. In the field of Cold War strategic analysis, Vladimir Lefebvre formulated the theory of reflexive control, functionally analogous to, but more sophisticated than the RAND Corporation's game theory. Systems with much higher levels of complexity, such as global biosphere, required more flexible and sophisticated computer modeling than the cybernetic approach of steering governance. Mathematician Nikita Moiseev directed the computer center of the USSR Academy of Sciences and led the team of specialists who in the late Soviet and early post-Soviet years calculated models of global climate change, including nuclear winter and global warming, with built-in allowance for a wider spectrum of

knowledge uncertainties and many unpredictable parameters.

Rindzevičiūtė treats these important achievements as "part of the wider cultural landscape of late modern governance," avoiding the typical tendency of Sovietological studies to Orientalize, dichotomize and conceptually oppose so-called East vs. so-called West. While definitely bearing some birthmarks of the unique special conditions and culture of Soviet society, the discussed examples of scientific predictions and modeling emerged in continuing dialogues with, were influenced by and influenced in return some analogous developments in Europe and America. They also became translatable and transferrable, applicable to similar challenges of late modernity elsewhere, altogether reflecting and demonstrating "how the meaning of scientific prediction changed and diversified over time ... in different areas of science" (2).

While admiring the breadth and sophistication of Rindzevičiūtė's analysis, I still can't help feeling that some core element remained excluded from consideration. The ideologically hugely important and quintessentially Soviet method of orchestrating future, the concept of economic planning for development, received a brief mentioning and dismissive remarks rather than an in-depth analysis. The prejudice here is not the author's as an individual, but of the currently hegemonic economic ideology that tries to deliberately hide and erase from memory the main lessons understood by John Maynard Keynes, John Kenneth Galbraith, and many other economists of mid-twentieth century who lived through the crisis of Great Depression. For them, government regulation was a key method of ultimately saving capitalism from its innate tendency to self-destruct, with the ideological alternative of Soviet socialist planning and investment providing an inspiring challenge, many useful (positive as well as negative) empirical lessons, and sources of selective borrowings, imitations, and adaptations. Reflecting on this experience in 1945, Edward Hallett Carr singled out the theory and practice of planning as the most important Soviet impact on the Western world, at least economically.

The question here is, once again, not how accurate or inaccurate were economic plans, predictions, and calculations of such Soviet authors as Gleb Krzhizhanovskii, Stanislav Strumilin, or Eugene Varga, but their ability to provide a motivating image of future and shape, or flexibly orchestrate, massive efforts and eventual outcomes. Once deemed outdated, their theories and experiences deserve a reconsideration and further analysis again, especially now, as the more recent variety of global capitalism continues sinking deeper into a fundamental crisis. If anything, recent experiences have illustrated that the fundamentalist ideological mantra that there is no alternative has, in its own turn, also become outdated. While the postmodern inability to envision an inspiring different future continues to stifle discussions and is not

conducive to finding unorthodox solutions to ever mounting challenges.

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Mawson, Stephanie Joy. **Incomplete Conquests: The Limits of Spanish Empire in the Seventeenth-Century Philippines.** Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 294 pp., \$130.00, ISBN 978-1501770265. Publication Date: July 2023.

In addition to highlighting the hypnotizingly braided nature of the Central Cordillera Mountains, a 19th-century topographical map of northern Luzon (“Idea aproximada del territorio entre Cagayan e Ilocos,” p. 121), and more specifically the labeled yet blank space in the upper third of the map, casts doubt on established notions of the Spanish conquest of the Philippines as being not only successful, but also “relatively bloodless” (7). In the fifth chapter of her *Incomplete Conquests: The Limits of Spanish Empire in the Seventeenth-Century Philippines*, Stephanie Joy Mawson explores what appears to be a geographical demarcation of a starkly unmapped area of this region, today the Apayao region. The tag that reads “ALZADOS (Desconocido)” —in English “uprising, unexplored”—cartographically indicates how even in the nineteenth century, Spain’s fourth and last century as colonial ruler of the Philippines, Spanish conquest and knowledge about the Philippines remained, as seen in the title of this impactful monograph, incomplete. Not only had the upland communities including the Igorots, the Ilongots, and the Isnegs, among others, strategically wielded geography in their successful efforts to fiercely defend their autonomy, but their successful resistance had “attracted a steady stream of lowland migrants escaping Spanish colonization across a very large region” (122). This snapshot of Mawson’s investigative work underscores the chief accomplishment of this historical inquiry, that is, her ability to employ thoughtful and critical engagement with myriad colonial archives to assemble a compelling counterhistory that peels away the layers of misunderstanding and false binaries shrouding the histories of colonization and resistance—and

everything between and beyond—in the context of the Philippine Archipelago.

Approaches to Philippine colonial history have taken many varied forms: from the claim that Spain civilized the Philippines without recourse to violence (John Leddy Phelan) to the *Ilustrado* view that Spanish colonial violence stymied a once great Philippine civilization leaving the majority of contemporary Filipinos culturally and intellectually inept (José Rizal). There are claims that Philippine history is a lost history since only Spanish records remain (Teodoro Agoncillo) and on the other hand, there are invitations by the likes of William Henry Scott to seek out and read beyond “the cracks in the parchment curtain.” Many a binary are employed when considering the indigenous of the Philippines as either victims of colonialism or collaborators with it, or as fierce resisters of the mountains and Mindanao, as opposed to the passive and willing participants in conversion and colonialism who inhabit the lowland regions of Luzon. Mawson, on the other hand, undergoes impressively broad and inspiringly deep archival work to weave together a counterhistory of the period of conquest that focuses not on “the processes that drove colonization,” but rather the “limitations of the colonial state” and the “histories of resistance, flight, evasion, conflict, and warfare... unearthed from across the breadth of this diverse archipelago” (4).

In this sense, her work develops in parallel to John D. Blanco’s *Counter-Hispanization in the Colonial Philippines: Literature, Law, Religion, and Native Custom* (2024) in that both texts answer “calls for a rethinking of Philippine history in the early modern period with greater attention to the colonial subjects who experienced it rather than the architects who imagined it” (Blanco, 20). Another wonderful interlocutor with whom Mawson engages is Kristie Patricia Flannery, whose *Piracy and the Making of the Spanish Pacific World* (2024) examines the limits of Spanish colonial rule in the Pacific in the context of the threats of piracy and the alliances with native Filipinos and Chinese migrants that the Spanish saw themselves obliged to forge in response.

Mawson’s introduction sets the stage for her study of colonial rebellions which, in part, argues that what has been described as “the inherent weakness of Philippine precolonial society—intense social fragmentation and the lack of any established state-like structures—was in fact a real strength when confronting colonial expansion” (5). A crucial caveat she lays out in the introduction, however is the risk of allowing a focus on rebellion to promote clear cut, but misleading binaries of resistance versus capitulation, while “overlooking far less dramatic and yet no less important processes” and framing “all indigenous actions in relation to the actions of colonizers” (5). She proceeds to critique and repurpose a popular concept in Philippine studies, especially in the writings of Oona Paredes and Stephen Acabado, that of “pericolonialism,” or the effect colonization had on still