

tice politics, and the nuanced development of capitalism in the context of neoliberal globalism. It is a worthwhile read despite its limitations.

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Scott Laderman, *Empire in Waves: A Political History of Surfing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014). 256pp. Hardcover \$65.00.

The serious study—and critique—of surfing as a social phenomenon has been a long time coming. Not that surfing hasn't been written about extensively over the last century—it has, but it has been limited to the confines of popular culture. It is only in the last decade or so that an emerging literature, often referred to as critical surf studies, has begun to slowly show itself. Viewing surfing through the lens of various social science frameworks, scholars are analyzing how the sport and lifestyle of surfing has influenced the modern world across a broad spectrum of sociopolitical realities. *Empire in Waves* by Scott Laderman is one of the most important contributions to this literature so far.

If there are such things as master narratives in popular surf culture (and as a surfer I believe unequivocally that there are), they are rooted not only in the language of the pursuit of personal pleasure and even spiritual enlightenment, but also in the problematic language of “discovery” and “exploration” while that culture simultaneously imagined itself as immune to politics. For Laderman this is more appropriately conceived in terms of empire.

Laderman begins appropriately with what he characterizes as the appropriation of Native Hawaiian culture during the overthrow era of Hawaii, calling it the “Americanization” of surfing. The way this history has invariably been portrayed in popular surf cultural production is as whimsical tales about ancient Hawaii’s “gift” to the modern world. Given that modern surf culture does trace its genesis to Hawaii, this was, he argues, the beginning of surfing’s complicated relationship with imperialism. Devoting the entire first chapter to surf culture’s otherwise highly romanticized founding myth, Laderman links surfing with American imperialism in the *fin de siècle* era, revealing how surfing was initially employed as a tool of colonization in Hawaii and the United States’ growing need to shore up its military presence in the South Pacific.

Fully understanding modern surf culture’s emergence from post-overthrow Hawaii requires a detailed analysis of Alexander Hume Ford, which Laderman faithfully executes in the first chapter. Ford is usually uncritically celebrated as having engineered the genesis of modern surf culture, but it is also well known that Ford made it his personal project to use surfing as a marketing tool to build the Hawaiian tourist industry—now safely in American hands—and Laderman examines this thoroughly. Where he veers off from popular histories is by highlighting

Ford's ideological commitments to American expansionism, which Laderman exposes through an analysis of Ford's prolific writing as a journalist and contextualizing the white supremacist underpinnings of Ford's Deep South upbringing.

After surfing spread to California and Australia in the early twentieth century, in the first half of the century surfing remained fairly localized. But with growing popular interest due in large part to Hollywood's propagation of the genre of teenage beach blanket films, the sport exploded, resulting in the overcrowding of waves. The drive for uncrowded waves gave birth to a new era of surf exploration, portrayed most famously in the iconic film *The Endless Summer*, a film that is revered in surf culture as the original surf adventure film. Laderman, however, locates the film temporally in Cold War America, analyzing it for—among other things—its portrayal of the USA “as a benevolent and sympathetic power” at a time when its image was suffering in much of the world (50). It is in this era, as the author suggests in his second chapter, that the “world [was] made safe for [surf] discovery” (41).

It is this wildly popular notion of surf discovery that Laderman connects with what could be—and has been—called “surf imperialism.” He does this through an extensive look at US involvement in places like Indonesia, particularly in Bali and East Timor (chapter three), and how the expansion of what he calls the surf industrial complex was implicated in the violence in those places in the latter part of the twentieth century. Likewise, in chapter four the author examines surfing's relationship to apartheid South Africa, identifying it as the moment “surfing discovered it was political” (91).

Why is this book important? What kind of contribution does it make to progressive social science literature? For scholars who happen to be surfers it is probably pretty obvious, but to non-surfers it may not be. Surfing long ago ceased to be just a youth sport lurking on the fringes of society. Since the mid-twentieth century surfing has become so entrenched in the American social landscape that it is generally considered to be a subculture. The image of the surfer has become so mainstreamed in the U.S. that it has come to symbolize the epitome of American youth, vitality, and freedom. As Kristen Lawler showed in her 2010 book *The American Surfer: Radical Culture and Capitalism*, market forces long ago seized upon the surfer image to sell everything from clothing to cars. And surfing as a metaphor has been woven into the vernacular of everyday life in the US and beyond (e.g. we “ride the wave” of whatever endeavor we might undertake; we “surf” the internet, etc.). But what escapes the notice of the vast majority of consumers of these images and metaphors is the deeply white male dominant, heteronormative orientation at the root of the actual surfing subcultural phenomenon.

As Laderman (and other scholars in critical surf studies) point out, popular surf writers have narrated a culture that prides itself on its apolitical nature, as though simply not caring about politics somehow renders an individual or group outside the sociopolitical processes that construct our collective social realities. *Empire in Waves* conversely shows us how mainstream surf cultural narratives have got-

ten this wrong by imagining a harmless but largely fictitious self-identity. With surfing as a multibillion dollar transnational industry that inserts itself into and exploits the most marginalized communities in the world (one recent study found that places with good waves contribute \$50 billion annually to the global economy), surf culture can no longer morally justify ignoring its impacts on these peoples and places. *Empire in Waves* is a wake-up call to this truth.

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Kojin Karatani, *The Structure of World History: From Modes of Production to Modes of Exchange*, Trans. Michael K. Bourdaghs (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014). 376pp. Paperback \$26.95.

Most modern academic disciplines have constructed a range of theories to help explain both the field itself, and the tools specialists use to analyze and understand it. In many disciplines this has led to the construction of broad consensual paradigms—models that help make sense of the otherwise confusing morass of processes and events. The same has not been true of the discipline of history, with one or two exceptions. Certainly, for much of the time history has been written, the genre of universal history has been highly esteemed, an approach that treats the affairs of the world as though they were those of a single whole, and which creates a thematic framework to demonstrate that a genuine understanding of the whole reveals something much more useful than just the sum of its constituent parts. During the nineteenth century, however, the rise of the nation-state led to the replacement of universal history with more specialized and tightly focused national and biographical histories. Yet ironically, during this same century, German philosophers such as Kant, Hegel, and particularly Karl Marx, were attempting to construct broad historical frameworks that fused the constituent parts of history into paradigms as broad and inclusive as nineteenth century scientific paradigms such as evolution by natural selection or geological uniformitarianism.

In *The Structure of World History*, Japanese philosopher Kojin Karatani offers a modern universal history that, very much in the spirit of Karl Marx, offers a framework for constructing a more equitable future as well as making sense of the past. Karatani criticizes increasing disciplinary specialization, which:

has resulted in the loss of any totalizing, systematic perspective for comprehending the structures in which politics, religion, philosophy and other dimensions are interrelated, as well as the abandonment of any attempt to find a way to supersede existing conditions (ix-x).

One of the strengths of this book then, particularly for historians working in the fields of world-systems, globalization studies, world history or big history, is that it offers a universal analysis of global systems that helps us better understand inter-