appreciated by readers interested in understanding the phenomenon of the college experience, the diverse forms it takes, and its role in the education marketplace. In addition, those who do not inhabit the world of higher education today may be surprised and edified by this critical illustration of the ways in which the various forms of experience in education, much like skills before them, have become subject to quantification and audit as packaged commodities in neoliberal colleges and universities.

SIBYLLA LEON GUERRERO

The Newcomers: Finding Refuge, Friendship, and Hope in an American Classroom

by Helen Thorpe
New York: Scribner, 2017. 313 pp. $28.00 (cloth).

Helen Thorpe's *The Newcomers: Finding Refuge, Friendship, and Hope in an American Classroom* offers a window into refugee resettlement and education in the United States. A journalist and author of several books, Thorpe builds on scholarship related to resettled refugees' language acquisition and schooling (e.g., Bigelow, 2010), employing longitudinal participant observations and interviews to portray the education of newcomers within the sociopolitical contexts that inform their experiences. Through her journalistic narrative, Thorpe engages with a wide variety of topics related to refugee resettlement and migration and does so in a way that is accessible to a broad audience. Her portrayal of a newcomer English class in Denver, Colorado, allows her to write about language teaching and learning for new arrivals, refugee resettlement policies and practices in the US, and the details of various conflicts around the world, including in Syria and Burma, which directly affect the students she profiles. Her data collection focuses on South High School in Denver and extends to Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where she seeks to understand the political and personal histories that have brought one family from East Africa to the United States.

The book, organized by seasons, allows readers to follow the students' academic school year. In the fall, we join seven students on their first day at South High School and meet their teacher, Eddie Williams, "the sort of teacher who devoted an enormous portion of his warmth, vitality, and intellect to his students" (p. 4). The seven students in Mr. Williams's newcomer class wear "shut-door expressions on their faces" (p. 4). They're all new to Denver and come from around the world, including from Mexico, Mozambique, and Thailand. They are at various stages in their English language and literacy development, with Saúl from El Salvador speaking the fewest words of English and Rahim and Ghasem from Afghanistan speaking and reading well enough that they would soon be transferred to more advanced English language classes.

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As the seasons progress, we learn about some of the stressors that students face outside of school and also watch small victories within the classroom walls. By winter, Mr. Williams's newcomer class has grown in size, and students are beginning to settle into what it means for them to live in the US. Lisbett, a student from El Salvador, worries about her upcoming immigration hearings, particularly as Donald Trump becomes the Republican presidential candidate. Jakleen and Mariam, originally from Syria, wrack up absences as the weather worsens, while Solomon and Methusela, from DRC, attend determinedly every day. By spring, the students have made considerable progress in the development of their English language skills, and we see them becoming friends, rambunctiously joking with one another. Some have even moved out of the newcomer class and into advanced English Language Acquisition classes, a major milestone for their integration into the larger South High School community.

Seeking a broader perspective on the refugee crisis, Thorpe shifts her focus away from Denver in the summer, when she travels to the DRC and Uganda. In this particularly incisive section of the book, she discusses the connections between diverse global conflicts and US involvement overseas. Through her time in DRC, she "became aware of the extensive economic links" (p. 341) between the DRC and the US, particularly as they relate to smartphone and laptop manufacturing. She explains that 30 percent of the world's coltan and 60 percent of its Cobalt, which are used in small electronic devices and lithium batteries, come from the Congo. The profits from these resources are used to fuel militia groups that continue to spur violence in the region, and children make up approximately 40 percent of the mining workforce. Thus, by buying electronics that use these materials, American consumers contribute to the conflict. As Thorpe explains, "What is happening in the DRC sounds barbaric and far-off, and we want to believe that we are not complicit," yet, considering the materials that make up her cell phone, "we carry small parts of the Congo everywhere we go, in the very devices we use to define ourselves as belonging to the developed world" (p. 342). This chapter importantly shifts the tone of the book to show the links between the conflicts that have resulted in unprecedented numbers of refugees (UNHCR, 2017) and European and US colonial and contemporary resource extraction.

A key strength of the book is Thorpe's deep look into the particular stories of students, following them both to their places of origin, as in the case of the students from the DRC, and into their families and neighborhoods in the US. These multisited observational and interview data allow the reader to see how struggles with housing and employment, for example, influence students' experiences of education in the US. Describing the work of Troy Cox, a case worker with a nonprofit organization in Denver, Thorpe explains that he has the difficult task of explaining to refugees that "they must surrender the vain illusion that from this point forward everything would be easy. Not at all. Everything was going to be brutally hard" (p. 134). The uphill battle Cox

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references echoes research with resettled refugees in New York City who hope that resettlement promises a more certain future but more often experience unexpected challenges related to affordable and safe housing, stable work, and educational opportunities (Dryden-Peterson & Reddick, 2017).

Another strength of the book is its focus on what is working in the schooling that refugee students receive. Through Thorpe's writing, for example, readers experience an educational environment that is enhanced by robust extracurricular opportunities such as track and student government, both of which refugee students join. Similarly, Mr. Williams is a dedicated teacher who embraces each student he receives and who works tirelessly to ensure that his new arrivals thrive at school. It's important to remember, however, that many refugees resettled in the US and other wealthy countries do not find such enriching educational environments. Rather, newcomers often find themselves attending school in under-resourced environments, whether in New York or in Berlin (Davis, 2017; Dryden-Peterson & Reddick, 2017; Vergin, 2018). In many respects, Thorpe's presentation of South High School offers a model of schooling that supports refugee students' academic and social well-being, one that other schools can learn from. That said, it is vital that readers keep in mind how unusual this instructional environment is for newly arrived refugees and immigrants in US classrooms. It's also important that readers understand that fully 84 percent of refugees are displaced to low-income countries neighboring their places of origin, with only 1 percent resettled to places further afield, like the US or Canada (UNHCR, 2017). It's easy to imagine when reading *The Newcomers* that the US hosts one of the largest populations of refugees in the world; the book would be strengthened by acknowledging that the vast majority of educational opportunities for refugees are provided in low-income countries proximate to conflicts (UNHCR, 2012).

Finally, Thorpe does not include a section about her strategies for data collection and analysis, which would have enhanced the book. She shares that she sees the classroom as "a mirror of the global [refugee] crisis" and hopes that "by telling the stories of various students, it would be possible to illustrate the crisis as a whole" (p. 62), but it is not clear precisely how she collected and analyzed her data and how she chose which students or conflicts to highlight in her text. We learn early on that she is a journalist and thus using her experience and training in journalism to guide her work. We also know that she spends a year at the school and that she travels to students' homes and to the DRC to learn more about students' families. As a scholar interested in research about migration and schooling, I would have appreciated more details about her data collection and analysis, as well as about how her own positionality as a white, female, US citizen shaped her work. Somewhat more information about her research design would have provided useful background information and made her an even more trustworthy narrator for this important story.

Through her ambitious project tracking refugee students and their families in Colorado over the course of a school year, and in exploring pre-resettlement

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experiences in the DRC, Thorpe offers a window into the world of one classroom and a jumping off point for a broader conversation about refugee resettlement in the US. For readers interested in learning about the global refugee crisis, and especially about the schooling experiences of refugee students living in the United States, *The Newcomers* is an excellent resource.

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