provide analyses of the structure of songs, leaving readers to imagine what they might sound like in reality.

The final chapter of *Breaking Rocks* discusses the phenomenon of “charismatic fetishism”, an important local form of leader-worship that undergirds much of the patronage system. Returning to Marxist theory, Trapido asks, “How are authority figures able to attract a retinue and portray themselves as ‘good givers’ when, in reality, their power is derived from onerous forms of exploitation?” (194). As an alternative to Marx’s “commodity fetishism,” Trapido suggests that “charismatic fetishism” is at the root of local forms of economic inequality. He ties trending ideologies to beliefs in the mystical potency of leaders and their ability to wield power over others. In the final section of this chapter, Trapido grapples with theories that seek to explain economic “failure” in Africa through the lack of the “principle of frugality” (226). He contests this view and argues that larger issues prevail, ones related to the instability of local industries and the flight of capital from the continent. Unfortunately, his discussion here is too brief to address the arguments thoroughly, and he does not do justice to the complexity of these debates.

Ultimately, *Breaking Rocks* takes as its center an intriguing financial system that has become integral to the survival of the DRC over the past five decades. It brings together musical creativity, class dependency, and global economies through depictions of local and international markets. Through extensive examples, anecdotes, and historical research, Trapido conveys the complexity of life in Kinshasa and its strong reliance on the music patronage system. At times however, his theoretical arguments come at the cost of more extensive explanations of crucial social processes and clearer descriptions of events and people. Furthermore, the intertwining of history in the present alongside the wealth of data might leave some readers confused as to the chronology of events, even as this information provides a deep encounter with life in the DRC. Finally, a clearer explanation of terminology at the outset would also serve to facilitate the reading and ensure accessibility across audiences. Given its wealth of data, *Breaking Rocks* will likely remain an instructive work for many, including researchers of contemporary Africa, those interested in popular music industries, and economic theorists.

*Bina Brody*

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*Lissa: A Story about Medical Promise, Friendship, and Revolution* is the first book in a series that presents ethnographic research in graphic novel form. An anthropological study of medicine, friendship, and the 2011 Egyptian uprising, this graphic novel expands the ways anthropologists can write and present ethnographic research. The book is divided into three parts: “Cairo,” “Five Years Later,” and “Revolution.” Individually, each section presents a range of themes that are juxtaposed through Layla and Anna’s unlikely friendship. As
a whole, the three sections chart the growth of Layla and Anna and their ways of reconciling illness, death, and political turmoil that lead to the 2011 Egyptian uprising.

The first section, “Cairo,” introduces Layla and Anna by foregrounding issues of class, which set the stage for understanding Layla and Anna’s experiences throughout the story. Layla is an Egyptian from a lower socioeconomic class, while Anna, a white American living in Cairo, has a higher socioeconomic status. Layla and Anna live in the same building but occupy different spaces. Anna lives in a well-furnished flat in the building, Layla dwells downstairs. Layla’s father is a bawab, a doorman whose primary job is residential building maintenance; this includes building cleanliness and security, as well as attending to the tenants’ needs. In the first few pages of the novel the authors create an intimate and playful scene between Layla and Anna, which is then layered with visual cues and crisp dialogue to comment on classist attitudes among many Egyptians. A tenant named Madame Nagla is accompanied with a friend who says, “How can the Americans just leave their daughter with the bawab’s family?! . . . Filthy peasants!” (21). Meanwhile, Madame Nagla demands that Layla collect her dry-cleaning items. Layla’s father, Abu Hasan, is introduced next, riding his bicycle with grocery bags through the crowded streets of Cairo. Madame Nagla reappears, addressing Abu Hasan, “Come back here and pay for this damage . . . you brought me broken eggs!” (25). Class dynamics and classist attitudes are a layered component of the novel’s story—especially as it relates to medical care. Additionally, Anna struggles with her mother’s cancer relapse, which leads to her death by the end of this section. Afterwards, Anna moves back to the United States but visits Layla in Cairo often.

“Five Years Later” picks up with Layla and Anna in college. Layla is studying medicine at a public college in Cairo and Anna is majoring in photography at a college in Boston. The major themes that this section tackles are illness, care, and access to treatment. Both Layla and Anna undergo difficult medical-care situations. For example, as a medical student doing rounds at the Cairo University Hospital, Layla witnesses an especially egregious case of advanced cancer. The doctor-professor complains, “These ignorant peasants always wait until the last minute to come and get treatment.” Layla boldly responds: “Most people don’t get good treatment even if they do come early! And why should people come see doctors who think they are ‘ignorant peasants’?! ” (94–95).

When Layla receives news about her father’s illness, she begins to navigate the bureaucratic structures that hinder her father’s treatment: needing to travel far to visit a special clinic, not able to afford the right kind of medicine, struggling to locate certain medications they can afford. The issue of class is interwoven throughout this section as well. From Layla’s perspective, her family’s marginalization in Egyptian society presents inequalities to adequate medical care for her father’s illness. Meanwhile, Anna continues to struggle with her mother’s cancer-ridden death and opts for an expensive preventive procedure. Anna’s decision, which she hides from Layla, is one that causes great strife between the two friends and is addressed throughout “Five Years Later.” Both Layla and Anna experience the ripple effects of illness and pain but conceive of it differently due to their cultural upbringing, often finding themselves unable to fully understand what the other is grappling with.
In spite of Layla and Anna’s differences, the authors attempt to converge their experiences on common issues they face, like disruption and despair. Through the layering of class dynamics, the authors bring to the forefront anthropological ideas around suffering, which gives voice to the physical and emotional pain of people battling with poverty, social marginalization, and disease. These human problems result from what political, economic, and institutional power does to people; in the case of this ethnography issues of politics and power are narrated through the events of the 2011 revolution.

“Revolution” is the final section of the book and further unravels Layla and Anna’s friendship. The point of contention in their friendship is resolved nicely by the end of the section and promotes cross-cultural understanding and solidarity. “Revolution” is a section dedicated to detailing the beginnings of the 2011 Egyptian uprising, leaving the ending unclear, in keeping with the meaning of lissa: “not yet.” In addition to class inequalities, issues of poverty, unemployment, corruption, and police brutality are interwoven in this section through the visuals and conversation. A culmination of these problems is shown through Ahmed’s character, Layla’s brother. Ahmed was introduced previously as someone who is unemployed and has hepatitis C. One night, Layla catches him taking tramadol—an opioid medication that is commonly abused by “street delinquents” (200), which Layla reminds Ahmed that he is not. During a mass demonstration that ends violently, Layla finds Ahmed in a clinic after having been shot by a sniper (200–207). The collaborative nature of this project truly shines in this section because of the partnership with Ganzeer, an exiled Egyptian street artist, who was asked to design a mural (235) that incorporates work by his street art peers to carry forward Lissa’s story. During a stroll in downtown Cairo, Layla and Anna admire the street art that sprung to life during the revolution and come to the realization that they are part of a larger world where many have sacrificed, and that “we still have so much to fight for” (232). In their own way, both Layla and Anna are fighting for a better future.

A final theme that is present in Lissa’s story is temporality. Underlying Anna and Layla’s friendship, one that includes conflict, misunderstanding, and growth, is time. Lissa is attuned to the passage of time through the use of grayscale, as well as through traditional textual markers. Mornings and evenings are cued by light and dark image tonality. Multiple events take place in a day, and over a number of days. However, years are marked by the three chapters, spanning a specific time in Anna and Layla’s life. When not printed in color, many graphic novels are printed in high-contrast black and white images. Lissa is unique in incorporating gray tones and reserving the use of black to its symbolic color reference of mourning, often showing similarities between Layla’s and Anna’s different upbringings. For example, when Anna’s mother dies, Anna is dressed in black at the funeral where black is an obvious color (44, 52); both Layla and Anna are dressed in black abayas when they visit the city of the dead in Cairo (218). Grayscale aids in the passing of time. Throughout the story there are attempts by the characters to stop time, squeeze out more time, and accept its passage. Each person in the novel is well constructed as individuals in relation to their families and cultures, live their own struggles, and engage with distinct and competing visions of temporality. These visions of temporality mirror those of mortality, which is present throughout the novel through various ailments and deaths.
Lissa covers an array of important issues in contemporary Egypt in a way that is thorough, accessible, and humanistic. It is a good book to assign in introductory courses in anthropology as well as other visually themed courses. Yet, to follow the story’s arguments requires a visual literacy that is not needed for traditional articles. For that reason, the book includes teaching materials, which include an essay that provides direction for the first-time comics reader, a short piece on graphic novels as ethnography, an interview with the authors, a teaching guide with questions, and further bibliographic resources. Not only does Lissa pave the way to new avenues of disseminating ethnographic research, it ensures that those reading and teaching the novel find it accessible and engaging.

Nama Khalil


In The Politics of Blackness: Racial Identity and Political Behavior in Contemporary Brazil, Gladys Mitchell-Walthour seeks to explain Afro-Brazilian political behavior and political inequality in the cities of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Salvador. These cities are among the largest in Brazil that have significant Afro-Brazilian populations. Even so, distinctions among them that relate to income inequality, racial composition, and racial politics allow for a dynamic comparison of Afro-Brazilian experiences and how these experiences, in turn, inform political opinions. Mitchell-Walthour centers racial group attachment and experience of racial discrimination to demonstrate variations in political behavior among Afro-Brazilians using the Latin American Political Opinion Project national surveys for 2010 and 2012 (LAPOP) and original survey data that she collected in 2005–6 and 2008. She also relies on in-depth interviews that she conducted in 2012 (32).

The opening pages of The Politics of Blackness guide readers through some of the complexities of race in contemporary Brazil. Importantly, Mitchell-Walthour lays out three aspects of color—social status, physical characteristics, and gender—that are central to the Brazilian context. She also situates her work within the current and existing scholarship on Afro-Brazilians and race among scholars such as Tianna S. Paschel, Keisha-Khan Perry, and Alexandre Emboaba Costa. Her own work adds nuance to understandings of race in Brazil and places the experience of race as central to her arguments on political inequality and racial discourse. The Politics of Blackness demonstrates the importance of prioritizing intersectional experiences in conjunction with skin color to understand political behavior and political outcomes, particularly in countries that have recently passed through both democratic and authoritarian regimes.

In chapter 1, “Afro-Brazilian Political Underrepresentation,” Mitchell-Walthour is concerned with how Afro-Brazilians explain political underrepresentation and social exclusion of Afro-Brazilians in spaces that are perceived as being white spaces. Even