

## **Critical Book Review: Further Guidance by Jonathon Turnbull (University of Cambridge)**

If you're just getting started with writing, you may find our [top tips for book reviews](#) a helpful introduction.

It's up to you whether you would like to offer a comprehensive review of the book, or if you would like to write your report on a particular section/chapter/theme that you think deserves most attention.

### **The following links might be quite useful starting points:**

- <https://writing.wisc.edu/handbook/assignments/crinofiction/>
- <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2015/03/27/essay-writing-academic-book-reviews>

### **I suggest taking notes as you read, prompted by the following questions:**

- What is the purpose of the book - its thesis? Is it convincing? How does the author convince you personally? What is their aim in writing the book?
- What sources are the authors using? Which sources are being (intentionally or unintentionally) excluded? How does this affect the argument?
- How is the book situated within the wider discipline of geography, in this case cultural geographies concerned with landscape, but also class, power, etc.?
- Are the theoretical arguments and the case study brought together well?
- Does the book connect to any other areas of geography that you have studied so far (at school or at Cambridge)? What are the links?
- How does the book read in 2021 (/current year)? Might it help us answer any questions relevant to contemporary politics?
- Are you enjoying it?

### **In terms of writing, you might want to follow the following structure, but feel free to adapt this to your argument as you see fit:**

1. Introduction: theme of the book, its relevance to geographers, the book's purpose, and a brief outline of what you will do in the essay
2. Summary: a concise summary of the book and its aim, perhaps including some information on the authors
3. Methods/Sources: what did the authors do? Why?
4. Strengths: did the book achieve its aim? How/how not? Here, you might choose to explicitly focus in detail on one part of the book, or you might be more general. This is your choice. (We will discuss the whole book, though, even if you choose to focus on one chapter).
5. Weaknesses: what did the book leave out, or how could it have been better? Comment on the [positionality](#) of the authors, and which perspectives are missing.
6. Conclusion: what did you think overall? Who else might enjoy this? Why is it relevant to geographers? How might it be updated to speak to the current moment?

You might want to draw on other sources and examples that were published more recently on the theme of the book to make your argument, but I'm not expecting a huge reference list here - the only reading set is the book itself.

# R O U T E S

The Journal For Student Geographers

This is an exceptional example of a critical book review that I read recently: [https://antipodeonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Book-review\\_Palmer-on-Daggett.pdf](https://antipodeonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Book-review_Palmer-on-Daggett.pdf). You might take some inspiration from that.

There are also some good textbooks you might refer to including Key Methods in Geography (<https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/key-methods-in-geography/book242938#contents>) - as a side note, the Key \_\_\_X\_\_\_ in Geography series is fantastic and I still turn to it regularly, alongside the *Dictionary of Human Geography* (Gregory et al., 2009), which is the best resource to start with on any topic.