

# Book reviews

## Economic/applied anthropology

CARRIER, JAMES G. (ed.). *Confronting environments: local understanding in a globalizing world*. viii, 198 pp., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: AltaMira Press, 2004. \$72.00 (cloth), \$26.95 (paper)

James Carrier's edited volume on local understandings of environmental issues is a timely contribution to the burgeoning literature on grassroots-level perceptions and understandings of local environments, and can be best described as an 'anthropology of the environment'. The book positions itself between anthropological approaches and geographical representation of local perceptions of the environment, and focuses on a range of places and aspects of people's surroundings from the local to the global. Thus, the contributions use examples from various locations (e.g. the Caribbean, European countries, Pakistan, Japan) both to disentangle the meaning of 'environment' for various stakeholder groups who are often in direct confrontation with each other over scarce resources (e.g. forests, fish) and to analyse the impacts of local events (e.g. tourism, environmental protection) on human-environment interpretations and understandings.

The book comprises nine chapters (including preface and conclusions) that each discuss how stakeholder groups understand and interpret their environments. James Carrier's introductory preface provides a challenging analysis of what the notion of 'environment' means to different people, and highlights the often abstract nature of the term, the inherent 'tribal understanding'

associated with different interpretations of 'environment', as well as the power of environmental discourses in environmental management decision-making and the problem of translation of these discourses between stakeholder groups.

The next five chapters focus on specific case examples that highlight how local understandings of environments have changed because of specific environmental challenges faced by local communities. For example, Macleod discusses issues of power and resource allocation in a Caribbean community (chap. 1), highlighting how the opening of an area in the Dominican Republic to global tourism has created new sets of meanings and expectations among local villagers concerning their surroundings. This chapter is particularly useful in showing how people's surroundings are both construed and shaped by the imposition of external powerful orientations and expectations, and the dangers of treating as uniformly 'indigenous' or 'tribal' what in fact represent a diversity of interests and orientations. This theme is taken further by Theodossopoulos' analysis of diverse views of the environment in the context of an environmental dispute on a Greek island (chap. 2). Here, beach tourism has had severe implications for local biodiversity preservation and has led to a clash between external conservationists' views and villagers' interpretations of sustainable environmental management. Ensuing 'discourses of power' exemplify that locals often do not communicate their environmental views to the outside world effectively. This problem of translation of environmental perceptions from the local to the national/global is also the theme of the next three chapters. Thus, MacDonald's contribution

on the global ecology and the politics of conservation in Northern Pakistan (chap. 3), Kirby's analysis of the interlinkages between toxic pollution, illness, and discursive shifts in a Tokyo community (chap. 4), and Carrier's assessment of environmental conservation and institutional environments in Jamaica (chap. 5) highlight a variety of interlinked issues, including the disenfranchising of people's local knowledge (often embedded in neo-colonial discourses) (Pakistan), changes in the views of locals about their environments after severe pollution events (Japan), and how locals can acquire new understandings of their environments through the establishment of new institutions such as national parks partly managed and funded by external agencies and institutions (Jamaica). The last two empirical chapters broaden out the discussion, with Berglund's analysis of the role of national forests in the Finnish psyche (chap. 6) and Milton's UK-based analysis of the link between direct action and environmental protest (chap. 7). While Berglund's chapter highlights the importance of national resources (e.g. forests) for national self-identity, she also emphasizes that these forests can serve local and personal interests as well as global 'external' influences. Milton, meanwhile, highlights the importance of situating environmental discourses in the changing context of a shift from local to national to global environmental concerns, and how government regulations have attempted to adjust to these changing understandings of environmental issues.

Unlike other edited books, which often lack a synthesizing, concluding chapter that brings together the various strands of the discussion, in Carrier's edited volume Josiah Heyman provides very apt concluding remarks about the common themes addressed in the book. Heyman highlights how the book successfully joins a long tradition of anthropological attention to people and environments, but also criticizes anthropologists' lack of engagement with issues of environmental translation and discourses from a local perspective. He rightly emphasizes how the authors in this book combine the culturalist and political ecology traditions to highlight how different understandings of the environment are shaped by, and respond to, recent historical changes in politics and economics and that different styles of environmental understanding embody specific power relations.

Carrier's book contributes specifically to three arenas of investigation: (1) that while we should contrast between 'abstract' versus 'personal' understandings of the environment, these

different understandings are not the exclusive possession of specific stakeholder groups (and that the notion of 'local' environmental knowledge may need further unpacking); (2) that power is implicated in environmental discourses and knowledge construction and dissemination, but that these discourses can change drastically based on sudden environmental change and/or the imposition of environmental views by 'other' actor groups; (3) that changes in how locals construe their views of the environment are almost always embedded in processes of environmental destruction or change both at the local and global scales.

On the whole, therefore, this book is a very useful contribution to the broader literature on human-environment interactions. Although most of the eight contributors to this edited volume are anthropologists, it will none the less be useful for students and researchers from many disciplines beyond anthropology, including, for example, human geography, political ecology, and environmental studies, as well as those with a general interest in the social, cultural, and political-economic aspects of local environmental management and thinking. Most importantly, it should also act as a trigger for policy-makers to re-think local approaches that attempt to influence and guide human-environment interaction.

GEOFF A. WILSON *University of Plymouth*

FRATKIN, ELLIOT & ERIC ABELLA ROTH (eds). *As pastoralists settle: social, health, and economic consequences of pastoral sedentarization in Marsabit district, Kenya*. x, 280 pp., maps, tables, figs, illus., bibliogr. London, New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2005.

The book is an edited volume that encompasses twenty years of the editors' and other contributors' work on the changing human-environmental circumstances of pastoralists in Marsabit district, northern Kenya, in general, and among the Rendille and Ariaal pastoralists in particular. It is rich in data from intense longitudinal research.

Marsabit district is interesting because it manifests lowlands, highlands, is home to several ethnic groups (e.g. Ariaal, Rendille, Boran, Gabra, and Somali), and possesses many different patterns of settlement (e.g. mission towns, mountain, and arid land towns). The book's focus is on elucidating the processes of sedentarization of these pastoralists, the history

of the processes (e.g. chaps 1 and 2), reasons why pastoralists settle (all chapters), consequences of sedentism on diet, nutrition, and health (chaps 7, 9, and 10), ecological effects (chap. 4), implications for women's welfare (chap. 8), and economic consequences (chap. 5), among others. Pastoralists have settled for a number of reasons, including political conflict, declining territory, and population growth, endogenous and exogenous, both of which have put pressure on the land and the resources. Add recurring drought, prolonged food aid, and a shift to commercial livestock production with its emphasis on beef and milk products and the results are escalating changes, both positive and negative. One of the major points the book makes is that sedentism is neither recent nor is it a foregone conclusion. It also provides a series of trade-offs for people.

The cultural history of the region is described in detail (chaps 2 and 3) with a nice description of the flow of different peoples in and out of the region and where on the land they herded and settled. There are circumstances in which sedentism has reversed or becomes split among households so that part of a household is settled while another is not. For example, pastoralists in planned-scheme settlements were more likely to rebuild livestock herds than other settled people (chap. 6). But the overall trend seems to be fewer movements of people and livestock and contraction of the home range, particularly in the dry season (chap. 4). This is due to the influence of increased settlement and the fact that the land is becoming more fragmented, resulting in a loss of ability to move across the landscape, phenomena that have occurred in pastoral rangelands around the world (see Kathleen A. Galvin *et al.* (eds), *Fragmentation in semi-arid and arid landscapes: consequences for human and natural landscapes*, 2007).

One of the benefits of such a book on a set of related topics is that it demonstrates the variability in not only causes but also outcomes of sedentarization for pastoralists. There are many nuanced factors that can only be found by writing about such a complex set of issues among a group of people in the same region. For example, Nathan and others find that sedentism often has a negative impact on childhood nutritional status (chaps 9 and 10) and health of women (chaps 7 and 11). On the other hand, diet intake showed less seasonality among settled women than pastoral women, but socio-economic status affected the diet of both groups (chap. 11).

People in settled communities often have increased access to education, especially for girls, and increased proximity to markets, jobs, and health care (chaps 5, 6, 12, and 13). For instance, Roth and Ngugi (chap. 13) found that educated women have a lower risk of sexually transmitted diseases. Alternatively, female circumcision does not seem to diminish in settled pastoralists relative to more nomadic herders, but closer access to health care for settled women reduces the risk of serious complications from the procedure (chap. 12).

Settlement is associated with increasing socio-economic stratification, though the cause and effect here is difficult to distinguish. Wealth differentials are, however, associated with increasing commercialization of the pastoral economy. Large herdowners and landowners have advantages over small ones, which has numerous implications. The process of wealth accumulation has repercussions for access to food resources (chaps 4 and 9), maintenance of social capital (chap. 4), and privatization of the land (chap. 7), among others.

Does settlement provide an adaptive strategy for these populations? Well that depends – on who is settled, where they are settled, and the circumstances of settlement. The book falls short in being inadequately edited. This takes away from the otherwise excellent content. However, it is worth a good read none the less and is an excellent data-rich reference for information on the causes and effects of sedentarization among pastoralists.

KATHLEEN A. GALVIN *Colorado State University*

NGAI, PUN. *Made in China: women factory workers in a global workplace*. xi, 227 pp., tables, illus., bibliogr. London, Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press/Hong Kong: Univ. Press, 2005. £14.95 (paper)

*Made in China* is a detailed and compelling account of factory work under Hu Jintao's market socialism. It describes how rural women learn to become *dangomei* (factory workers) through a mixture of capitalist discipline and state oppression. Meteor, the site of Pun Ngai's fieldwork, is a micro-electronics company owned by Hong Kong businessmen and located in the rich Nangshan district of Shenzhen, pullulating with skyscrapers, luxury hotels, and department stores which the workers can only gaze at from a distance when they return to the factory dormitories at night. Now deserted by multinational capital, Shenzhen is a mixture of

'anarchism and heterotopias' (p. 35) where the new middle-class cohabits with petty capitalists, state bureaucrats, and a multitude of migrant labourers. Through the governmental Shenzhen Labour Service Control (LSC) and the private and informal labour market, these rural workers find only temporary jobs and accommodation and are denied the status of both permanent workers and residents (*hukou*).

In Meteor, 'lazy' and 'peasant' 'socialist bodies' are transformed into capitalist subjects through the disciplinary machine of multinational capital. Of the 500 employees of Meteor, 75 per cent work on the production line, 90 per cent of whom are women. Work starts at 8 a.m. and finishes at 6 p.m. (at 10 p.m. when overtime is taken into consideration). 'Becoming *dangomei*' is a relenting and painful process of sensory and emotional adaptation to the production line. Flashing lights indicate different stages of the production process; popular Cantonese music is played in-between shifts to clear the workers' minds; plastic curtains are sealed on the windows to prevent them from being distracted by the outside world; English letters are posted on the walls to allow them to decipher the meanings of the words printed on the components to be assembled; illustrations of the production tasks are scattered all over the line. In the semiconductor assembly room, women with nimble fingers handle small dies, wires, and printed circuits using microscopes and in artificial light and temperatures which give them chronic headaches, dizziness, and pains.

As in other Chinese industrial ethnographies (e.g. Ching Kwan Lee's *Gender and the South China miracle*, 1998), locality and regionalism reinforce gender divides within the workforce. For instance, the monthly wages of Hong Kong male managers are between 1,000 and 1,500 yuan and the wages of line leaders, generally from Canton, Chazhou, or Sichuan, are double those of line workers from 'backward provinces' (as low as 300 yuan) and often as high as the wages of the supervisory staff. Kinship and ethnicity are also central to the workers' solidarity and informal organization on the shopfloor, where ethnic and kinship enclaves articulate in 'honeycomb patterns' (p. 56). Paradoxically, these women workers escaped their role of family daughter and the patriarchal hierarchy of the village, but ended up reproducing the manager's paternalistic vision of *dangomei* as factory daughters and sexualized bodies. Pun Ngai avoids the pitfall of portraying

these factory daughters as defenceless *vis-à-vis* the patriarchal forces of market socialism. On the contrary, sometimes they seem to enjoy the lure of city life through window shopping, Cantonese pop music, and flirting with the company managers. On the shopfloor they are engaged in 'minor genres of resistance', slowing down production, writing petitions, joking and gossiping about the management, and challenging the industrial machine by 'acting out' their menstrual cramps, headaches, and other bodily pains. But it is in the private realm of the dormitory that, according to the author, resistance becomes most evident. In their terrifying screams during their dreams the workers 'resumed the unity of their body and their self' (p. 186) and healed the pain of factory labour. *Made in China* has two main strengths. First, it extends the micro-sociology of the factory into the stratified and globalized spaces of Shenzhen and into broader individual trajectories of rural and urban divide. Secondly, it boldly embraces class analysis in the contemporary context of post-Mao China. It argues that under market socialism the flow of rural migrants into new urban areas gave rise not to a new Chinese working class but to a hybrid formation, 'half peasants and half proletariat' (p. 193). But unfortunately Pun Ngai constructs class through a personalized, individualized and subjective narrative which eschews structural analysis. The book suggests that the Chinese *dangomei* are 'floating people' – suspended between the rural and the urban, the modern and the backward, and the individualism of Western capitalism and the collectivism of Chinese socialism – and that in their exposure to multiple forms of oppression they are able to develop 'a new cartography of transgressions' (p. 196). From the author's vivid and disheartening portrayal of the alienated existence of these *dangomei* subjects the reader will be forgiven for questioning the effectiveness of their minor genres of resistance against the 'triple oppression' of the state, the market, and family life.

MASSIMILIANO MOLLONA, *Goldsmiths College*

PINK, SARAH (ed.). *Applications of anthropology: professional anthropology in the twenty-first century*. viii, 244 pp., illus., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2006. \$65.00 (cloth), \$25.00 (paper)

The title of this book is a significant variation on the older term 'applied anthropology', indicating that anthropology can have numerous

forms of application to the world today. The chapters fall into different categories. Sarah Pink's introduction and chapters 1 (by Susan Wright) and 2 (by David Mills) (part I) are historical and provide useful overviews of the gradual and often reluctant ways in which professional associations in the UK came to deal with the old issues of 'pure' versus 'applied' research and how to provide jobs for graduates, partly by creating links with industry and government bodies in the fields of personal entrepreneurship. Part II contains a pair of studies arguing for particular viewpoints. Simon Roberts (chap. 3) describes a range of projects he has carried out using ethnographic methods in which anthropological approaches have become a 'brand' of research that can be 'consumed' by business clients. Adam Drazin takes an opposite tack (chap. 4). He advocates engagement with other research methods in the arena of consumer consultancy, including laboratory-based research and multi-disciplinary teamwork, in which the anthropologist may challenge the research brief and seek ways of exchange with the subjects of the study. Drazin uses the well-worn commodity/gift distinction to draw contrasts between his work in Romania and the UK.

Part III is continuous with part II. Maia Green (chap. 5), whose earlier work has been on Christianity in Africa (Tanzania), explains how her involvement in social development research aimed at reducing 'poverty' entails a different framework from her ethnographic studies. Mills Hills (chap. 6) describes his work for the UK Ministry of Defence and the use of network theory in the planning of warfare (the topic here seems related to an earlier time; now, surely, the focus must be more on terror and terrorism, see, e.g., Strathern *et al.* (eds), *Terror and violence*, 2006). Elizabeth Hart (chap. 7) writes very interestingly of her work on the National Health Service in the UK, pointing out how nurses and cleaners in hospitals may fear to be blamed for particular deaths in a way comparable to accusations of witchcraft. By stressing the importance of social relations, Hart succeeds in genuinely applying anthropological insights into the problems of, for example, nurse retention in hospitals.

Part IV contains three rather diverse studies. Paul Henley (chap. 8) writes of his work as Director of the Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology at Manchester University. He traces a history of change from the popularity of ethnographic films in the 1960s and the 1970s in Britain to today's emphasis on more journalistic

and popularist programmes which may contain some anthropological content. The transition is not fully explained, and the heydays of the famous *Disappearing world* films are only cursorily described. Charlie Nairn's film *Ongka's big moka*, possibly one of the best known films in the whole series, and still much used in curricula in the USA, is not mentioned. Chapters 9 and 10 are both absorbing ethnographic accounts, immediately recognizable, like Hart's chapter, as belonging to the twentieth-century traditions of anthropology carried forward into twenty-first-century contexts. Garry Marvin (chap. 9) perceptively traces the unintended transmutations of his roles as an ethnographer of fox-hunting, beginning from a position of restricting his investigation into those who practised this form of hunting and proceeding to the point where he was invited by the Countryside Alliance to discuss their case in the context of their opposition to a government ban on such hunting in Scotland. Marvin wryly notes that his anthropological conclusion regarding the value of hunting, that is, that it helps to form community relations and constitutes a part of cultural heritage, was in the end not considered very useful, perhaps because it did not address the issue of killing the fox! In the last chapter, Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers provides a perceptive account of her role as an expert court witness regarding blood feud practices in Albania and asylum cases of Albanian migrants to the UK. She notes, as we also have in our writings, the historical variability of these practices of revenge and the baneful impact of war rapes perpetuated as a means of insulting the honour of women in Kosovo. Legal procedures may not help here because a disclosure of rape brings further shame and does not guarantee 'the success of an asylum claim' (p. 220).

The chapters in this book are all well executed and sprinkled through with references to classic anthropological theorists of the twentieth century. They also show the virtues of continuing the ethnographic traditions of qualitative participant observation as a method of inquiry and insight into problems. The focus tends to be on the UK, albeit a UK shot through with global processes. An expansion of the volume's theme of 'applications' into other countries, for example the USA or Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific, where innumerable contested themes of application abound, would be very welcome (see, for example, the cases in P.J. Stewart and A. Strathern (eds), *Anthropology and consultancy*, the first volume in this Series of

Studies in Applied Anthropology, 2005). *Applications of anthropology*, however, establishes a very effective and thoughtful benchmark in a developing field of writing in anthropology, and deserves to become one of the central works in its field. It provides both a historical overview in the chapters by Sarah Pink and Susan Wright, and a broad sample of case studies by the other contributors. Perhaps the most satisfying of these studies, for some readers, will be those that demonstrate the classic ethnographic values that run across the outdated and factitious categorization of 'pure' versus 'applied' research.

ANDREW STRATHERN & PAMELA J. STEWART  
*University of Pittsburgh*

SILLITOE, PAUL (ed.). *Local science vs global science: approaches to indigenous knowledge in international development*. xi, 288 pp., maps, figs, bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2007. £80.00 (cloth)

This collection is much more than a plea for valuing 'indigenous' knowledge. It is a reasoned set of arguments to value those things that cannot be measured; to recognize that not everything that can be counted counts and that not everything that counts can be counted. The current concerns with the measurement of outcomes in a whole variety of different fields blind us to the 'fact' that measurement is about management and control – over resources and over people. The book is of much wider interest than the apparently narrow focus on environmental anthropology and ethnobiology that provides the framing perspective.

*Local science vs global science* originates from the British Association's Festival of Science at Salford in 2003 and from the Decennial Conference of the Association of Social Anthropologists in Manchester in the same year. It attempts to break down some of the stereotypical representations of 'indigenous' knowledge. It moves us 'beyond science' in our thinking about the future concerns for 'sustainable' development and the elaboration of measurable indicators to achieve the millennium development goals. The various contributions implicitly if not explicitly promote the search for opportunities that can transcend the two dominant paradigms competing for legitimacy. One is associated particularly with economic, reductionist, and linear thinking and the ideology of relentless economic growth (now subtly re-labelled as 'poverty alleviation')

as the panacea for sustainability. The other is associated with participatory strategies for development. This latter paradigm recognizes the hegemony of such linear thinking that blinds us to understandings that the world comprises many parallel cultural universes. This is more than merely holding 'indigenous cultures' up to confront the 'developed' world with differences. It is also, centrally, about the anthropological perspective and its place in what is deemed as 'scientific', rational inquiry.

The collection is introduced by the editor, who provocatively argues that 'relativity is relative' and contrasts the physical and the social scientists' notions thereof. He argues for the importance of understanding the 'other', not just to build more inclusive and participatory (and thus more sustainable) processes and programmes, but also for countering the hegemonic processes of standardization associated with globalization and the destruction of biodiversity – processes aimed at standardizing and simplifying. The various contributions certainly do not advocate a set of dichotomies between indigenous and Western or traditional and modern, but rather search for a less hegemonic compromise. This involves the 'fusion' of different worldviews – not only between different cultures but also between what have been termed the 'hard' and the 'soft' sciences; between objective, linear, dissociated, competitive, rational ways of ordering the world and subjective, circular, context-dependent, co-operative ways of living in and with the world. This is as important in the evolution of anthropology as it is in the evolution of organizations to manage sustainable futures – whether we are talking about the shaping of the development assistance agenda, building good governance structures, or encouraging corporate responsibility as integral to good business for companies' investment strategies, at home or abroad.

There are essays that focus more on the 'ethnography' of research institutions and on the political and social dynamics of the context in which they operate. Other essays focus on the debate between private acquisition and control of intellectual property rights. This is resonant of the processes during colonial periods when common land was unilaterally expropriated as private property (land-grabbing in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America, or as government 'forest reserves' in places like India and Africa).

Other essays focus on the role of maps and of 'mapping' to legitimate administrative control. These maps then become the main

evidence to justify control. 'The illegible (and thus illegal?) cacophony of local property regulations and communal tenure' gave way to the official, standardized, administrative order. Much attention has been given recently to these imposed landscapes and the effects they have had on different societies and cultures (see, among others, the works of David Mosse and Michael Scott).

Echoing Gadamer, Heckler makes the argument that it is impossible to pursue knowledge without an interpretative horizon, and her essay on the Piarao in Venezuela argues for the recognition of a variety of 'knowledge paradigms' that need to be taken into account and their value negotiated in the pursuit of joint and perhaps more sustainable solutions. Rhoades and Nazarea argue a slightly different case in their discussion about 'envisioning the future' with two communities in an ecological reserve in Ecuador. They argue that the future is envisaged very differently by scientists concerned to maintain biodiversity and villagers concerned with jobs, livelihoods, and relationships, where forests are seen as areas to exploit rather than areas to preserve. They also significantly argue that the scientists would adopt a similar response to developments in their own backyards.

Space precludes further elaboration of the rich mix of approaches developed here, except to mention the important encounter with mathematics in the final chapter by Sillitoe with the question 'can we count on numbers?' – an important reminder that we cannot measure what is most valuable and that Western society may not prove to be the best adapted or most advanced social formation in a sustainable future.

DAVID MARSDEN *European Investment Bank*

SILVERMAN, MARILYN. *Ethnography and development: the work of Richard F. Salisbury*. vi, 398 pp., tables, bibliogr. Montréal: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press, 2004. £38.95 (cloth)

This memorial volume in honour of Richard F. Salisbury is produced by a group of his students who were profoundly struck 'with the breadth of his knowledge, with his ability to move into other disciplines, and to pursue issues laterally, into adjacent theoretical areas'. *Ethnography and development* is a collection of eighteen of Richard Salisbury's interesting and often also provocative essays. These essays are presented in six groups, each of which is introduced by one of his

students. The topics of these groups of essays range from ethnography and social structure in New Guinea, political anthropology, anthropological economics, and anthropological praxis to developing anthropology. The eighteen essays constitute an eclectic mix of Richard Salisbury's wide range of interests and expertise and concentrate on his perception of the interplay between fieldwork, ethnography, and theory.

Most of his arguments and analyses are based on the fieldwork he conducted in Papua New Guinea among the Siane of the New Guinea Highlands and the Tolai of the Gazelle Peninsula of New Britain. He maintained that the development of bad theories was the result of bad fieldwork. Some of the methods of his own field studies were impressively innovative. For instance, he studied kinship structure and village organization through the eyes of a child that has to adapt to it. Yet 'the dependence of the political on the economic persisted as a central theme throughout Salisbury's career' (p. 95). However, though he regarded himself as an economic anthropologist, he seemed never really to have grasped the fundamental difference between anthropology and economics, namely that the former is principally inductive whereas economics insists on being a deductive science. Salisbury refers to the phase sequence macro-models that development economists have been building and compares them with the phase sequences micro-models that anthropologists have been constructing without seeming to realize that the economic models were based on rational 'economic man' assumptions which anthropologists can never accept. He was obviously unaware of the basic assumptions of economic analysis which Frank H. Knight, the founder of econometrics, spelled out clearly in his critical review of Melville J. Herskovits's *Economic anthropology* when he said: 'The principles of economy are known intuitively; it is not possible to discriminate the economic character of behaviour by sense observations; and the anthropologist, sociologist or historian seeking to discover or validate economic laws by inductive investigation has embarked on a wild goose chase; economics is a purely deductive study' (Melville Herskovits, *Economic anthropology*, 1960, p. 512). It is a pity that Salisbury decided to venture into economics in general and economic development in particular, where he obviously lacked the expertise he had in the field of anthropology. This emerges clearly when he discusses the supply and use of shell money among the Tolai,

where he displays his ignorance of economic principles when he says: 'My own calculations of the rate of manufacture of new shell money suggest that at a period somewhat before 1780 enough shells could have been produced from Tolai beaches without the need for overseas voyaging' (p. 203). To consider that shells readily available on local beaches could be considered as money clearly indicates his economic naivety. The Tolai themselves did realize the economic principle that scarcity determines value and therefore chose as their currency specific small shells (*nassa camelus*) which were not available on the Gazelle Peninsula. To obtain these shells involved a lengthy and dangerous journey by sea that ensured the shell's scarce value. These shells 'in fact possess all the attributes required of a modern currency' (A.L. Epstein, 'Tambu, a primitive shell money', *Discovery*, 1963, p. 159). Also somewhat surprisingly, Salisbury did not link the low cocoa bean production he found on the basis of records noting bean deliveries to the Tolai Cocoa Project Vunamami fermentary to the practice that allowed sons to cultivate their fathers' matrilineal lands to which they had no title. Salisbury's inspiring analyses of political processes, faction alignments, asymmetrical marriage systems, descent theories, etc., etc., however, certainly provide a necessary insight into the understanding of socio-economic change processes which the majority of economists still lack. It is in this context that his work undoubtedly makes an outstanding contribution to the understanding of socio-economic changes. Therefore, he will remain a star on the anthropological horizon, and his students who have put this interesting book together deserve our thanks.

T. SCARLETT EPSTEIN *University of Sussex*

SLOCUM, KARLA. *Free trade and freedom: neoliberalism, place, and nation in the Caribbean*. xviii, 253 pp., maps, tables, illus., bibliogr. Ann Arbor: Univ. Michigan Press, 2006. £17.50 (paper)

The relationship between the local and the global is an established concern in anthropology. *Free trade and freedom* considers it in terms of St Lucia, a small Caribbean island-state, and its place in the globalizing international banana market. The central question that Karla Slocum addresses is how banana-growers understood their political-economic situation.

The book has three parts. The first locates St Lucia in its historical and international contexts, paying special attention to the Mabouya Valley, the focus of Slocum's fieldwork early in the 1990s. St Lucia's sugar industry collapsed after the Second World War and was replaced by bananas grown by small-holders. Bananas were traded through a single shipper, Geest, and their grading and sale were governed by a single entity, the St Lucia Banana Growers Association (SLBGA), dominated by the St Lucia government.

The second part of the book describes the SLBGA system and growers' perceptions of their work. The SLBGA closely followed advice from Geest about market demand and sought to regulate growers to assure that their bananas met Geest's standards, enforced through a multi-tier pricing system at buying depots. In spite of the extensive advice and demands of the SLBGA, growers saw their lot as one of 'freedom'. Commonly, growers took that to mean being one's own boss, a definite improvement over the position of sugar plantation workers and, before that, slaves.

The third part describes the Banana Salvation Committee (BSC), which led a protest movement late in 1993 and early in 1994 to increase the prices that growers received for bananas and to decrease government control of the SLBGA. The movement organized several growers' strikes, largely without achieving their economic and political goals. In a postscript Slocum reports the sharp decline in small-scale banana-growing by the late 1990s.

In broad outline, *Free trade and freedom* will be familiar to those acquainted with the island Caribbean. Slocum offers more than this broad outline, however. Throughout the book, and especially in her third section, she describes the ways in which St Lucians saw their world and the global forces that affected them in terms of 'the local', in two senses: St Lucian history and society; and the specific places in the island where they lived. It is on this description that the book's sub-title, *Neoliberalism, place, and nation in the Caribbean*, rests.

Slocum's description of the BSC agitation focuses on this topic. She reports how the BSC and the government cast each other in terms of their place in and claims on the country as a whole, and thereby cast the country in novel ways. The BSC cast the government as dominated by an urban elite of monoglot English speakers, and themselves as a rural peasant movement of creole speakers. The government, and especially the Prime Minister, cast themselves as working tirelessly for the

small growers, and the BSC as dominated by a self-interested and fairly well-off set of people.

The book tells an interesting tale, but is not entirely satisfactory. For one thing, Slocum presents her understandings of St Lucians more than she does the evidence that would justify them and allow us to see what her points, often abstract, look like in practice. Similarly, and somewhat more unsettling, her discussion of the BSC episode relies almost entirely on what people said in public. For this description of political rhetoric to be a persuasive anthropological argument, we would need to learn how St Lucians acted on, or at least interpreted, that rhetoric.

In addition, Slocum argues that global forces are inflected by and seen in terms of specific places. At one level this is a truism: the market in bananas appears in a certain way in St Lucia and islanders interpret it in terms of their histories and social and cultural resources. To say more than this, however, Slocum needs to consider at greater length than she does what difference these inflections and interpretations make. Are they any more than local manifestations and perceptions of forces over which St Lucians have no significant influence? If so, what do they tell us about these forces and the places that they affect?

As should be clear, in *Free trade and freedom* Slocum raises important questions. These are about the ways in which global forces affect a particular place, the ways in which they are shaped by that place, how they appear to people there and how those people respond to them. The tale of much of the Caribbean is not an encouraging one, and this book helps us to understand another part of it.

JAMES G. CARRIER *Indiana and Oxford Brookes Universities*

STAMMLER, FLORIAN. *Reindeer nomads meet the market: culture, property and globalization at the 'end of the land'*. xxvi, 379 pp., maps, tables, figs, illus., bibliogr. Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2005. €29.90 (paper)

This book is another in the series of Halle Studies in the Anthropology of Eurasia published by the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. It is also a very welcome addition to the gradually expanding collection of writing on anthropology of Russian North and Siberia.

The book offers a very detailed insight into the life of reindeer-herders in the Yamal-Nenets district in the northwest of Siberia. It opens with

a long literature review of Siberian studies, nomadism, property, and territoriality, and the post-socialist market economy. These are all undoubtedly critical readings for this particular study, but the writing becomes slightly dry and betrays the doctoral dissertation underlying it.

Nevertheless the book retains a high standard of scholarly flair, and, more importantly, a flair for wholesome and solid anthropology. Stammler carried out his research doing anthropological fieldwork in a traditional way: he lived for a prolonged period in the reindeer camp and helped to herd reindeer. But the pretence of becoming a herder was unnecessary – Stammler made sure that the herders knew of his research and importance of it; this entailed mutual respect for their respective work (p. 41).

Apart from providing us with very detailed historical and ethnographic background to reindeer-herding in Yamal, the book captures the Nenets reindeer-herders at the critical time when they are trying to grasp a new lesson in economics and learn how to run reindeer and business simultaneously.

Analysis of the Nenets case study is very significant in many respects. Reindeer-herding practice in Yamal is exceptional in that even during the Soviet years, when total collectivization swept away privately owned herds in other regions, it represented a mixture of private and commonly owned stocks. After the demise of the Soviet economic establishment the number of privately owned reindeer increased even more. Stammler's excellent analysis of this exceptional situation explains the reasons for the sustainability of the reindeer-herding practice on the whole.

Stammler introduces us to the practice of reindeer-herding, describes the specifics of this practice in Yamal, and goes through historical milestones of the Soviet period. He then brings us to the main points of his study: property and the transition to the market economy. Here the author's purpose is to demonstrate the connection between 'the global and the local, the community and the market sphere of the economy' (p. 283). This is where Stammler's analysis is at its best. Indeed, the examples demonstrating this connection are very illuminating: *panty* (velvet antlers) exported to the South Asian market and gas extracted on the migration territories.

Stammler closes his book with a disappointingly trite anti-essentialist approach to culture, arguing that culture should be considered as a local and evolving phenomenon (pp. 323-36). The reader is left with the feeling

that Stammler has dealt with the notion of culture too hastily, and that his careful demonstration of anti-essentialism got in the way of revealing his understanding of the term fully.

Stammler demonstrates remarkable ability to engage fully in both the Russian and Nenets languages. However, the glossary has an unnecessarily extensive list of words used throughout the book. Looking through the list the principle for selecting the terms is unclear. Some words do not specifically add to the understanding of the overall themes or critical interpretation of the book, for example 'adzhika – Caucasian barbecue-sauce' (p. xix). There is some inconsistency of transliteration here as well: in some cases the main word is introduced in Russian, in other cases in English.

Yet, apart from these minor shortcomings, the book is an excellent read, particularly for specialists of Siberia and the Arctic. The main asset of this book is its very careful study of one particular case of reindeer-herding practice in the Russian north in historical perspective that is valuable for academics working on pastoralism and nomadic studies. This is also a unique and valuable study of post-Soviet economic anthropology. Therefore it can be recommended to a large reading audience.

TANYA ARGOUNOVA-LOW *University of Aberdeen*

## General

ALLISON, ANNE. *Millennial monsters: Japanese toys and the global imagination*. xxii, 322 pp., illus., bibliogr. London, Berkeley: Univ. California Press, 2006. £15.95 (paper)

In this captivating and highly informative book, Anne Allison explores the worldwide popularity of Japanese toys and youth media ranging from manga, anime, and gameboy, to Power Pangers, Tamagochi, and Pokémon. The book, based on multi-sited research in Japan and the US, sets out to identify those properties inherent in play goods and the imaginary worlds they are associated with that render them attractive to young consumers. Allison argues that Japanese play products are, firstly, typified by a 'polymorphous perversity' that enables them to be continuously refashioned and spread across a variety of new forms. It is this fluidity that enables consumers to create and re-create endless varieties of imaginary worlds. It has also been at the base of the successful export of

Japanese fantasy goods worldwide, which has turned the play industry into the cornerstone of the Japanese economy in the last decade. A second characteristic of Japanese toys is that they are endowed with what Allison calls 'techno-animism', or a mixture of virtual and spiritual elements that generate intimate relationships with consumers. Allison traces this animist sensibility to Japanese folk traditions and Shinto and Buddhist ideas that blur the boundaries between human and non-human beings. She reveals how, at the end of the nineteenth century, to make sense of their fast-changing world (contrary to the standard view that modernity leads to secularization), the Japanese turned to the vibrant world of spiritual beings. At the end of the twentieth century, the prevalence of these native ideas about spirituality turned toys into 'enchanted commodities' that could bring release from a stressful, fractured modern society by facilitating access to imaginary worlds where new forms of intimacy and friendship might be created.

The book starts off with two historical chapters. Allison, firstly, gives an insightful account of the development of the Japanese toy industry and its role in the growth of the national economy between 1945 and 1960. She offers some fascinating revelations, like the fact that the same tins that contained food rations distributed by the US occupation army were recycled into toys such as army jeeps that were exported to the US, where they became popular with American children. This section is followed by a detailed analysis of Japanese ideas about technology by comparing two post-war Japanese fantasy creations, Godzilla (*Gojira*) and AtomBoy (*Tetsuwan Atomu*), that blur the distinction between humans and machines. These engrossing historical case studies throw new light on the complex notion of the self in modern Japan. However, it is unfortunate that Allison's analysis rarely goes beyond theoretical discussions about (post)modernity. Apart from a brief mention of Bruno Latour's work, the author, for example, fails to engage with the extended anthropological literature about material culture that has pioneered research into the relationship between people and things.

In the next chapter, which focuses on growing feelings of loss, alienation, and isolation encountered by Japanese since the 1960s, Allison's penchant for postmodern ideologies becomes even more pertinent. She depicts a rather gloomy picture of Japanese society, discussing themes such as the rise of violent youth crime, urban terrorism enacted by religious

sects, experiences of social alienation among recluses who never leave their rooms (*hikikomori*), nerds absorbed by the fantasy world of manga and anime (*otaku*), and sexual harassment on commuter trains (*chikan*). Although all these phenomena are interesting and merit investigation, by listing them without providing much ethnographic or other evidence about their ubiquity, Allison runs the danger not only of uncritically reproducing headlines articulated in the Japanese media, but also of adding to the mountain of literature that mystifies or reifies Japanese society abroad. Whereas earlier in the book Allison makes a case for the specificity of Japanese modernity, in this section she draws on theorists such as Marx, Benjamin, and Deleuze without questioning their applicability to the Japanese context. One is left wondering why the rich anthropological and sociological literature about the complexity of contemporary Japanese consumption practices (e.g. B. Moeran, *A Japanese advertising agency, 1997*; J. Clammer, *Contemporary urban Japan, 1997*; M. Ito *et al.* (eds), *Mobile phones in Japanese life, 2005*) is completely disregarded. More so, since the following four chapters are devoted to the consumption of different types of Japanese entertainment products popular between 1993 and 2000. An in-depth study of two Japanese TV series, *The mighty Power Rangers* (chap. 4) and *Sailor moon* (chap. 5), as well as two popular play goods, Tamagochi (chap. 6) and Pokémon (chap. 7), leads Allison to conclude that the 'multi-partedness' of Japanese play goods simultaneously embodies a range of anxieties linked with modernity and offers a healing solution. It is through the endless transformation of the bodies of heroes, and the intertwining between the bodily and the virtual, that novel interpersonal relationships of friendship and intimacy (techno-intimacy) between play goods and consumers are stimulated.

Allison is certainly at her best in these knowledgeable, enlightening discussions of various examples of Japanese fantasy products. However, her ethnographic data seem thin and do not reveal much of the complexity and contradictions that she must have encountered during her extended fieldwork. Despite these caveats, this is a seminal book that offers important, new insights about the dynamic interplay between the local and the global. Its intelligence and originality come to the fore in the final chapter, when Allison confronts the literature about globalization. She argues that the global circulation of Japanese play goods follows a different trajectory from the cultural

imperialism generally associated with the spread of meta-symbols of American culture and 'Western' modernity such as Coca-Cola, McDonalds, and Disney. Unlike Disney, the imaginary world of Pocket Monsters (*Pokémon*) is not anchored in a particular locale closed off from the rest of society and players are encouraged actively to customize and adapt play goods to a variety of contexts. This Japanese case study thus demonstrates the potential strengths of new models of capitalism that successfully link fantasy and play with the global economy.

INGE DANIELS *University of Oxford*

BUCHANAN, DONNA A. *Performing democracy: Bulgarian music and musicians in transition*. xxiv, 519 pp., CD, bibliogr. London, Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, 2006. £47.50 (cloth), £19.00 (paper)

Donna Buchanan's book is based on her intensive field research, which was conducted between 1988 and 1996 in Bulgaria. Her research was focused on professional musicians and folk ensembles and illustrates Bulgarian musical culture and development in comparison to the socio-economic changes and the political processes in the country. The democratization process was shaped and reinforced with a variety of music and dance performances, which were conducted at home and abroad. Buchanan highlights that '[t]his is a book of changes ... as a means of understanding the complex interaction of music, politics, and identity in Bulgarian society during the last hundred years' (p. 6). A common theme throughout her interpretation is the 'fight' of rural musical practices and cultural performances to produce new performance styles in correspondence to current socio-economic changes. This condition created an influential discourse about Bulgarian identity, which was linked to cultural heritage and the promotion of music and dance cultures.

The book is divided into three parts. The first section details the author's research practices, providing descriptive information on how she entered into the field site; her motives for doing research in Bulgaria; and discussing ethical matters, for instance how she employs pseudonyms and builds her ethnographic narrative in a flexible perspective. Furthermore, she refers to the historiography of the musical and cultural life in Bulgaria; the process of the establishment of folk ensembles, which is linked to national music, *narodna muzika*, and orchestras. Additionally, she pinpoints the

political changes in the country, giving a description of the socio-political conditions, from Zhivkov's regime and communism to democracy and modernity, and she describes people's nostalgia for the former period. Bulgaria is divided into six ethnographic regions differentiated by musical and cultural practices: the regions of Shop, Pirin Makedoniya, Rodopa, Trakiya, Dobrudzha, and Severna Bulgariya (p. 81). Buchanan illustrates the musical life in rural, urban, and minority communities; she describes the anthropogeography of the regions, highlighting their topography and musical, linguistic, and cultural diversity. In this section there is a wealth of ethnographic material on village musical life, and on the cultural performances, oral tradition, dance, music, and folk costumes of the different regions. There is a vivid distinction between the role of women in singing, and the role of men in playing musical instruments. Consequently, Buchanan indicates which musical instruments are used in which region, the kinds of dances that are performed, and the variations of them.

The second section deals with the variation of folk ensembles, their programmes, the way they work, their skills in representations, where they are performed, and how they promote the different regions in Bulgaria. In this section Buchanan poses the questions of musical representation and (self-)reflection, the notion of tradition, musical, and cultural heritage as perceived by musicians, by people who were involved in those performances, and she notes the vital discourse about Bulgarian identity as being (re)presented by those 'agents'. According to her informants' narratives there is an essential need to balance older musical practices with new performance contexts (p. 231), and musicians characterize the whole process as a professionalization of *narodna muzika* (national music). In consequence, the notion of Bulgarian tradition is linked with musical and dance practices and customs (e.g. festive dancing ceremonies during weddings) which are performed in the different regions inside the country and abroad. Each of the different ensembles promote their *horo* (dance) and *muzika* (music) as a representation of the Bulgarian nation and national identity. Buchanan presents lyrics of a few songs and tales to facilitate the comparison with current political changes, and the process of how people question Bulgarian identity and their socio-cultural legacy.

In the third section of the book Buchanan refers to the birth of the Balkana group and she

examines how this group manages to enhance and promote *narodna muzika* transnationally. Furthermore, she indicates the success of the volumes of *Le Mystère des voix Bulgares*, while she provides an analysis of women's voices, singing, and the vocal technique as images of 'authenticity' and tradition (p. 368). In addition, she presents different performances of the song 'Dilmano, dilbero' in comparison to Bulgarian socio-cultural history and mentality, diverse concepts about past, present and future socio-economic conditions, and she illustrates an exegesis of political change and transition by interpreting the lyrics of the song. This song played a vital role in the transition from rural village communities to urban-orientated socialist collectives (p. 425). Finally, there is a description of the evolution of the market economy and how music was industrialized. The book encloses an audio CD-Rom with Bulgarian folk music, lyrics, and pictures, and includes a glossary, a discography, a coherent bibliography, and an index. The book, which is notable for the author's ethnographic research skills, will be of use to researchers on Southeastern European musical practices and cultural performances.

CHRISTOS KARAGIANNIDIS *University of Sussex*

BUIJS, KEES. *Powers of blessing from the wilderness and from heaven: structure and transformation in the religion of Toraja in the Mamasa area of South Sulawesi*. vii, 262 pp., illus., bibliogr. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2006.

Kees Buijs's ethnography recovers those ritual traditions slipping out of practice and memory in the Mamasa district of South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Within its pages, we find something fascinating, to be sure – the spectacle of ritual life. Yet we also find something predictable and sedate – the sort of structural analysis of ritual and cosmology that has largely fallen out of use in most precincts of contemporary anthropology. We can be very grateful to Buijs for his earnest, painstaking work in presenting a comprehensive account of a now absent ritual order in the Mamasa region. Meanwhile, it is intriguing to consider the way in which fading cultural, ethnographic, and analytic traditions have become entwined in this book.

Buijs lived and worked in the highland town of Mamasa from 1978 until 1983 and pursued anthropological training in Leiden in the 1990s. Beginning in 2000, he was able to make several two-month visits to Mamasa, during which time he conducted ethnographic interviews on

Mamasa's indigenous ritual tradition. Buijs never witnessed the rituals of focal concern to his dissertation, of which this book is a revised version: *pa'bisuan* (women's prosperity rites, last held around 1960, in which women, possessed by 'spirits of the wilderness', would climb, screaming and naked, up a banyan tree) and *bulu londong* (men's prosperity rites, held as recently as 2000, which feature representations of headhunting). He relies on first-hand accounts from Mamasa's elders for most of his ethnographic reconstructions of the past; the contemporary role of recalling (or forgetting) ritual tradition is of little concern to him. With social relations, history, and ethnographic intersubjectivity thus bracketed from consideration, the study approaches ritual as spectacle, text, and system – as a language of religious ideas, if you will, the elements and grammar of which must be compiled, arranged, and philologically investigated before comparative study is taken up (a hallmark of ethnography on the Toraja until 1980).

Buijs persuasively demonstrates the dualisms that organized Mamasa's bygone ritual life (by 1980, almost all of the district's inhabitants were Christian or Muslim): male and female, heaven and wilderness, *bulu londong* and *pa'bisuan*, and so on. There is much here, too, that conveys the richly metaphoric and pragmatic workings of ritual.

A comparative spirit animates much of Buijs's analysis, especially with respect to the structural transformation of religions systems. His comparative interests are commendable but his approach to comparative method and to understanding transformation is unconvincing. 'Impulses for the direction of religious transformation', he argues, 'are present in the structure of religion' (p. 7). For Buijs, then, political, ideological, and historical forces do not significantly guide or find expression in religious change; and this implies that these forces have little place in comparative analysis. Further, he takes as a working premise the common cultural Austronesian heritage of Indonesia's non-state, embedded societies. For Buijs, 'transformation' is to be discovered in the comparison of local Austronesian religious systems; religious logics persist but as locally and circumstantially expressed variations on a theme. Buijs chooses to compare the Toraja Mamasa rite of *pa'bisuan* with the Toraja Sa'dan rite known as *buak'asalle*, a grand ceremony of the ethnic communities to the east of Mamasa. Discerning shifting religious understandings about a 'transcendent

wilderness' as a source of blessings, he argues that Mamasa's *pa'bisuan* transformed into Sa'dan's *buak'asalle*. Nowhere does Buijs deeply engage local discourses on gender and environment, so the reader remains sceptical about his explanation of religious differences and transformation among historically linked communities designated as 'Toraja'.

KENNETH M. GEORGE *University of Wisconsin-Madison*

CLARKE, KAMARI MAXINE & DEBORAH A. THOMAS (eds). *Globalization and race: transformations in the cultural production of blackness*. ix, 407 pp., bibliogr. London, Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2006. £64.00 (cloth), £14.95 (paper)

The mutually sustaining relationship between constructs of 'race' and 'nation' has been of interest to analysts, particularly in Europe and the Americas. Gilroy's *There ain't no black in the Union Jack* (1987) is a well-known example. But it has also been recognized – at least since Gilroy's later *The black Atlantic* (1993) – that ideas about race (and nation) are constituted in a much broader frame of reference. Dikötter's *The discourse of race in modern China* (1991) also reveals the impact of Western categories of race on Chinese thinking about human diversity, and historical studies of racial thinking in the era of raciological science cannot but encompass a broader canvas, even when the focus is explicitly national, as in Stepan's *The idea of race in science: Great Britain, 1800–1960* (1982). The constant global traffic of ideas and categories of race has recently been addressed by such as Livio Sansone (for Brazil) and J. Lorand Matory (around the black Atlantic).

The authors of *Globalization and race* continue this trend, eschewing methodological nationalism and decentering discourses of race and nation. For them, more complex, transnationalized concepts of race are emerging – albeit still linked to older categories and still with the power to divide and discriminate – in which consumption plays a key role, as does US black culture. Biology remains an important realm in which ideas about race are constituted, but culture has become dominant, and although the nation has been unsettled as the primary frame of reference, 'place' remain vital in thinking about race. Diaspora is a key concept for many authors in this book, but it is a diaspora fragmented by difference, rather than unified by notions of common origin.

The sub-title of the book is important, because this is a book about *blackness* rather than race more generally. It is also, to a large extent, about US constructs of blackness. Although only three of the sixteen authors (of whom twelve are anthropologists and thirteen are based in the USA) write specifically about the USA, another six deal, at least in part, with how US ideas about blackness impinge on Europe and the Caribbean. Brown, for example, looks at how black America and Africa figured in ideas about black identity and culture among post-war Liverpool-born blacks, particularly via the black GIs who were present during and after the Second World War. Pabst looks at how Canadian blacks get incorporated into US constructs of blackness. Codrington examines how US rap has shaped British black youth identities. Some chapters buck this trend: Ifekunigwe examines Nigerian sex workers in Italy, arguing that more recent migrations need to be added to the accumulating layers of the African diaspora; Farred focuses on how race re-emerges in the political discourses of South African leaders Mandela and Mbeki; Adams, Fikes, Godreau, Hernández-Reguant, and Sawyer write about the Dominican Republic, Cape Verde, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Sweden, respectively. But the (black) USA is a strong presence in the book – not surprisingly, given the power of the USA in shaping global patterns of the cultural production and consumption of blackness.

Some chapters are not very effective in really dealing with globalization and multilateral movements. Others stand out in this respect. Brown and Thomas, both with chapters that are closely linked to their recent books, are excellent examples that grapple in subtle and insightful ways with the transnational movement of ideas, values, and people; both adopt a global frame that is very sensitive to the dangers to local-global dualisms. Thomas's analysis of 'modern blackness' looks at how lower-class black Jamaican culture is constituted both in opposition to and in intimate relation with dominant values, whether associated with middle-class Jamaicans or the USA. Clarke's chapter is on how blackness in the USA has become institutionally defined by commodified heritage and 'roots' which invoke 'Africa', but the global processes seem more one-way here: the construction of US black identity takes place *within* the USA, albeit in relation to (an imagined?) Africa. Clarke's fascinating vignette describing an encounter between US roots tourists (members of the US Oyotunji African Village) and Nigerian immigration officials is a

testament to exactly this. Hernández-Reguant's account of *timba* music in Cuba during the economic crisis of the 'Special Period' in the 1990s, is also quite nation-state-focused in its analysis of how the state became strongly involved in commercializing popular culture, thus mediating the apparently subversive nature of *timba* with its strong affirmation of blackness. But she effectively shows how tourism and the global economy were central to the way *timba* music developed.

An interesting and useful book that will undoubtedly appear on many reading lists, this volume is welcome for its explicit aim of paying close attention to global processes in the construction of race. However, only some of the chapters really deliver on that promise.

PETER WADE *University of Manchester*

DROBNICK, JIM (ed.). *The smell culture reader*. xii, 442 pp., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berg Publishers, 2006. £34.95 (cloth), £19.99 (paper)

A fascinating compilation, *The smell culture reader* lives up to its promise to provide an overview of 'our most elusive sense'. Its thirty-six chapters, grouped into seven sections, cover a wide spectrum of olfaction-related issues. Drobnick has added a clear and concise introduction to the book, as well as brief introductions to all the sections. These introductions are crucial to understand the structure of the book; the disciplinary backgrounds of the contributors vary widely, and so do their writings. Some chapters are truly classics in the study of smell, some are more anecdotal, and others again may appear somewhat quaint to non-specialists.

The book does a good job in mapping some of the diversity of past and contemporary practices of scent. It also gives a good impression of the shifting status of smell in people's sensorium: whereas in the early 1990s one study reported smell to be the least valuable of the senses, it is now the first and most popular sense people wish to indulge. The insight that smell is culturally constructed is nowadays a commonplace in the anthropology of the senses, and with the compilation Drobnick aims to radicalize the constructionist position. Proposing the term 'olfactocentrism', he invites the reader to consider how our thoughts would change if all our perception were by smell. It is not the only neologism that arises in the book, and in this, too, Drobnick follows the practice of smell studies.

The book opens strongly. Part I, 'Odorophobia', addresses cultural-specific intolerances toward smells. El-Khoury's essay on the anxieties and practices of sanitization campaigns documents the search for odourlessness in late eighteenth-century France; through the introduction of the sewer system, the final victory over stench eventually led to the reign of 'olfactory silence'. Largey's and Watson's classic sociology of odours is included as well, with its insights on odours, social status, and impression management. There is also an interesting piece about olfactory-triggered panic attacks within Cambodian refugees, the result of deliberate acts of intimidation and torture.

Part II, 'Toposmia', investigates the spatial location of odours and their relation to particular notions of place. It includes Porteous's pioneering essay on 'smellscapes' and their fragmentary character. Margolies presents an olfactory map of New York, arguing that smells persist notwithstanding the rational grid of that city. Cohen graphically describes the smells of a Bangkok lane, claiming that the inhabitants of the slum are marked by an olfactory dualism: they are oblivious to the smells emanating from rubbish around them but sensitive to much weaker human body odours. Rindisbacher's remarkable essay on the stench of Nazi concentration camps brings together accounts by both survivors and perpetrators. Power is enacted upon and denounced through olfaction.

The structure of part III, 'Flaireurs', is less clear. It approaches scent and identity, and includes a chapter by Corbin on the new calculus of olfactory pleasure, two accounts of famous smellers such as Helen Keller, and chapters on the odours of childhood and the understanding of odour preferences. Part IV addresses perfume from various perspectives. There is a short story by Proust, a piece from an obsessed professional perfumer, and an extensive perfume review. Gray reveals that in Süskind's novel *Perfume* the obsession does not lead to beauty or wisdom but to alienation and destruction. Despite scent seeming to be the antithesis of reason, 'enscentment' produces the same sort of manipulation and colonization as enlightenment.

Part V, 'Scentsuality', approaches issues around scent and sexuality. Stamelman traces perfumes in an array of mythological and literary sources, and identifies themes of eroticism and loss. Other pieces address the smell of females in Freud; the graphical descriptions of the odour of male solitude in nineteenth-century anti-masturbation tracts; an analysis of 'queer smells'

promoted in perfume ads; and misogynist and emancipatory interpretations of an exhibition featuring women's worn underwear. Part VI, 'Volatile art', examines examples of olfactory creativity in Japanese court culture, contemporary art, and digital media. Paterson discusses attempts to convey smells through cinema and digital media, noting that the realization of multi-sensory media has been hampered by technological limitations as well as hostile attitudes against odoriferous intrusions. Part VII, 'Sublime essences', addresses mystical olfactory phenomena, such as hellish scents and the odour of sanctity, the scents that accompany religious practices in the Muslim-Arab world, and the olfactory after-death communications experienced by some Americans.

The book lacks a conclusion about what can be said in retrospect about smell studies. For example, there seems to be a movement away from smell as physical sensation in the more classic articles, towards smell as political construction in the more recent ones. Also, the choice of the contributions may give the impression that Drobnick aims at establishing the study of smell as a further specialization of the anthropology of the senses. Much can be said, however, for a more generalist approach emphasizing the multi-sensorial analysis of culture. In this regard, the term 'olfactocentrism' raises questions about things we do not smell. What are the drawbacks of olfactory determinism? How does smell distort if it is taken as an isolated sense?

ROY GIGENGACK *University of Oxford*

ELLEN, ROY. *The categorical impulse: essays in the anthropology of classifying behaviour*. xiv, 233 pp., illus., figs, tables, bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2006. \$70.00 (cloth)

Along with Ralph Bulmer, Brent Berlin, and Eugene Hunn, Roy Ellen is one of the pioneers in the development of ethnobiology. Although a crucial sub-discipline, standing at the interface between the biological and social sciences, ethnobiology is very much of a marginal interest to most cultural anthropologists. It is given no mention at all (for example) in Ingold's compendium of anthropology, or in Michael Herzfeld's text on 'Anthropology', which quite misleadingly sets up a false dichotomy between our critical engagement of the world and our explanations of it. Ethnobiologists were never besotted with either textualism or postmodernism, and always distanced

themselves from crude positivism, a concept nowadays employed by cultural anthropologists as a term of abuse, even though they themselves tend to embrace the radical empiricism and anti-realism of the positivists!

This present text is an important and very worthwhile collection of Roy Ellen's essays and reflections on ethnobiology, specifically focusing on ethnobiological classifications and on classifying behaviour. Written over the past thirty years or so, they represent a seminal and enduring contribution to anthropological knowledge. It is, however, a pity that the collection leaves out Ellen's essays on Nuauulu hunting strategies and on modes of subsistence, as well as his critique of romantic ecology 'What Black Elk left unsaid', which is a very useful teaching text.

Some ten essays comprise the collection, all written in a readable, engaging style, and embracing the virtues that Ellen generously attributes to the late Ralph Bulmer, namely a scrupulous attention to ethnographic detail (with Ellen this specifically relates to the Nuauulu, swidden-cultivators living in the rainforests of South Central Seram); a respect for the knowledge of individual informants; an insistence that classifying behaviour, and cultural practices generally, must be embedded in their wider social and ecological contexts; and, finally, a respectful but critical attitude towards universalist-evolutionary paradigms. This is an approach that is quite different from the dismissive attitude of many cultural anthropologists and postmodernists. Ellen certainly does not feel it necessary to disparage and denigrate the scientific endeavours of biologists, psychologists, and social scientists more generally. In fact, as he writes in the introduction – written especially for the collection – what he has always attempted to do is to build 'bridges' between the social constructionists (like Mary Douglas) and those who emphasize a cognitivist and universalist approach to ethnobiological classifications (like Brent Berlin). In bridging this divide, Ellen seeks to develop a more embedded and processual approach to the understanding of classifying behaviour. His central focus is, then, on the relationship between cognition and culture, bringing together cognitive studies, which tend to emphasize the universal aspects of cognitive processes and cultural anthropology with its focus on cultural beliefs, or what Ellen, following Durkheim, calls 'collective representations'.

Although the collection has a specific focus, on the relationship between culture and

cognition, the essays nevertheless are fairly wide-ranging and cover many important topics and issues. Four of these are worth noting, as they may be of interest to cultural anthropologists.

First, there is an interesting discussion, for example, of Nuauulu zoological classifications, particularly relating to the cuscus, a marsupial mammal, and the cassowary, both of which are of crucial importance to these swidden-cultivators. Against the emphasis on formal taxonomies, Ellen demonstrates that the Nuauulu mode of classification is inherently variable, flexible, and dynamic, often overlapping, and thus can be understood only if placed within a situational context – whether cultural, social, technical, or ecological. Classifying behaviour is thus a dynamic process and inherently contextual, essentially an expression of human-environment interactions. This leads Ellen to question the rigid separation of general-purpose classifications, expressed in formal taxonomies, and special-purpose classifications, which relate either to pragmatic usage (as medicine or food, for example) or to the symbolic significance of animal (or plant) categories. But Ellen nevertheless emphasizes the crucial importance of the categories that relate to the biotic domain – expressing as they do the inherent discontinuities of the natural world – for they form the basis or 'benchmark' for wider semiotic schemas and cultural paradigms.

Second, drawing on the distinction between the processes of analysis (separation, difference, part-of) and synthesis (aggregation, unity, kind-of) – as interdependent cognitive processes – Ellen gives an interesting account of human body parts (anatomical classifications) and how such classifications relate to cultural ideas and artefacts, particularly to social and symbolic classifications.

Third, in a seminal discussion of the concept of 'fetishism' – expressed in early anthropological studies of religion, in Marxist theory, and in psychological and psychoanalytic studies – Ellen attempts to show that such cultural paradigms are not so much pathological, dysfunctional, and deviant, nor do they express some 'primitive' mode of thought, but rather they can be understood by relating them to universal, underlying cognitive processes. These specifically include: the general propensity of humans to express complex ideas and relationships as 'things', to thus reify ideas through a process of concretization; the general tendency of humans to animate things, and thus

to apprehend and represent the world in anthropomorphic terms; and, finally, the general human tendency to conflate, especially in a ritual context, the signifier (an artefact or organic being) with the signified (some spiritual agent). Thus Ellen explores the interplay between the three cultural traditions which have utilized the concept of 'fetishism' and these three universal cognitive mechanisms, emphasizing that although individual perception and cognition and cultural schemas and 'representations' are clearly distinct, and ought not to be conflated, their relationship is always one of 'mutual embeddedness' (p. 186).

Finally, the importance of a 'contextual' approach is also reflected in Ellen's essay on the 'cognitive geometry of nature'. Reacting against the claim of the cultural idealists and postmodernists that nature is simply a 'social construct' and acknowledging that the concept of 'nature' is by no means universal, Ellen emphasizes that our conceptions of the natural world vary historically and ethnographically. Thus there are multiple ways in which nature may be interpreted and used in specific cultural settings. But Ellen suggests that underlying our conceptions of nature there are three basic cognitive dispositions which are widely recognized. These relate to the idea that nature is an inventory or collection of different kinds of 'things' or 'natural kinds', which are expressed as basic categories – the concept of 'nature' is not in itself a basic category; the notion of nature as a topological space that is distinct, and separate from human concerns; and, finally, nature conceived as an inner essence or force. But Ellen, like Maurice Bloch and Tim Ingold, downplays the linguistic model of culture and affirms that language only mediates – and then only rather inadequately – between these three underlying cognitive dispositions and the diverse cultural conceptions of nature. And he emphasizes the contextual, variable, and contingent ways in which these various cultural schemas and paradigms are utilized. He thus completely repudiates the exoticism of much cultural anthropology which sets up a false dichotomy between so-called 'Western' thought (equated with Cartesian metaphysics) and the thought of forest peoples living in some remote part of the world.

The book is sub-titled 'essays in the anthropology of classifying behaviour', and for Ellen the process of classifying inherently connects culture, psychology, and the perceptual discontinuities of the concrete world. Our propensity to classify – the categorical

impulse – thus involves the possession of innate cognitive skills, but it also concerns our ability, as Ellen cogently puts it, 'to organize our perceptions through culture (aided by language) based on models drawn from somatic experience, and from social and perceptual experience of the material world' (p. 29). Thus, although eschewing philosophical issues, Ellen stands firmly in the tradition of historical or emergent materialism. In fact, he quotes Engels to suggest that although our categories may be socially constructed, they still refer to a real world.

The early chapters of the book, along with Ellen's important introduction to the recent volume *Ethnobiology and the science of humankind* (JRAI Special Issue, 2006), give a clear and refreshing overview of the sub-discipline, as well as affirming ethnobiology's crucial role in the continuing development of anthropology as a multi-discipline. An anthropology interpreted not as a form of semiotics or as a purely literary enterprise, but as the historical science of humankind.

BRIAN MORRIS *Goldsmiths College*

HOBART, ANGELA & BRUCE KAPFERER (eds). *Aesthetics in performance: formations of symbolic construction and experience*. ix, 239 pp., figs, illus., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2005. £50.00 (cloth)

This edited volume contains essays devoted to the aesthetic forms and dynamics found in performances. It is a result of a workshop held at the Cross-Cultural Centre Ascona in 2001. In terms of wider scholarship, many of the essays in this volume either see performance as deriving its meaning and potency from outside the symbolic (e.g. in the political or class orders) or view the aestheticized symbolic as ideologically obfuscating 'real', objective realities, as in materialistic theories. As the editors argue, symbolic forms and processes in themselves have agency in the sense that aesthetic processes both condition their composition and have an interventional capacity (this is why they are used in shamanistic performances or healing rites, for example). Performance is also more than action or practice in that the participants in performance are thoroughly conscious of their actions as a performance to be witnessed or participated in as such. What is important, however, is that performance is not 'merely' an enactment or the materialization of a pre-existing schema or text because while there

may be a text, performance is also a non-reducible emergent phenomenon, a symbolic formation *sui generis*. Thus the text is created through the performance and only available through it rather than pre-existing it.

The book comprises eleven chapters, and as the editors explain, it moves from particular aesthetic and ritual forms to the problematics of everyday life (in worship and healing) and through to the aesthetic organization of secular public events (carnival, political gatherings, and the circus). In the first essay the editors, Kapferer and Hobart, outline the aesthetic dimensions of performance, argue that symbolic forms themselves have agency, and introduce the essays. In a piece called 'Making grown men weep', Beeman offers a very strong analysis of how the acoustic dimensions of singing literally move people by evoking a variety of emotions. Next, Shulman's 'The buzz of the gods and the click of delight' represents an analysis of how music and poetry lead to psycho-physical changes in listeners through a focus on an Indian text written in the thirteenth century. In 'Songs of love, images of memory', Kersenboom uses a Telegu song to explore the experiential and sensory dimensions of performance. Bastin, in 'The Hindu temple and the aesthetics of the imaginary', makes a case for understanding how the divinity is very much part of the very architecture of holy places in India. In 'Where divine horsemen ride', Friedson offers a fascinating analysis of trance, music, song, and clapping as they form the core performative elements of trance. Kapferer uses his piece 'Sorcery and the beautiful' to offer the most insightful contribution of the volume, devoted to how the poetics, music, song, dance, mime, drama, or the plastic arts are part of the process by which Sinhala healing rituals become effective. Hobart offers us 'Transformation and aesthetics in Balinese masked performance' to explore how the compositional elements of such a performance allow it to re-make the Balinese world and extend their consciousness to life-revitalizing aspects of human existence. DaMatta returns to his long-term preoccupation with 'A concise reflection on the Brazilian carnival' to analyse the aesthetics of such rites of reversal by showing its fleetingness and constant decentring of social order. Handelman's 'Bureaucratic logic, bureaucratic aesthetics' uses two public events in Israel to explore the fascinating subject of the aesthetic 'feel' of practice. The final essay by Carmeli, 'Compassion for animals, indifference to humans', again is a strong piece focusing on

how circus animals were perceived as part and yet not as part of 'nature' in Britain of the 1970s.

There is much to commend in this volume (although the essays differ in their theoretical sophistication, empirical foundations, and appeal to anthropologists). First, it contains a fascinating array of cases where the aesthetic dimensions of different performances are analysed. Second, the opening essay by the editors does an excellent job of introducing the main issues and placing them in the wider context of scholarship. And, third, many of the essays are accompanied by illustrations and photographs that enhance and exemplify the arguments found in the texts.

To conclude, I recommend this collected volume for scholars interested in ritual, performance, and aesthetics.

EYAL BEN-ARI *Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

HOWELL, SIGNE. *The kinning of foreigners: transnational adoption in a global perspective*. xvi, 255 pp., tables, illus., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2006. £75.00 (cloth)

The last few years have seen an efflorescence in the anthropology of adoption. Along with the no-longer-new reproductive technologies, adoption now appears to be in the vanguard of the 'new kinship' that emerged after the Schneiderian doldrums of the 1980s. At first glance this seems odd, for as Signe Howell notes in the opening chapters of *The kinning of foreigners*, adoption languished as a footnote to kinship theory for decades. This book is intended as a corrective, and as such it provides the reader with a salutary overview of what has happened to the institution of adoption since it became enmeshed with the flow of people and ideas now taken as emblematic of a globalized world.

The book makes several important interventions. The most valuable of these is the way in which Howell tracks the impact of what she calls the 'psy' disciplines on the adoption process in industrial countries, and on adoption legislation itself. This was a set of dots that needed to be connected up, and Howell has placed herself in an excellent position to do it. As she notes, the 'psy' perspective is fundamentally predicated on the notion of the possessive individual, who is none the less affected from an early age by the 'stimuli' of his or her surroundings. It is this perspective, with its underlying premise that a child possesses a set of interests independently of a constellation

of kin, that informs the 'best interests of the child' aspect of much contemporary adoption law. Particularly in the second half of the book, Howell points to the fact that many donor countries – especially those whose local adoption and fosterage practices emphasize 'house welfare' rather than 'child welfare' – find these legal provisions baffling at best, imperialistic at worst.

Also notable is the account of exchange through which Howell renders transnational adoption. She presents a model in which children move from developing countries to industrial ones, while legislation moves in the opposite direction. The legislation presents the appearance of a monolithic 'Western' perspective on transnational adoption that is then imposed upon donor countries, but Howell pursues the underlying question of whether there is even a consensus on what adopted children need and deserve in the receiving countries. There is not, of course. The shifting ground of the 'psy' authorities, the ongoing interpretation of law, and the differing attitudes of these countries towards the transnational adoption market all contribute to the labyrinthine process undertaken by prospective adoptive parents to constitute a 'family'.

In using the word 'market' to describe transnational adoption, Howell's otherwise illuminating discussion falls short. By positing the transnational adoption exchange as one of children for laws, Howell makes an intriguing theoretical move but also one that sidesteps the uncomfortable fact that, like other resources, children are flowing from poor countries to rich ones, and money in the form of agency fees and donations to orphanages is flowing in the opposite direction. Further, these children are the products of anonymous and invisible persons: the one perspective Howell does not provide or even acknowledge is that of the women who relinquish their children, a glaring absence in an otherwise comprehensive account. While there is some discussion of what it means to involve money in a transaction that also involves the creation of a family, this section of the book is under-analysed. This is unfortunate, not least because it would help to shed light on why the two receiving countries on which Howell focuses her discussion, Norway and the United States, approach transnational adoption in profoundly different ways. Transnational adoption in Norway proceeds solely through state apparatuses and does not permit prospective adopters to specify preferences as to their child's sex, age, national

origin, or health status. In the US, both state and private adoptions can be contracted, and adopters are routinely permitted to select all sorts of attributes in their children. That Norway regulates its adoptions and the United States doesn't should come as a surprise to no one. And that Howell manages not only to be surprised but scandalized by American adoption practices suggests a reluctance to engage with the possibility that transnational adoption might be driven by market principles.

The book's strengths, therefore, lie in its examination of adoption ideologies rather than the economic relations that underpin them. This is a worthwhile enterprise in itself. *The kinning of foreigners* represents a thought-provoking contribution to the burgeoning literature on adoption, and will be a valuable resource for any who are currently working in this area, or in the fields of kinship or transnationalism in general.

MELISSA DEMIAN *University of Kent*

KUROTANI, SAWA. *Home away from home: Japanese corporate wives in the United States*. xi, 241 pp., tables, bibliogr. London, Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2006. £14.95 (paper)

Sawa Kurotani's book might also have been sub-titled 'Japanese incorporated wives', for the subjects of her ethnographic study are women whose main task, on accompanying their husbands on job assignments to the US, is to maintain 'domestic bliss' and thus the reproductive capacity of their husbands during their life abroad. This expectation is held collectively by the Japanese corporations as employers, husbands, and the wives themselves, who consequently aspire to high standards of domestic perfection. One of Kurotani's main concerns is to explore what kind of female subjectivities emerge from this situation, and how the women's sense of self is shaped within the context of corporate demands, Japanese ideologies of homemaking and motherhood, the community of other wives, and their transnational situation in the United States.

Kurotani's book addresses a significant gap in the discussions of globalization, namely what could be called the 'domestic underbelly of global capitalism'. This has so far mainly been discussed in relation to female migrants from poor countries, such as domestic workers, childcarers, and others who form part of the 'global care chain'. This study highlights, for a rather more privileged group, that the operations of Japanese subsidiaries in the United

States are substantially enabled by the co-optation of the wives of those who are sent on a *kaigai chuuzai*, a posting abroad. Just how crucial the women's support is becomes evident in cases where the male employee departs for the US alone, and, without his wife's support, is considered at great risk of becoming ill, having an affair, behaving unwisely, or failing his assignment altogether.

In a fine-grained ethnographic study, Kurotani explores what it means for these women to, as they put it, 'play their part'. Befriending informal groups of Japanese corporate wives in three US cities – one in Greater New York, one in the North Carolina research triangle, and a place called 'Centerville' in the Midwest – she joins the women for their daytime activities and details their homemaking practices, which are carefully geared to reproduce, as much as possible, a properly 'Japanese' home abroad. Kurotani eschews any simplifying approach with regard to how these women may be constrained in their personal life choices through their capacities as wives and mothers; instead, she is interested in how the women inhabit the position of the corporate wife in the US. One key element, it seems, is the notion of 'play', as the women refer to their regular gatherings in each other's homes, which provide some relief from domestic chores and, to some extent, childcare. At the same time, these meetings also constitute means of mutual support and conduits of information, and thus indirectly benefit the women's families, and ultimately the corporate employers. Kurotani draws an emphatic picture of some of the women's personalities, and sketches how they respond individually to their 'long vacation' – as they rather euphemistically refer to their time in the US.

Kurotani is not interested merely in how aspects of 'Japaneseness' are re-created abroad, however, but also in how these may be challenged and negotiated through the women's transnational experience. If anywhere, this is perhaps where this study falls short, as one does not get a strong sense of how such transnationality features in their lives. While the children attend American schools, their home lives are as much as possible continued in Japanese style, including the provisioning of foodstuffs from Japanese supermarkets. Although their location in the US indirectly underwrites much of the families' everyday lives, evidence of how this may prompt the women to challenge their roles remains rather understated. We are told that the women are interacting with

other American parents and neighbours, but contacts are rather sparse and are not much elaborated upon; neither are the thoughts that the women may have regarding American society more generally. Thus, the perspective of the study appears to some extent confined to the living rooms where the women's gatherings take place.

Given the lack of attention afforded to privileged migrants, and women's roles in the corporate assignments described here in particular, Kurotani's study is a timely and important contribution to an emerging field. This holds even more so since rather lofty, speculative studies on a supposed 'global capitalist class' do not include qualitative ethnographic material on the people who may be part of it. Therefore, in order to highlight links between globalization and domesticity, the living rooms of Japanese expatriate wives in the US may be as good a place to start as any.

ANNE-MEIKE FECHTER *University of Sussex*

MEYER, BIRGIT & ANNELIES MOORS (eds). *Religion, media, and the public sphere*. vii, 325 pp., illus., bibliogr. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2006. £65.00 (cloth), £24.95 (paper)

This dense and provocative book is a series of (mostly) professorial papers from a conference that took place in 2001. It provides a wide range of evidence from the 1990s of a demonstrably complex conceptual relationship between the three elements of the title. The book is interdisciplinary, with a strong anthropological presence. Although the editors denigrate anthropology's past contribution to media analysis (unfairly, to my mind), their book provides ample proof of anthropology's continuing importance to the understanding of media in society and its role in transforming and reproducing values.

The collection is divided into three sections. The first concerns the mediation of religion and its new publics. The case studies include accounts of cassettes of popular sermons in Cairo (Hirschkind), Evangelical television stations and print media in Rio de Janeiro (Birman), an orthodox Jewish publishing house in London (Stolow), and a Sephardic radio station in Israel (Lehmann and Siebzeher). The second section examines public religion and the politics of difference. The subjects are debates about family law in Palestine (Moors), public morality in Mali (Schulz), issues of transparency in Indonesian journalism (Spyer), rights claims in South Africa

(Hackett), and indigenous control of media in Australia (Ginsburg). This section is the most heterogeneous, and the engagements with legal issues of representation and mediation are especially stimulating. The final section examines how religion enters the domain of entertainment and catalyses a realignment of discourses and interest groups. Case studies include commercial sponsorship in Ramadan television programming in Egypt (Armbrust), the theological star of a popular television chat show in Turkey (Öncü), auratic presence on Indian television (Dasgupta), the relationship of Hindi films to Hindu nationalism (Dwyer), and Pentecostal videos in South Africa. The thematic sphere of this section is less clearly defined than the others, and some chapters deal with issues explored in the first section. Like the other contributions, they challenge expectations of neat or predictable media effects.

Refreshingly eclectic as a group, the chapters also demonstrate eclecticism within allegedly global systems, for religion refers to *global* religions, except in Ginsburg's account of Aboriginal 'indigenous movements'. Most chapters have a solid foundation in empirical research, and demonstrate that anthropological approaches to media have an important role to offset some of the more general theorizing which casts the world in a Western mould and fails to recognize the heterogeneity of (post)modernity. The diversity *within* religions will not surprise most anthropologists, but it is reassuring to see so much evidence of local variation despite shared technology and globalization-speak. This variation is further enhanced by the effective visual materials in many chapters. Secularization is revealed to be part of a see-saw operation. The logic of (post)modernity and the Baudrillardic simulacrum are challenged by the evidence that mediation, rather than being the nemesis of the real, remains grounded in the ongoing effect of social relations. Its is a tangible world which encompasses technology, instead of being dematerialized by it.

The book returns us to issues first explored in the excellent collection edited by Hoover and Lundby (*Rethinking media, religion and culture*, 1997). But instead of an 'interrelated web within society', the unifying theme is now Habermas's 'public sphere', and all the chapters are about the 'public presence of mediated religion' (p. 3). There have been many critiques of the normative homogenization of the public sphere concept, such as Rajagopal's argument that media reproduce 'a structured set of

misunderstanding' between 'split publics' (*Politics after television*, 2001, pp. 24–6). Given this material, the contributors might have pushed their case further, to provide alternative frames of reference. We are given a rich diversity of regions and media in terms of counter-publics and pluralisms, but ultimately the collection shies away from finding an alternative to the public sphere, although some contributors hint at more elaborated conceptual frameworks in their full-length books. Ultimately, the strength of this collection is in its detailed case studies, and in the questions it raises about mediation, appropriation, and transformation in society in general. It will be extremely welcome to anyone teaching and researching communication and the contemporary life of symbols, whether in relation to religion, media, or culture, within anthropology and cognate disciplines.

FELICIA HUGHES-FREELAND *University of Wales  
Swansea*

Ó CADHLA, STIOFÁN. *Civilizing Ireland: Ordnance Survey 1824-1842, ethnography, cartography, translation*. viii, 280 pp., bibliogr. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007. £47.50 (cloth), £20.00 (paper)

This book focuses on what can be loosely described as the ethnographic activities of the Ordnance Survey in Ireland during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. During this period the survey accomplished the mapping of Ireland at the scale of six-inches-to-one-mile, with a resultant coverage of the island in 1,900 map sheets. This was its primary task and is especially significant in an Irish context as it provides a detailed record of the landscape on the eve of the Great Famine, when rural population was at its maximum. Widely regarded as an immense organizational and technical achievement, the project was none the less the subject of considerable controversy, both at the time and in later years. Much of the debate has been about its cultural baggage, most notably in how the survey handled the interpretation and spelling of place-names and, more generally, the linguistic clash between an advancing English and a retreating Irish. Aware of these sensitivities, the survey employed Irish language speakers as fieldworkers to undertake enquiries on local usages. Their findings were recorded in 'name-books' and in the letters they sent to headquarters in Dublin. Other surveyors also collected a broader category of statistical and antiquarian information about the areas

they were mapping. For a decade in the 1830s, under the inspiration of the local director, Captain Thomas Larcom, the survey considered publishing written descriptions, in the form of parish memoirs, to accompany and elaborate on their maps. This initiative soon foundered, with only one memoir published, and much of the initial framework (in outline 'hard and logical' according to the survey's meticulous biographer, Professor John Andrews) became buried in what Andrews succinctly calls 'a shapeless mass of antiquarian tissue' (*A paper landscape*, 1975, p. 159).

Though little appeared in print at the time, much material was collected for this abandoned scheme, particularly for areas in Ulster. Fortunately preserved in the Royal Irish Academy, these records have been published and edited in recent decades by the Institute of Irish Studies at Queen's University Belfast. Another recent initiative, still in progress, has been the editing and publication on a county basis of the letters written by the survey's roving cultural specialists. The primary material of the survey's non-mapping activities is thus being made more widely available. At the same time, the early years of the survey itself have been subject to considerable scholarly scrutiny. The above-mentioned comprehensive study of the nineteenth-century survey by John Andrews, *A paper landscape*, remains unrivalled. But to it can now be added the work of Gillian Doherty on the memoir project (*The Irish Ordnance Survey: history, culture and memory*, 2004), and a growing body of studies seeking to 'read', and perhaps deconstruct, not just the survey and its maps but also its wider historical context (e.g. Mary Hamer in *Textual Practice* 3 (1989), 184–201). Beyond the confines of academic work, the cultural challenges of the early years of the survey have caught the imagination of the playwright Brian Friel in his widely acclaimed play *Translations* (1980).

Now Stiofán Ó Cadhla offers his own wide-ranging contribution focusing on the prose generated by and for the survey. According to him, 'The extant memoirs ... provide a unique example of both the ethnographic aspects of the survey and the evolutionary colonialist discourse informing its conceptualization and practice in the field' (p. 20).

Across seven chapters, Ó Cadhla wrestles with ethnography, cartography, and translation – themes which he considers focus on the cultural, spatial, and symbolic dimensions of life. He adds that this combination is used 'to locate and contextualize what Spivak calls "the

palimpsestic narrative of imperialism" and its subtext or referent, the subjugated knowledge' (p. 6). Ó Cadhla's work is thus placed within a theoretical and critical setting in which the actions of the Ordnance Survey are seen as being part of a colonial superstructure. Approving of the dictum of E. Estyn Evans, a pioneer of Irish folklife studies, that 'to depend on documentary evidence alone is to see Ireland through the eyes of her conquerors', Ó Cadhla goes on to substantiate his claim that as a result 'the past is re-presented and "the Irish" are other to themselves' (p. 8).

The themes and ideas being reviewed in this book are clearly interesting and relevant to any interpretation of the role of Britain in early and mid-nineteenth-century Ireland. However, readers may find the book wordy and in places more a polemic than a systematic treatment. Incomplete referencing and rather too many minor factual imprecisions add to the shortcomings. Readers unfamiliar with the subject matter may wish to reconnoitre the topic first via chapter 4, 'Topography ancient and modern', in Andrews's *Paper landscape*. This well-expressed and reliable overview provides the kind of basic orientation that is lacking, yet still needed, in *Civilizing Ireland*.

ARNOLD HORNER *University College Dublin*

ROBBEN, ANTONIUS C. G. M. (ed.). *Death, mourning, and burial: a cross-cultural reader*. x, 322 pp., fig., bibliogr. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004. £60.00 (cloth), £19.99 (paper)

Generations of anthropologists have tried, from a number of distinct analytic perspectives, to advance our understanding of the ways in which humans conceptualize death and respond to its brute presence in their lives. From Van Gennep's turn-of-the-twentieth-century observations on the tripartite structure of death rites to Nancy Scheper-Hughes's provocative account of death without grieving among impoverished Brazilian mothers, anthropologists writing about death have offered powerful insights into its social, psychological, and political underpinnings in a range of societies. The present volume, an excellent collection of twenty-three previously published texts on various aspects of death in Western and non-Western societies, includes some of the most important writings along these lines.

There are two key strengths to this 'cross-cultural reader': one is the quality of the chapters, for the text includes a bevy of highly

important, conceptually fresh writings, ranging from seminal and still relevant texts such as Robert Hertz's 'A contribution to the study of the collective representation of death' to more modern classics such as Renato Rosaldo's 'Grief and a headhunter's rage', to an excerpt from Scheper-Hughes's ethnography 'Death without weeping.' The second strength lies in the diversity of the writings at hand: questions of death, grief, mourning, burial, remembrance, and mortuary rituals are explored from a number of perspectives – social structuralist, political economic, psychocultural, comparative, historical. Most of the authors are anthropologists, but also included are a few signal historical (Ariès's 'The hour of our death') and psychological musings (Ernest Becker's 'The terror of death' and Robert Jay Lifton and Eric Olson's 'Symbolic immortality'). On the anthropological side, earlier, foundational statements by Van Gennep, Malinowski, Evans-Pritchard, Radcliffe-Browne, Lienhardt, and Fabian coincide with more recent treatments. Many of the latter draw on in-depth ethnographic research to advance their arguments. Ellen Badone, Anne S. Strauss and María Cátedra consider aspects of dying and death in, respectively, Brittany, France, Northern Cheyenne society, and the Asturias region of northern Spain. In similar terms, Loring M. Danforth examines metaphors of mediation evident in Greek funeral laments; Beth Conklin details the cultural logic of the mortuary cannibalism once practised by Wari people of the Brazilian Amazon; Hikaru Suzuki sheds light on the economic and socio-political dimensions of modern Japanese mortuary rituals; and Jonathan Parry inquires into the approaches of death practised by Aghori ascetics.

Other chapters address issues of direct relevance to modern Western societies. Margaret Lock considers the impact of Western medical technology on definitions of death, life, and personhood in North American and Japan. Katherine Verdery considers why the corpses of political leaders can often work as potent, multivalent symbols. And Antonius C.G.M. Robben documents the pained responses to political violence, disappearance, and reburial in the wake of Argentina's Dirty War. The above glosses indicate the range of topics covered in the book, and suggest that the anthropology of death is a decidedly multifarious field indeed. In reading all of the chapters chronologically – in terms of their original dates of publication, that is – one finds the analytic prisms becoming increasingly more precise, variegated, less

universalist, and yet the thought involved, the nature of the insights on hand, is not necessarily more profound.

Robben, the volume's editor, has organized the assortment well, placing the essays within six parts: conceptualizations of death; death and dying; uncommon death; grief and mourning; mortuary rituals; and remembrance and regeneration. He introduces the entire volume with an essay that situates the readings within an informed context, noting along the way how future anthropological studies of death might proceed. Of note, he argues, quite legitimately, that the anthropology of death 'can develop further into at least six directions, namely critique, comparison, self-reflexivity, objectification, death-centeredness, and dialogue'. As should be now evident, several of the texts are abridged versions of the original publications, but the omissions do not really detract from the conceptual force of the originals. All told, *Death, mourning, and burial* makes for a superb, one-of-a-kind source book for courses on death and funeral rites from an anthropological perspective, and for any social scientists interested in reading into such matters.

ROBERT DESJARLAIS *Sarah Lawrence College*

VOM BRUCK, GABRIELE & BARBARA BODENHORN (eds). *The anthropology of names and naming*. xii, 290 pp., tables, bibliogr. Cambridge: Univ. Press, 2006. £45.00 (cloth)

This collection of thoughtful essays offers an anthropologically grounded discussion of how names are bestowed, changed, shared, coveted, rejected, used, and sometimes abused in a wide range of ethnographic contexts. It provides an excellent array of case studies, from high-ranking Yemeni Imams to African American slaves who must not only relinquish their given names but also answer to demeaning or absurd monikers, and many illustrative examples in between. The essays examine the salience of names at life-cycle moments that vary culturally and include birth, puberty, marriage, illness, and death. Each underscores that names are best understood for how they play a critical role in shaping dynamics of gender, sexuality, religion, power, place, birth, death, and the body. The volume illustrates how, as sites of struggle, names are never free of the politics that shape them, and naming is often the terrain where social dynamics are mediated and transformed. This relationship between name and person/place is one of sign and referent that plays out in everyday discourse,

historical narrative, and material culture in both small-scale and urban societies.

The chapters cohere around key issues outlined by vom Bruck and Bodenhorn in their introduction, including how names may be more than arbitrary signs; how names are linked to various dimensions of personhood; and the symbolic and expressive dimensions of this social process. The editors draw on both cultural and linguistic anthropological theory to outline their thematic areas of study, as do several of the contributors. The body is a special point of focus throughout the book; indeed, some of the most compelling ethnographic discussion centres on the often overshadowed connection between the semiotic and the material. Such a sub-disciplinary bridge, which happens infrequently, is a most welcome part of this rigorous examination of the philosophical, semiotic, and political underpinnings of names that guides us from antiquity and into the present. Rather than group the chapters thematically, the editors have arranged them such that adjacent ones articulate topically. Editor commentary prefaces every chapter and helps to situate each *vis-à-vis* others. These interludes are especially helpful when reading the entire volume and contemplating different incarnations of the book's central themes.

Identity is a focus that unites the collection's diverse ethnographic settings and sociolinguistic customs, and the essays approach this concept through complex, grounded analyses of naming practices. Chapters by Linda Layne, Andre Iteanu, Barbara Bodenhorn, and Carolyn Humphrey examine the societal implications of who deserves a name, when one receives a name, and the implications of not being named altogether. Maurice Bloch's and Michael Lambek's chapters analyse the philosophical underpinnings of naming and modes of address as they occur among the living and deceased in different regions of Madagascar, while Stephen Hugh-Jones offers insights on these subjects from Northwest Amazonia. Susan Benson historicizes contemporary African American names by examining slavery-era West African naming practices, the atrocities of naming prevalent in the Atlantic slave trade, and recent strategies to reclaim name choice and bestowal. The ways in which names are etched on bodies and landscapes in papers by Gabriele vom Bruck and Thomas Blom Hansen speak to questions of gender, race, class, and place. Together, the chapters cover an impressive breadth and scope of perspectives on names and naming.

While the chapters flow nicely as arranged, explicit section headings that group the essays thematically could highlight the collection's contributions more substantively. For instance, using key topics identified in the introduction – especially gender, religion, or power – to order the essays would make the book more readily accessible to readers with specific interests. In its current configuration, chapters that discuss names in urban regions of the United States, South Africa, and Yemen bookend studies based in small-scale societies in Papua New Guinea, Madagascar, Amazonia, Alaska, and Mongolia. Ultimately the book offers a far more complex and nuanced approach than a comparison of naming in small- versus large-scale societies, and an organization that transcends such a divide might better serve the collection. This minor point does not, however, detract from the overall merit of this timely collection. In an era when names act simultaneously as markers of identity and tools of surveillance, this edited volume provides much material for thought and comparison on the regional significance of names. Indeed, this welcome set of essays will be of interest to both cultural and linguistic anthropologists in search of a deeper answer to the age-old question of what is in a name.

SHALINI SHANKAR *Northwestern University*

WHITEHOUSE, HARVEY & ROBERT N. MCCAULEY (eds). *Mind and religion: psychological and cognitive foundations of religiosity*. xxx, 248 pp., figs, tables, bibliogr. Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 2005. £19.99 (paper)

All thirteen contributors to this edited book focus on evaluating Harvey Whitehouse's 'modes of religiosity' theory, which assumes that there are two fundamental types of religious systems. First, there are 'doctrinal' systems involving institutionalized leadership roles, elaborately organized and written-down theologies, and predictable and repetitive rituals. Second, there are 'imagistic' systems involving leadership by inspired and charismatic individuals, and rituals that are exciting, unpredictable, and not frequently repeated. Each mode is assumed to exploit a different set of cognitive processes in the minds of those to whom religious concepts and teachings are transmitted. For example, the repetitive rituals of the doctrinal mode are expected to elicit processes enabling explicit memory, while the infrequent but arousing rituals of the imagistic

mode are expected to involve episodic memory. In theory, if we can recognize the mode of a particular religious system, then we should be able to make accurate predictions about the types of cognitive processes involved in the evolution and maintenance of that system.

The book is divided into three sections. The first deals with theoretical considerations, the second with testing the theory and the third with the theory's wider applications. In the first section, Robert A. Hinde and Mathew Day each contribute (in separate chapters) broad and somewhat loosely organized discussions of theoretical considerations about Whitehouse's work. E. Thomas Lawson offers a more targeted commentary on cultural transmission in the context of the modes theory, including a brief review of experimental research on this topic, and Todd Tremplin sketches a dual-process (rational and experiential) model of religious thought. Finally, Pascal Boyer's chapter in the section, in which he reviews his own 'standard model' of religious thought and critiques Whitehouse in light of this model, is particularly outstanding. More than any other contributor, Boyer successfully applies the logic of evolutionary psychology in order to distinguish the cognitive adaptations that produce religiosity from aspects of religion that arise as by-products of these adaptations. In this regard his analysis of Whitehouse is especially illuminating, for example when he discusses the doctrinal mode as a correlate of cognitive by-products such as guilds and literacy.

Several first-section contributors emphasize the need for research that tests the predictions of the modes theory, and the book's second section takes this issue to heart. Justin Barrett draws up a list of twelve hypotheses derived from the theory that are most in need of empirical testing. Such lists are helpful in terms of clarifying the criteria for falsification of the theory's predictions, and may inspire others to conduct the suggested research. However, empirical research is more easily said than done, and it would be reassuring if this section contained more chapters that actually presented data. In fact, only one chapter in this section (and in the whole book) contains original empirical research: Rebekah A. Richert, Harvey Whitehouse, and Emma Stewart describe a pair of experiments in which university students participated in ritual-like activities. These experiments were designed to test the modes theory's prediction that rituals eliciting stronger emotional reactions will motivate more elaborate

exegetical reflection about that ritual. Results supported the prediction: subjects who had stronger emotional responses to the ritual were likely to attribute meaning to a greater number of ritual actions, and to draw more analogies while expressing this meaning. This chapter is certainly one of the book's high points, as it presents interesting results that are relevant to the debates at hand. Moreover, reading the descriptions of the rituals involved in these creatively designed experiments is in itself highly entertaining.

In the final section of the book, Ilkka Pyysiäinen discusses religious conversion in terms of the constructs of the doctrinal and imagistic modes, while Jesper Sørensen considers the role of charismatic authority in the establishment of religious movements, as well as the cognitive effects of ritual, and perceptions about the purpose and meaning of ritual. Finally, D. Jason Sloane analyses the reoccurrence of free-will problems in religious systems cross-culturally, and Whitehouse himself concludes with a response to the other contributors' comments on his work.

In summary, the main weakness of this book is that while many contributors comment on the need for empirical tests of the modes of religiosity theory, only one chapter actually presents original data. Nevertheless, for anyone interested in Whitehouse's work, this book provides an excellent set of commentaries, and for those interested in cognitive approaches to religion more generally, it offers a good overview.

MICHAEL E. PRICE *Brunel University*

## Material culture and archaeology

BROWN, DAVID H. *Santería enthroned: art, ritual, and innovation in an Afro-Cuban religion*. xx, 413 pp., figs, plates, illus., bibliogr. London, Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, 2003. £27.00 (paper)

*Santería enthroned* is a long-awaited work; an erudite, massive, and luxurious volume, drawing together anthropology, history, material culture and visual culture in an extremely sophisticated way. Brown brings a fresh look in a field that too easily falls in repetitive debates on origins, authenticity, and the 'invention of tradition'.

One of the main contributions that Brown is making is to put images at the centre of his argument. This is not just an art history of

Santería, describing the iconography of altars; the author is also interested in showing how the active relation between religious objects and images and practitioners transforms religious practice and discourse. Images here are not just examples of myths, but agents in transformations of Santería.

The central issue of the book is changes and innovations in Afro-Cuban religions. The choice of words is not casual: Brown is talking not just about creolization, transculturation, or mixture, but also about innovation and change, the formation of something new and unprecedented: a historical process.

For that purpose, Brown makes a careful and well-documented historical account of the formation of what nowadays has come to be identified with Santería in Cuba. Since colonial times, a recurrent topic in this incipient cultural formation is 'royalty': the figures of the festival kings and queens of the *cabildos*, and their ambiguous relation with established authority, in a complex negotiation of power relations. The theme of 'royalty' is still very much present in contemporary Santería: aristocratic discourses of spiritual ancestry are central to the transmission of authority and power. And yet these narratives are punctuated by constant change and transformation in practice. Santería has always changed precisely by reassessing its regal ancestry, the 'new' is always defined in terms of being 'older' than the 'old', more traditional and more authentic, more regal. In this sense, Santería is faithful to the dialectics of ritual and kingship in Yoruba religion, as described, for example, in Andrew Apter's *Black critics and kings* (1992).

In the second part of the book, Brown addresses royal iconography in modern Santería altars and what he calls the 'creole taste'. Central to his argument is the question that surprised Brown when he was first exposed to Santería rituals and altars: the use of what he identified back then as 'European' images and material culture. His informants, in their turn, were surprised by this identification: what for Brown was 'European' was 'Cuban' for them, or simply common images and objects from their past, from their history. The *soperas*, soup tureens that contain the *aché*, the sacred power of the gods or *orichás*, have replaced the African calabashes, like Catholic saints have replaced African images. For the practitioners of Santería, this is not a contradiction or a loss in authenticity: the *sopera* is not only a functional replacement but it also adds an index of power, *soperas* being status symbols in post-colonial Cuba. In the same

terms, we can see the use of elaborate and luxurious clothing, furniture, and Catholic images that look 'European' to the outsider less in terms of iconographic authenticity to Santería's African roots than as indexes of powers. The Orichá shrines, the 'thrones', are seats of power, and as such, their constitutive elements are indexes of power, not just authentic African objects. If power in Cuba was indexed in ceramic, elaborate embroideries, satin robes, and baroque furniture and images, it made sense that these indexes of power became indexes of the Orichás in the thrones. This creole taste is perfectly faithful to the spirit of Santería's African forebears while changing its visual and material culture at the same time. Being indexes of power, this creole and baroque material and visual culture also influenced changes and innovations in the ritual and the cosmology of Santería.

On the other hand, the increasing influence of people who look at religion like Brown originally did – as an American intellectual looking for 'origins' – has produced a reaction to this creole aesthetic, a revival of 'Pure African' rituals and material culture. None the less this anti-syncretistic movement operates with the same mechanisms that Santería has always used: assessing the 'new' as 'older' than the 'old', closer to the royal root. In this masterful volume, Brown has skillfully shown how innovation and tradition are, in many ways, reversible terms.

ROGER SANSI *Goldsmiths College*

LEVINSON, STEPHEN C. & PIERRE JAISON (eds). *Evolution and culture*. xvii, 296 pp., figs, illus., bibliogr. London, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006. £48.95 (cloth), £22.95 (paper)

What is culture? Is it a truly human phenomenon? If so, when did it evolve and what was the main evolutionary mechanism that triggered it? These issues are addressed in this book, which is loosely based on the proceedings of the Fyssen symposium on 'evolution and culture' that was held in 1999. It comprises a collection of thirteen chapters written by contributors from the fields of physical and evolutionary anthropology, cultural anthropology, ethology, psycholinguistics, evolutionary biology, primate behaviour, brain research, and evolutionary psychology. The book is divided into two central themes: the emergence of culture in evolution; and brain, cognition, and evolution. The former focuses on the place of culture in the greater evolutionary scheme. A central issue is therefore the place of

both human and non-human culture in modern evolutionary theory. Levinson (chap. 1) provides a stimulating discussion on the role of mechanisms such as kin selection, group selection, and sexual selection in hominid evolution, and more specifically in relation to cultural evolution. In chapter 3, Foley addresses the issue of the emergence of culture with a particular emphasis on hominid cognitive evolution, in relation to the evolution of technological advancements such as tool-making traditions. In chapter 4, Boehm addresses the interface between social, cultural, and evolutionary mechanisms during the later stages of human evolution. In chapter 5, Boyd and Richerson assess the issue of the evolution of human co-operative systems in relation to theories that explain human cultural group selection and moralistic reciprocity. Dennett (chap. 6) discusses cultural transmission mechanisms in the context of both genetic and non-genetic transmission theories. In the following chapter, Sperber calls for a reconceptualization of the study of cultural evolution and suggests that scientists should develop a naturalistic approach to culture by examining cognitive causal chains of events in a manner that is somewhat similar to the methods and rationale applied in the field of medical epidemiology.

The second part of the book examines the relationship between the evolution of culture and evolution of cognition. It opens with Dunbar's chapter on brain cognition and the evolution of culture (chap. 8), which is followed by Singer's assessment (chap. 9) of the neurobiological aspects of cultural evolution. In chapter 10, Tomasello juxtaposes the coevolution of the biological, social, and cognitive aspects that led to the unique evolution of human culture. He proposes that culture evolved by a 'ratchet-effect' mechanism in a manner such that each change is irreversible and hence is a progress towards a more sophisticated and complex system. Tomasello argues that the cognitive adaptation of anatomically modern humans accounts for the differences between modern human and primate cognition. The next two chapters examine a rather specific set of theories which are to some extent tangential to the study of cultural evolution. In chapter 11 Hauser examines the evolution of moral systems and the aspects of co-operation and inhibitions in human and primate development and learning, and in chapter 12 Gallistel, Gelman, and Cordes propose a theory that the system of arithmetic reasoning with real numbers evolved

before language and that foundation of the latter lies in an arithmetic relationship between real numbers and integers. Premack and Hauser conclude this volume with a chapter which addresses the ultimate question as to why animals do not have culture. They state that 'the function of human culture is to clarify what people value, what they take seriously in their daily lives, what they will fight for and use to exclude or include others in their groups'. They believe no aspect in animal behaviour comes close to this aspect of human culture.

All in all, this volume provides a fascinating account of cultural evolution. However, the contributors' accounts in fact tackle a wide array of loosely related topics which reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the symposium. Consequently, the reader must be aware that this is for the most part a highly theoretical volume and that the audience is likely to be academics who are interested in this subject. At the same time, the somewhat convoluted account of some of the contributors reflects the complexity of the issue at hand. Thus, Tomasello concludes his chapter with the claim that

any adequate theory of human cognition must provide some reasonable account of the processes of sociogenesis in historical and ontogenetic time that intervened between the human genotype and the human phenotype. This is quite simply uniquely human material and symbolic artifacts, which in turn have created an evolutionarily unique cultural niche for human cognitive ontogeny, which in turn has created an evolutionarily new form of cognition that relies on intersubjective and perspectival cognitive representations.

Did the course of cultural evolution involve a tangled complex chain of unique historical events? Or is it possible to pinpoint the ultimate evolutionary mechanism that triggered it? It is left for readers to decide.

RON PINHASI *Roehampton University*

STANISH, CHARLES & BRIAN S. BAUER (eds). *Archaeological research on the Islands of the Sun and Moon, Lake Titicaca, Bolivia: final results from the Proyecto Tiksi Kjarka*. xv, 224 pp. maps, figs, tables, illus., bibliogr. Los Angeles: Cotsen Inst. Archaeology at UCLA, 2004. £24.00 (paper)

In *Archaeological research on the Islands of the Sun and Moon*, Charles Stanish and Brian Bauer have

tactfully assembled key results of an impressive project of archaeological research in an important region of the central South American Andes. The project was conducted in 1994-6 under the auspices of the National Science Foundation, the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, the Field Museum of Natural History, and other public and private institutions.

The volume includes everything one would hope for in a monograph: clear writing, ample data, logical organization in their presentation, and many illustrations and photos. In six chapters and one appendix, the volume successfully outlines the contributions of prior research in the Lake Titicaca region of Bolivia, in relation to the objectives and results of research of the *Tiksi Kjarka* project that is summarized here.

The primary goals of their project, as stated in the opening chapter, were (1) to evaluate the accuracy of historical documents regarding Inca occupation of the islands in AD 1400-1533, and (2) to determine whether their significance for the Inca developed from earlier cultural traditions. Sixteenth-century chroniclers indicated that the islands were among the most important pilgrimage sites for the Inca and that they housed major temple complexes tended by priests, resettled colonists, and 'chosen women' who dedicated their lives to the sun and moon cults. Indeed, Inca myth claimed that Lake Titicaca was a place of cosmic origins, and that the sun first arose behind a sacred rock, the *Titikala*, perched on the north side of the Island of the Sun.

After a brief introduction to the islands, previous research about them, and project goals in chapter 1, Stanish and Bauer summarize results of their archaeological investigation of settlement history on the Island of the Sun. They find that the island was inhabited by the Late Archaic period (*circa* 2000 BC), and that during the Upper Formative (500 BC-AD 500), settlement became complex and a ritual site may have been established near the sacred rock. Complexity increased during the Tiwanaku period (AD 500-1100), as a regional political centre was established on the south side of the island and a ritual centre on the north, near the sacred rock. The island and sacred rock waned in importance during the Altiplano Period (AD 1100-1400), but re-emerged as pilgrimage loci under the Inca. Elaborate monumental complexes were constructed near *Titikala*, farming settlements took advantage of prime agricultural land to support the island's

inhabitants and solar cult, and roads lined with ritual platforms facilitated pilgrimage by connecting the south end of the site near the mainland to the *Titikala*.

Succeeding chapters detail results of excavations at specific sites on the islands of the Sun and Moon. Chapter 3 describes results of excavation at four Inca sites in the *Titikala* sanctuary area: one a likely residence for sanctuary attendants; the Chincana, a conjoined temple, residence for chosen women, and storehouse; Kasapata, a probable place for ceremony and festival; and the *Titikala* sanctuary itself, a documented place for burying offerings that, excavations confirmed, have been extensively looted. Chapter 4 describes excavations on Tikani, a ridge northwest of and visible from *Titikala*. Research confirmed that two structures on the ridge that frame the June Solstice sunset, as seen from *Titikala*, indeed served as solstice markers.

Matthew Seddon's chapter 5 is a volume gem. A summary of his dissertation at University of Chicago, it presents results of excavation at Chucaripupata, the site near *Titikala* that served as ritual centre during the Tiwanaku period. These excavations confirm occupation near the sacred rock during the Upper Formative, and that the area was considered sacred as part of the Tiwanaku state, if not earlier. Excavations also demonstrate dynamic transformations at Chucaripupata as its interaction with Tiwanaku intensified over time, eventually concretized in an elaborate platform complex associated with ceramic wares for ritual consumption and a formal storage complex for food and ritual paraphernalia. These results correspond nicely to evidence for similar transformations at Tiwanaku and other affiliated settlements.

Chapter 6 presents results of excavation in the elaborate complex of Iñak Uyu on the Island of the Moon, eight kilometres to the southeast. Historically documented as housing a temple, priests, and chosen women dedicated to a parallel moon cult, Iñak Uyu includes some of the best-preserved monumental ruins in the Andes. Excavations confirmed the ritual importance of the site and island for the Inca, and reveal suggestive evidence that it may have been a ritual focus for the Tiwanaku as well.

Stanish and Bauer's excellent monograph complements their more general co-authored volume synthesizing this research, *Ritual and pilgrimage in the ancient Andes* (2001). While I recommend the latter to those interested in a broad understanding of the islands and their

past significance, I highly recommend the present monograph as a companion that details the results of an important archaeological project in the highland Andes.

JOHN JANUSEK *Vanderbilt University*

## Social anthropology

ABU-LUGHOD, LILA. *Dramas of nationhood: the politics of television in Egypt*. xvii, 319 pp., illus., bibliogr. London, Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, 2004. £15.50 (paper)

Modern media have a deceptive simplicity. They are technological innovations and have taken shape in a historical context where capitalism and democracy are the dominant economic and political forces, and as with any other technology, communications media are regarded as instrumental to the prevailing forces. Moreover, in modern societies, a widespread belief has taken hold that promoting communication diminishes the possibility of misunderstanding and even of inequality.

But neither capitalism nor democracy is a simple thing; they both have multiple tendencies that interact and complicate each other, or, as Lila Abu-Lughod puts it, 'the vectors of modernity crisscross' (p. 132). And promoting communications may of course trigger conflict just as easily as it may inspire peace; if people understand each other's intentions better, there is no guarantee what the outcome will be. Communication technologies are indeed instruments, of corporations and of public or state agencies, but their consequences are not exhausted by their instrumentality. People are liable to put them to unpredictable uses; this openness is one of the reasons why they find mass media attractive. The results, when one inquires into the meaning and effects of something like television, is a complicated and non-coherent series of acts, events, and intentions.

For an anthropologist, however, television can provide a useful means of opening up methodological debates about models of culture and ethnographic fieldwork. The prevalence of television helps to point out that 'culture' is never a given but has always been mediated, and has always relied on situated, material instruments and practices, to fabricate outcomes that are contingent on a given historical and political context. This implies that 'culture' ceases to be the privileged gateway for

understanding the world. Cultures that may appear distinct are often revealed as connected by technologies and systems of circulating goods and images, obliging the ethnographer to question received ideas about 'us' and 'them'.

Abu-Lughod's response to the problem is to practise a mobile and multi-sited ethnography of people's lives, regarding television as but one aspect of the fields she is exploring. With such a method, the circulation of 'cultural meanings, objects and identities' come into view, as well as the connections between different sites (p. 20). Pre-eminent among the connections revealed is the national character of television, or the promotion of particular ideas of the nation on the medium.

Abu-Lughod examines the dramatic Egyptian television serials of the 1990s, especially the popular and high-quality productions shown during the Ramadan months, and rerun later. Her main aim in the book is to examine national television's efforts to stitch audiences together; her analysis reveals that it is inherently a political effort, negotiating numerous internal divisions of religion, location, gender, and class.

She provides an extremely rich and detailed chronicle of the major serials in the context of their production, as well as an examination of the tensions between Nasserite secularism and emergent Islamism amongst the intellectuals responsible for producing these serials. Although Abu-Lughod has chosen not to make the issues of secularism and religious nationalism central to her book, the 'dramas of nationhood' and 'the politics of television in Egypt' are fought out more specifically over these issues than they are over new capitalist aesthetics and modes of consumption, or styles of authenticity in subject formation, although these other issues are examined in her book as well.

Drawing on densely textured ethnography performed over more than a decade, with audiences ranging from urban viewers to villagers in Upper Egypt, Abu-Lughod asks how mass media may be participating in the reconfiguration of religion in Egypt, and whether religion can be understood without reference to the nation-state. These are hardly academic questions in Egypt, of course, as the 1981 assassination of Anwar Sadat by Islamists dramatically underscored. Strangely, Abu-Lughod points out, until 1993, there was no treatment of Islamic identity on Egyptian television, owing to the influence of Nasser's secular developmentalism.

Thereafter, Abu-Lughod discerns three strategies on the part of Egyptian television for

dealing with religious extremism: discrediting terrorists; modelling Coptic-Muslim unity; and, somewhat serendipitously, offering 'traditional' rural values as an alternative to Islamism. Implicitly, one of the strategies involved creating a distinction between good and bad Muslims, between authentic religion and ignorant, backward religion – the latter being represented by the fundamentalists. In the process, the Egyptian state has shifted quite far from its original Nasserite moorings, and now attracts criticism for appeasing Islamists, Abu-Lughod points out.

This book will prove a deep reservoir of insights and information for those looking to understand the cultural nuances of modernization in Egypt. What emerges unmistakably is that an object that appears to be part of popular culture is deeply involved in national pedagogy, and thus is thoroughly political in character:

The urgency with which television serials are trying to shore up a national identity is surely related to the weakening of that strong sense of the nation that had been produced a few decades ago ... If Egypt is one of those places where, as [Ulf] Hannerz puts it, 'the national may have become more hollow than it was,' it is also the place where the political regime in power and the mass media instruments at its disposal are working quite hard to fill in that hollowness. (p. 160)

Abu-Lughod demonstrates in this rich and compelling book how television works to 'fill in that hollowness' of the nation.

ARVIND RAJAGOPAL *Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars*

ARGENTI-PILLEN, ALEX. *Masking terror: how women contain violence in southern Sri Lanka*. xiii, 240 pp., figs, illus., bibliogr. Philadelphia: Univ. Pennsylvania Press, 2003. £35.00 (cloth)

Alex Argenti-Pillen has crafted an excellent study of violence and its containment in a number of Sinhalese 'rural slum' communities in Sri Lanka. What may rankle some (though not me) is her carefully researched ethnographic argument that Western-style mental health efforts to alleviate the consequences of violence there actually may be doing more harm than good. Sri Lanka, of course, has experienced more than twenty years of civil agony, the result both of a bitter

inter-ethnic civil war between its politically dominant Sinhalese majority and separatist-minded Tamil minority, and of deep-seated intra-communal tensions between its urban elites and an underemployed rural population that culminated, in 1988-90, in a bloody civil war between the Sri Lankan government and the communist-nationalist JVP (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, or People's Liberation Front). This sad history doubly exposed to violence the communities that Argenti-Pillen studied: first, because the tactics used by both sides in the government-JVP war frequently resulted in male neighbours killing or betraying each other; and, second, because the villages became reservoirs of army recruits for the Sri Lankan government's long war with Tamil separatists. Unsurprisingly, this extended exposure to war attracted the attention of social scientists and mental health professionals associated with those transnational NGOs that specialize in alleviating or 'treating' chronic violence as some kind of pathology. It is the dangerous interaction between these communities and this transnational violence industry that lies at the core of this book.

As earlier publications reveal, Argenti-Pillen has long taken an ethnographic interest in the community of transnational mental health professionals – epitomized by the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies – that globally distribute a discourse about violence that tends to see conflicts like Sri Lanka's in terms of a single pathology: post-traumatic stress disorder (or PTSD). PTSD, a diagnostic category originally created in the 1970s to treat returning Vietnam veterans, is a powerful explanatory tool for two, interrelated reasons. First, its aetiology suggests that violence like that found in Sri Lanka is self-generating. That is, in theory, since violence begets PTSD, and PTSD damages people in ways that predispose them to commit more violence, what results is an always upwardly spiralling cycle of violence that, without intervention by PTSD counsellors, will never end. Second, given this, the political cause of violence is theoretically irrelevant to its PTSD-driven continuance and, hence, to its treatment – a feature which renders what Argenti-Pillen calls 'the discourse on trauma' useful in transnational contexts where any discussion of national or geopolitical politics might be suspect by the powers that be.

Argenti-Pillen, for her part, is doubly critical of the discourse on trauma. First, she is rightly suspicious of the way trauma discourses depoliticize the violence they would alleviate,

pointing out that a more likely source of the 'dehumanizing' mindset that trauma experts attribute to PTSD are the explicitly dehumanizing counter-insurgency tactics (such as 'hooding' and torture) taught by Western experts to non-Western counter-insurgency forces. Second, and more central, Argenti-Pillen claims that the discourse on trauma ignores, and is eroding, how Sinhalese communities already contain violence. According to Argenti-Pillen's detailed ethnography, the woman of the 'rural slums' she studied 'traditionally' limited violence by recourse to a gendered discourse about non-Buddhist spirits (or *yaksha*), and their 'gaze of the wild', that short-circuited the cycle of male violence. According to this discourse, woman experience diseases 'of the terrified heart' caused by the *yakshas*' 'gaze of the wild' that can be alleviated only by 'cleansing rituals' – some domestic, some (such as the well-known *tovil*) involving much of the local community. These rituals work, first, by identifying and isolating the always-local enemy responsible for making one vulnerable to the gaze of the wild; second, by 're-sealing' the borders between families that generally keep the gaze at bay. During the civil war this 'gaze of the wild' discourse thus short-circuited the potential for an upwardly spiralling cycle of violence by limiting revenge to the single male individuals responsible for given acts of violence. As evidence of this, Argenti-Pillen points to an all-male body count and the continued co-residence of victim and perpetrator families after the war.

But the war also produced a local counter-discourse. Some woman who lost husbands or sons to the violence became 'fearless', claiming they – like many young men and soldiers – no longer believed in *yakshas* or their gaze (or even that humans had now become so bad that *yakshas* were now afraid of them). Such 'fearless' woman, no longer bound by the complex sociolinguistic rules of the discourse on the wild, could ignore the boundaries put in place by its cleaning rituals, and could thus feel, and teach their children, a generalized hatred of their enemies more in line with the modernized discourses on violence found, according to Argenti-Pillen, in mainstream Sri Lankan party politics with their talk of 'communist insurgents' and 'Tamil terrorists' as inherently disposable categories of people. The potential for violence to become more 'modernist' and unlimited for children raised by such mothers is obvious to Argenti-Pillen. But to Western-style PTSD experts,

'fearless' woman seemed 'empowered' and were, thus, the ones selected to be trained as local PTSD counsellors so that they, in turn, could 'empower' other woman by liberating them, too, from the 'denial' in their talk of *yakshas* and their gaze. To Argenti-Pillen, then, this strange alliance between 'the discourse on trauma' and 'fearless woman' in the dismantling of the violence-containing discourses of southern Sri Lanka is a nightmare waiting, or already beginning, to happen. This is a chilling thesis one hopes is not true. But Argenti-Pillen's book is so superbly researched and carefully argued, I think we can ill afford to dismiss her fear.

MARK WHITAKER *University of South Carolina*

BOISSEVAIN, JEREMY. *Hal Kirkop: a village in Malta*. xv, 200 pp., maps, tables, illus., bibliogr. Malta: Midsea Books, 2006. (paper)

Jeremy Boissevain is something of an institution in Malta. He is known mainly for his work on the practice and politics of the ever-popular feasts, and his *Saints and fireworks* (1965, subsequent editions) has in some way or another been assimilated by a wide range of people. In international scholarship, his key moment was of course *Friends of friends* (1974), which contained the kernel of his seminal theoretical work on networks. In Malta, however, it is saints and politics that count, followed closely by his more recent research on tourism and environmentalist movements.

It is therefore hardly surprising that leading Maltese publishers Midsea have decided to go ahead with a third edition of his *Hal Kirkop* (first published in the Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology series in 1969 as *Hal-Farrug*), a classical 'politics, religion, kinship, and economy' – in this case in that order – ethnography of a small village in the south of the island. There are several reasons why the book is still relevant (and therefore worth buying) today.

First, it is relevant as the milestone of 'Maltese' anthropology it most certainly is. When the book was written, social science was still in an embryonic stage at the University of Malta, and then only in the shape of a sociology of secularization heavily patronized by the Catholic Church. Following Boissevain's pioneering lectures in the 1970s and 1980s, social anthropology was established as an official degree-awarding university programme in the early 1990s. For the burgeoning number of

students (including foreign ones) studying anthropology in Malta today, *Ħal Kirkop* is a must-read, encouraging students to think about the dynamics, changes, and politics of Maltese society. The section on *fešta* politics is particularly useful and, read in conjunction with Jon P. Mitchell's *Ambivalent Europeans* (2002), invites methodological and analytical comparison. In this sense, the volume is possibly the best example of Boissevain's sustained and ongoing research in Malta.

Second, the volume includes two epilogues, the first written in 1979 for the second edition, and a more substantial thirty-page-long one for this latest edition. The book can therefore be read as an updated account of village politics, and national politics from a village perspective, in Malta. Boissevain documents the changing streetscapes, demographics, and formal structures of *Ħal Kirkop* diligently enough, but his descriptions tend to be static and matter-of-fact, seldom engaging or analytical, and do not add much to the understanding of contemporary Maltese society. It is all too clear that the epilogues, unlike the main text, are based on visits to rather than prolonged stays in the village. As a result, Boissevain's analogy between the village core today and an 'inset preserved in amber' (p. 172) works rather too well.

The book will also be of interest to scholars interested in approaching – for constructive, deconstructive, or reconstructive reasons – the ideal of an anthropology of the Mediterranean. Despite fleeting glimpses of 'Mediterranean man' (including one in the 2005 epilogue, by which date one would expect the exorcism would have been complete), Boissevain is generally cautious and relies on observation rather than spurious categorizations for his analyses.

Above all, the book is rich in ethnographic fine-grain which speaks volumes about Malta in the 1960s as well as what it meant to be an anthropologist then. There is a picture, for instance, of Boissevain's daughter sitting on a doorstep with a group of local children. She is the only one wearing shoes, which reminds us partly of the privileged position of the fieldworker, partly that barefootedness, after decades of efforts to the contrary by social reformers, was still common in rural areas in the 1960s and carried important class connotations. The bitter church-state struggles of the time reach us not least in little snippets such as Boissevain's children learning to make rude noises whenever the name of Dom Mintoff (the socialist leader) was mentioned. And, to remind

us how our discipline has changed, the author confesses his guilt at living in a comfortable house rather than a mud-hut.

Since the 1960s, a number of the implicit theoretical assumptions of the book have been reassessed – in part by Boissevain himself in his later writings. Its empirical ethnographic solidity and lucid style, however, endure. Almost forty years on, *Ħal Kirkop* still makes a good read.

MARK-ANTHONY FALZON *University of Malta*

CANNELL, FENELLA (ed.). *The anthropology of Christianity*. ix, 373 pp., bibliogr. London, Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2007. £64.00 (cloth), £14.99 (paper)

In her introduction to this fine collection of essays on the anthropology of Christianity, Fenella Cannell notes that, given anthropology's determined secularism, Christianity has become anthropology's 'repressed'. Not only have there been few ethnographic studies of Christianity, but until recently, and even now, the role of Christianity in the development of anthropological theory has received little critical attention. Cannell hopes that her anthology will help remedy this situation. And no doubt it will.

The ten essays treat the reception and manifestation of Christianity in Highland Bolivia (Olivia Harris), South India (Cecilia Busby, David Mosse), the Philippines (Cannell), Fiji (Christina Toren), Biak in Irian Jaya (Danilyn Rutherford), in Melanesia generally (Harvey Whitehouse), in Sumba, Indonesia (Webb Keane), and among evangelicals in Sweden (Simon Coleman), the Piro of Peru (Peter Gow), and Seventy-Day Adventists in Madagascar (Eva Keller). The authors approach their subjects from different points of view, thereby opening up a range of possible approaches to the study of Christianity.

Though Cannell stresses the repressed role of Christianity in anthropology, neither she nor the other contributors explore *explicitly* the effect of Christianity on how they (or other anthropologists) formulate their findings. Their *regard* tends to be unidirectional rather than critically self-reflexive, and, as such, it confirms, unwittingly perhaps, the anxiety that Christianity purportedly arouses in the secular anthropologist. Nor do they direct their attention to the effect of peripheral christianities on – for lack of a better term – the centres of Christianity.

The essays focus mostly on such conventional issues as the relationship between Protestantism and modernity – Weber's, but not Marx's ghost, haunts many of them – conflicts

between orthodoxy and local (syncretistic) understanding, conversion and consequent reconfigurations of experience, and stress on the inner life in Protestantism. Through their sensitivity to the telling detail, however, they challenge the usual take on these issues. To give one example: convention does not always produce the dramatic reorganization of inner experience that Christian theology assumes. Indeed, the Piro are so indifferent to it, according to Gow, that they seem to have forgotten when they became Christians.

Though the contributors are aware of the definitional challenge their research poses, 'Christianity' generally and 'Catholicism' and 'Protestantism' as reference points in their ethnographies are often treated with insufficient elaboration and differentiation. This is particularly true of 'Protestantism', in which distinctions, say, between evangelical and mainstream Calvinist Protestantism or between Fundamentalism and Pentecostalism are not always as well defined as the contributors' exceptionally fine descriptions of local Christian expression demand. In part, this arises from a bias toward the converted rather than the missionaries and their particular theologies. In part it results from a failure to work out the missionaries' on-the-ground hermeneutical assumptions.

Several of the contributors are, however, sensitive to the effect of missionary style and belief on local christianities, but they have looked mainly to the historical record rather than to contemporary missionary activity. Mosse contrasts the approach of the early Jesuit missionaries, who were tolerant of (the incorporations of saints in) spirit possession practices in South India, to that of the French Jesuits who returned after the Jesuit expulsion in the eighteenth century and whose commitment to personal agency rendered their attitude toward saints and spirits far more severe. Rutherford contrasts nineteenth-century Dutch Pietists' and Biaks' conceptions of Word and Scripture. The Biaks appear to have transposed their understanding of the *korwar* (an 'idol' in missionary understanding) and its power to the Bible, the written word, from within a kinship-enforced view that attributed particular power to what was foreign ('absent') but could be possessed. Rather than bringing about inner conversion, the Bible became 'a heathen' thing and the underlying cultural orientations of the Biaks remained unchanged.

Other contributors also draw attention to the standing of the word (not necessarily the Word)

and Scripture. Cannell focuses on reading and writing practices among the Bicol. Though their performance of a passion play may be identified with submission to Catholic doctrine, it is also framed within a symbolic exchange system with a 'traditional' father figure of shamanistic import. Keane, who has written extensively on the materiality of words, stresses their role in 'the religious construction of subjects and subjectivities'. He argues that insofar as words can be decontextualized, as in prayer and chants, they appear to stand beyond a particular time and place, giving them a special status. However, I would argue that, aside from context-specific prayers, the effectiveness of other more formal prayers might depend on precisely their pragmatic capacity (to call up, for example, a deity).

The power of words assumed by many of the 'christianities' may be embarrassingly mundane in desired effect. Coleman insists (*contra* Susan Harding) that for the prosperity-oriented Word of Life Pentacostals the sensuous and spiritual quality of words cannot be divorced, for words in their religious context are thought to be effective in the construction of both the material world and the born-again person.

Though the contributors are sometimes caught in stale debates as between the rise of Protestantism and modernity, their essays are conceptually refreshing. They certainly set a high standard for the advent of an anthropology of Christianity.

VINCENT CRAPANZANO *City University of New York  
Graduate Center*

COMAROFF, JEAN & JOHN L. COMAROFF (eds). *Law and disorder in the postcolony*. x, 357 pp., illus., bibliogr. London, Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, 2006. £44.50 (cloth), £18.00 (paper)

Despite the proliferation of legal practices and claims, many places in the world are also marked by a simultaneous increase in disorder and violence. Such processes seem to be particularly marked in those areas often referred to as the 'postcolony'. Democratization in Latin America has gone hand in hand with a rise in violent crime. Similarly, majority rule and a new constitution in South Africa have existed alongside increased anxieties over criminality. Such apparent paradoxes raise important questions at a time when more law and order is often seen as the panacea for situations as varied as civil war in Iraq and urban street crime in

Europe. The seemingly contradictory relationship between law and disorder is the central issue addressed in this edited collection.

The editors stress, however, that the paradox of more law seeming to create more disorder is no paradox at all. For, as they argue in their thought-provoking introduction, 'law and lawlessness are conditions of each other's possibility'. At one level, legality is made possible by an often hidden resort to violence and legality in other times and other places. At another level, violent crime often mimics legal form, creating parallel modes of governance. Law and violence, order and disorder are always entangled and mutually implicated in one another. Crucially, the editors also link these processes to the spread of 'neoliberal' politics and economics, an often vague concept, but which here is linked, at least in part, to the outsourcing of the coercive, social and economic functions often associated with the state. The result is a fragmentation of sovereignty, where the line between legitimacy and illegitimacy, legality and illegality, public and private becomes increasingly tenuous. As the editors argue, such practices take on a global scale, as 'zones of prosperity and order feed off and perpetuate zones of scarcity and violence'. In this process the contradictions of the global political economy are displaced into the corrupt economies and legal systems of the postcolony.

The individual chapters range from the ethnographically poignant to the theoretically complex. They are made up of a mixture of reflections on long-term fieldwork and relatively more recent research by leading political anthropologists. Morris examines the tension between notions of political and intimate violence produced by the South African state's increasing reliance on the family as the ground of its power. Caldeira argues that despite the relative democratization of Brazil, the institutions of public order have been systematically unable or unwilling to guarantee security and civil rights for all, resulting in a situation where, for many of the young urban poor, notions of justice and rights are disconnected. Scheper-Hughes provides an evocative, although ultimately pessimistic, account of protests over the take-over of one small Brazilian town by an alliance between local elites and an armed gang. In her chapter on the violence that ripped through the Moluccas Islands between 1999 and 2002, Spyer argues against 'explanatory backdrops', in favour of an examination of its 'ambiance' and 'atmospherics'. Geschiere compares how the South African and Cameroonian legal systems

have tried to deal with witches, and asks whether we can ever expect the law to contain the fear and ambiguities of witchcraft. Roitman examines the economic networks that cross the Chad Basin and argues that the people of the region make a clear distinction between illegal activities and licit practices, as unregulated forms of economic activity produce their own forms of governance. In their own chapter, which focuses on the South African Police Museum, the co-editors argue that anxieties over seemingly increased criminality produce a form of melodrama at the heart of the state, as theatre and coercion, fantasy and rationality merge. Finally, in a largely theoretical chapter, Mbembe asks how the very 'idea of politics takes place in a confrontation with death'.

Whereas all the chapters may focus on the postcolony, the editors point out, and rightly so, that postcolony is not unique in its particular mixture of legal fetishism and violent disorder, but merely running ahead of itself. The rest of the world is not far behind. Whilst all the chapters may not always hang coherently together (few edited collections do), individually and as a whole they provide some thought-provoking insights into the ways in which law and disorder, criminality and justice feed into one another, and serve as stark warning to those who would see legality as all-conquering.

TOBIAS KELLY *University of Edinburgh*

DAS, VEENA. *Life and words: violence and the descent into the ordinary*. xiv, 281 pp., bibliogr. London, Berkeley: Univ. California Press, 2007. £12.95 (paper)

Veena Das is one of the most important scholars to open up our understanding on questions of violence, social suffering, and subjectivity and to consider what it means to produce testimony to these events. *Life and words* is to be celebrated as a book that brings together Das's lifework, a collection of essays woven around an exploration of how the extreme violence of critical events can descend into ordinary life. Das's analysis stems from the experiences of her informants, mainly survivors of the 1947 Partition of India and the 1984 massacres of Sikhs in New Delhi after the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. In his foreword to the book, Stanley Cavell explains that Das's drawing on philosophical work throughout, in particular Wittgenstein, is because her address to the survivors, like that of Wittgenstein's to the human other, revolves around the study of pain.

In this beautiful and subtle interweaving of the story of the nation, the community, and the individual, Das begins with the notion of the social contract as the sexual contract. She argues that the figure of the abducted women that circulated in political debates soon after Partition allowed the state to mark a state of exception, a disorder from the normal exchange of women. This produced a foundational moment, enabling the authorization of a social contract between men as grounded in a sexual contract in which women were to be returned by the 'right' men. Women suffer multiple violence in that not only are their voices silenced in official discourses, but they are also made passive witnesses of the disorder of partition and their bodies are appropriated to inscribe a gendered sovereignty.

In addressing social suffering, Das asks how did women mourn the loss of self and the world? She notes a zone of silence. Instead women used the metaphor of 'drinking the poison' and 'keeping it within', hence protecting themselves and enabling them to assimilate their experiences into their everyday life. Das explores the shifting temporal structures of family and kin and how women's own formations of their subject positions can mean that they are able to lay their claims back on the very cultures that had subjugated them by repairing relations and thus reinhabiting the world.

Seeing the stories of the survivors as in the constant process of being produced, Das is concerned with the work of time. For instance, in the patience of women in biding their time, time is an agent that 'works' on relationships, allowing them to be rewritten and reinterpreted. Time also appears in Das's analysis of the rumour, which produces themes of nationalism, masculinity, fear and hatred, self and other, victim and perpetrator in critical events. She argues that rumour can produce events, making certain facets of the past which might have otherwise stayed inert come alive in the very act of telling so that continuity can be achieved between events which might seem unconnected. With this approach, Das traces the continuities between the Partition of India, Sikh militancy in Punjab, and the related counter-insurgencies, in particular the 1984 action around the Amritsar Golden Temple, the assassination of Indira Gandhi by her Sikh security guards, and the subsequent authorization of the horrific violence against Sikhs.

Some of Das's best analysis emerges from mapping violence in particular localities. She shows how the location, embodiment, and actualization of violence against the Sikhs must

be understood in terms of growing from the heterogeneity of everyday relations. The lesson is to understand the everyday life of particular localities of violence if one is to understand how feelings of hate and anger can become translated into actual acts of killing.

The state is highly implicated throughout, the most chilling example being of the burning of the Pradhan and his sons crying out for water while the police officer protects the violent crowd that have been led by local politicians, shouting that anyone who dared to come out and interfere with the law would be shot dead. However, Das also shows the magic of the state that is grounded in the routines of everyday lives when, for instance, the survivors also looked to the state, and the law, as a resource for seeking justice. She uses the concept of the signature of the state to capture the double aspect of the state as a form of regulation that oscillates between a rational and a magical mode of being, and suggests that this is underpinned by the illegibility of the state, the unreadability of its rules and regulations, and allows for the possibility of hope.

A sense of hope most strongly emerges, however, from how survivors respond to the violence through a descent into the everyday in which life is a possibility because it can be removed from the circulation of words, producing boundaries between saying and showing. The ethnographic challenge that Das's exemplary book sets to anthropologists, then, is how to uncover the forms and formations of such violence in the ordinary when it might reveal itself through gestures, in silence, in rumours, or when words are animated by other voices and there is often a distinction between what is being told and what is being shown.

ALPA SHAH *Goldsmiths College*

FRIEDMAN, SARA L. *Intimate politics: marriage, the market, and state power in southeastern China*. xvi, 344 pp., maps, table, illus., bibliogr. London, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2006. £32.95 (cloth)

The coastal Huidong region in China's southeastern Fujian province has long been renowned for customs of delayed conjugal residency, same-sex intimate relations that complement – and oftentimes rival – normative kinship, 'exotic' female attire like elaborate headpieces, and atypical gender divisions of labour where women specialize in tough manual work. These practices distinguished these rural

Han communities from other Han – the majority ethnic group in China – which in effect created an anomalous positioning that aligned Huidong residents with ethnic minority others, hence ‘backwards’ and ‘feudal’. In socialist China these embodied practices of work, dress, and post-marital residency have become crucial sites for state-sponsored civilizing and modernizing interventions. With these practices labelled as feudal and oppressive and requiring liberation, state actors implemented socialist ideals and mass campaigns of opening and reform – yet with questionable success.

*Intimate politics* explores the ambivalent relationships between Huidong people – especially women – and the power of civilizing and modernizing state discourse throughout the socialist period up until the post-Mao market reform era. The dynamics and political entanglements of socialist civilizing agendas with women’s embodied struggles and reappropriations are conceptually termed ‘intimate politics’, and are explored in chapters about changing marital and labour practices, and changing attire styles. Friedman explores varied analytical avenues and ethnographies towards understanding the dynamics between socialist state-sponsored campaigns to produce a socialist modern and civilized Chinese nation and local diverging intimate practices regarding marriage, love, and same-sex bonds outside normative kinship. These customs included underage arranged marriages, delayed conjugal residency – older informants recounted fleeing back through the night and delaying the move for years until their first childbirth – as well as women’s same-sex intimate bonds, termed *dui pnuā* (‘companions’, p. 139), and the related ‘evil’ of collective suicides among such companions.

Pervasive state discourses and mass campaigns starting in the early 1950s attempted to redefine labour in the context of gender liberation and freedom from feudal oppression, and introduced new discursive meanings to traditional gendered division of labour where men fished and women took responsibility for agricultural, household, and manual labour. Gradually, female labour mobilization locally, alongside general modernizing changes, modified existing practices and meanings of labour as skilled and valued. In turn, stone-carving industries and urban labour migration emerged, with the effect that increased mixed-sex socializing, changed standards of intimacy, romance, married life, and conjugal residency, as well as the meaning of *dui*

*pnuā* relationships, have altered significantly. While older women recounted lifelong *dui pnuā*, perhaps counting eight in total, who cared for each other through important life-cycle events like weddings, childbirth, and by tomb-sweeping after death, young women today counted social worth and desirability by having scores of *dui pnuā* attending events and partaking in gift and money exchange.

Friedman argues that the state campaigns to alter intimate practices such as conjugal residency and underage arranged marriages were only partially successful, and were unable to eliminate many basic aspects of the perceived ‘feudal’ system simply because the local customs continued to be preferable and practically more suitable to the women up until the 1990s. Although locals dutifully appropriated authoritative reform and civilizing language, they failed to be fully persuaded internally and socially.

The discourse of young women who dressed traditionally in the post-Mao era engendered powerful social divisions regarding the degree of modernity of the Chinese nation in terms of ‘quality’, ‘culture’, and being ‘spiritually civilized’. The state thereby sought to produce national conformity and make Han citizenship uniformly modern, opposed to the ‘feudal’ Huidong’s marital and attire practices. Yet the trope of Huidong women wearing traditional attire was appropriated into money-making initiatives like tourist sites, as an exotic primitive local identity to market and consume. In turn, debates on Huidong authenticity that drew on ideals and memories of local identity, tradition, and history generated new divides and social distinction that further complicated the state-sponsored initiative towards Han conformity and national unity.

In a refreshingly complex and detail-orientated writing mode that sets a new and higher standard in Chinese anthropology, Friedman applies an unusually rich ethnographic flavour to her discussion by including old villagers’ retrospective narratives and life stories, official political documents and literature, and local traditional and propaganda folk songs and protest poetry, which proved so crucial in a region long plagued by illiteracy.

*Intimate politics* presents a sophisticated and theoretically engaging argument regarding the complex relationships between state power, embodied individual practices of marriage and intimacy, and late-socialist modernity in contemporary China. It should be essential reading for anyone interested in China, socialist

societies, and new ways of thinking gender and kinship.

ELISABETH LUND ENGBRETSSEN *London School of Economics and Political Science*

HODGSON, DOROTHY L. *The church of women: gendered encounters between Maasai and missionaries*. xvii, 307 pp., maps, illus., bibliogr. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2005. \$24.95 (paper)

This book has two principal merits: it offers a wonderfully nuanced account of Christian missionary activity in Africa, with a strong focus on the centrality of gender to the encounter between Africans and Western missionaries. In this carefully written and engaging work, anthropologist Dorothy Hodgson asks why so many more women than men have converted to Christianity in East Africa – even when this was not part of the missionary agenda. Her agenda is to interrogate how gender has shaped the encounters between missionaries and the Maasai, and in particular how the political and economic disenfranchisement of Maasai women has shaped their religious experiences, identity, and practice.

Hodgson describes herself as an anthropologist with experience in development issues, and whose earlier work centred on gender and social change, but as a scholar whose secular feminist assumptions initially prevented her from seeing the significance of spiritual to other forms of power. The more that she came to understand that spiritual power was central to Maasai women's sense of themselves, the more she realized that she was going to have to factor spirituality into her analyses of culture, power, and history. This book is the fruit of that realization. It is based upon her work among the Maasai of Tanzania, and in particular a Catholic missionary community known as the Spiritans, who had been trying to evangelize Maasai men for over fifty years.

The various chapters of the book provide different perspectives on gender, power, and the missionary encounter through a historical reconstruction of Maasai religious beliefs and practices before the advent of the missionaries, followed by the early history of the Spiritans and an analysis of three missionaries in particular, then an interesting comparison of evolving evangelization strategies and gendered outcomes. The gender dynamics of three 'churches of women' are also explored, and a whole chapter is devoted to the experiences of

different groups of men who participate in these churches of women. There is also a comparison of the varying perspectives of men and women on conversion, and how concepts of spirit possession influence their understanding. The penultimate chapter examines the emergence of a 'Maasai Catholicism' and its broader impact on Maasai gender relations. In her conclusion, Hodgson reiterates that the story of evangelization is a story of encounter between individuals, communities, and cultures against a backdrop of changing social and economic circumstances. It is also a story that is incomplete without attention to the different ways in which men and women experience and express their old and new religion. All in all, the book makes a cogent case for more anthropological studies of missions, then and now.

ROSALIND I.J. HACKETT *University of Tennessee*

KAHN, HILARY E. *Seeing and being seen: the Q'eqchi' Maya of Livingston, Guatemala and beyond*. xi, 242 pp., map, illus., bibliogr. Austin: Univ. Texas Press, 2007. £12.99 (paper)

Hilary Kahn's fascinating and decidedly reflexive ethnography of the Q'eqchi' Maya explores the cultural uses of visual metaphors in the context of inter-ethnic relations in Guatemala. The book is based on fieldwork in the Caribbean coastal town of Livingston, where she encountered the intersection of indigenous Maya, Garifuna (Afro-Amerindian), and Ladino (*mestizo*) populations. It examines Q'eqchi' identity politics, ritual, cosmology, consumption, and selfhood through the lens of local ideas about power and the moral connotations of visibility. The rich ethnography makes a significant contribution to the study of indigenous people in Latin America and visual anthropology.

Kahn's attention to colonial history and regional Maya migrations challenges the tendency to associate indigenous people with a continuous presence in a specific (and often rural) place. In Kahn's study we see not only the cultural adaptation of Maya farmers in an urban area, but more importantly we are given a vivid picture of how the Q'eqchi' envision themselves *vis-à-vis* various 'others' in Livingston, ranging from Garifuna neighbours, former German landowners, to the increasing influx of tourists. Kahn's historical perspective makes her argument about power and sight particularly interesting. She draws parallels between ancient Maya regimes, colonial authorities, foreign landowners, the state, and mountain spirits in suggesting that

all of these sources draw their power and significance from their common status as 'unseen' outsiders. Kahn is thus able to present a historical ethnography that convincingly links ancient Maya regimes of authority to what she calls 'the Q'eqchi' imaginary' she studied in the 1990s. Both historically and today the external gaze of 'invisible overseers' is associated with control and ownership. Whether spiritual deities or German landowners, Q'eqchi' notions of 'morality-in-place' demand that respect be paid to these various unseen owners, which Kahn argues are collapsed together in the Q'eqchi' imaginary.

The book gives considerable attention to the theoretical implications of Kahn's methods. By teaching Maya informants how to use video cameras, she introduces a collaborative video-making project to create what she calls a form of *ethnographic vérité* in which the anthropologist and the Q'eqchi' together became 'catalysts for the expression of invisible culture' (p. 184). Kahn suggests that, in addition to recording and revisiting events, the video project revealed to her local ideas about sight and (in)visibility. Her work provides an example of how visual anthropology can be expanded to encompass more than just ethnographic film and photography or the study of material objects. Q'eqchi' visual metaphors, according to Kahn, reveal much about indigenous notions of morality, selfhood, and relations with various local and unseen 'others'. She concludes that applying visual theory to aspects of non-visual culture allows anthropologists to explore less tangible, internalized relationships. The author's use of photography in the book is also effective, as triptych images of Q'eqchi' informants are placed within the text without accompanying explanations.

Kahn joins the scores of social scientists in recent decades who argue that identities should be seen as processes in motion rather than fixed, finished products. She repeatedly challenges Western dichotomies of subject/object, internal/external, foreign/familiar as 'bounded sites of knowledge' that do not fit with Q'eqchi' ideas (p. 11). She takes a decidedly reflexive approach, celebrating her subjective 'entanglement' in theories discussed in the book (p. 12). This statement is problematic as well as indicative of the book's central shortcoming. Despite overt claims of reflexivity and numerous examples of the author's position as a liberal American critical of colonialism, it is difficult at times to distinguish between the voices of the ethnographer and the Q'eqchi'. This is particularly surprising for a text

that makes such extensive and productive use of recorded interviews.

One example is Kahn's interpretation of 'outsider' symbolism in the Q'eqchi' Deer Dance in Chapter 6. She suggests that various characters in the dance represent ideas ranging from foreignness, colonialism, and disrespect to neoliberal economics, slave labour, and 'potential resistance to foreign producers and consumers' (p. 99). Here explicit connections between Kahn's analysis and her informants' interpretations are noticeably absent. One wonders if these conclusions are based only on the anthropologist's observations and assumptions or in part on Q'eqchi' interpretations. There is little evidence that abstractions like 'resistance' or 'neoliberal economics' fit neatly with or are even relevant to Q'eqchi' ideas. Kahn later points out that 'dialogic and hybrid' Q'eqchi' worldviews contradict the dichotomies in evangelical categorizations. This leads to the question of why Q'eqchi' ritual symbols should then match the author's seemingly abstract categories. This example illustrates the problem in Kahn's claim that the Q'eqchi' are responsible for her methods and theories. Regardless of how much affection or obligation an ethnographer feels toward informants, blurring the boundaries between 'self' and 'other' in ethnographic writing risks assuming even greater claims to authority than the early generations of ethnographers criticized in anthropology's literary turn. In this book Kahn goes to great lengths to situate herself personally in the context of Livingston and Q'eqchi' family life. What is lacking in some chapters (though not all) is a reflexivity that distinguishes the author's voice from those of the Q'eqchi', rather than one that assumes too much shared ground between the two.

Kahn's book is a useful resource for scholars interested in Guatemala and inter-ethnic relations and identities in Latin America more generally. It also provides a useful case study for courses looking to expand the scope of visual anthropology.

CASEY HIGH *Goldsmiths College*

STEPHEN, LYNN. *Zapotec women: gender, class, and ethnicity in globalized Oaxaca* (2nd edition). xvii, 387 pp., maps, tables, illus., bibliogr. London, Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2005. £15.95 (paper)

Lynn Stephen's monograph *Zapotec women: gender, class, and ethnicity in globalized Oaxaca* is

not only a revised and updated version of the work done in the 1980s; it is also a rethinking of the paradigmatic base for feminist, ethnic, and social movement studies. This is no easy task since it requires bringing her into a renewed encounter with the friends who were her collaborators twenty years before the changes in their and her own perspectives. It involves an ongoing dialogue as well with colleagues who were developing what was still a fledgling field of women's studies in Stephen's first field session.

In the interim, two major changes in the global economy have engaged Zapotec weavers and cultivators. The first was the so-called 'reform' of the land reform act brought about during Salinas's presidency in 1992, and the second was the approval of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994. Both these acts ratified by the Mexican Congress changed the relations of peasant cultivators with the state, first by allowing the privatization of communal lands and second by setting small plot cultivators in direct competition with North American government-subsidized, large-scale producers. These shifts also triggered the uprising of indigenous cultivators and artisans to the south in the state of Chiapas, and necessitated the large-scale migration not only of Zapotecs but of all indigenous people to the United States.

Stephen analyses the impact of these events in terms of gender, class, and ethnic relations. Her book demonstrates how well-grounded ethnology, using quantitative material, updated with new capital inputs and gains along with extensive interviews with the same and new actors, enables the ethnographer to interpret processes of change in more than metaphorical terms. At a time when anthropology has been focused on interpretative and postmodern approaches that emphasize reflexivity and discursive elements of fieldwork encounters, it is good to find an ethnography that brings the larger global forces into local perspectives. Stephen has steered a firm course, engaging her subjects in an exploration of their experienced world within and beyond the community. This course enables us to compare change over time and in different settings in order to appraise the variables of gender, ethnicity, and class that are central to her study.

The modernist expectations cultivated by indigenist anthropology in the decades after the 1910 Revolution that predicted the disintegration of Zapotec identity have been disclaimed by the rise of pan-indigenous movements. Along with

the integration of their distinctive weavings into national and even international markets, Zapotecs promoted a wider regional identity than other indigenous groups as they strengthened their market niche. Stephen deftly weaves into her own multiplex picture of Zapotecs' portraits drawn from historical and ethnographic sources, defying the temptation to essentialize or naturalize the subject of her inquiry. In the span of her own acquaintance and participation with the people from the 1980s to the first decade of the third millennium, she identifies a greater differentiation in class, although labour relations of domination and subordination are still mediated and controlled by local leaders in customary patterns. Her description and analysis of the expression of identity in Teotiteco daily production, ceremonial, and political life reveals a complexity responding to the conflicting demands of their lives.

Central to the integration of social sectors in Teotitlan is the cargo system of office-holders in civil and religious posts. Although ties between the civil and religious hierarchy were broken in the decades soon after the Revolution, Stephen shows how the cross-cutting networks of kinship and *compadrazgo* (ritual co-parents of child) constructed primarily by women reinforce the integrity of community. One of the more interesting analyses is that of the *guelaguetza*, or ritual exchanges of labour and goods, which provides another layer of reciprocal network reinforcing the security of the community. These exchanges, expressed in dances as well as goods and services, occur during celebrations that reaffirm all of the social relations that go into their production.

With this edition of Zapotec ethnography, Stephen advances a theoretical model that allows us to see the configuration of class, gender, and racial-cultural attributes in their material embodiment. She does not reject the class categories that she defined in 1990, but, rather, uses them as a *bricoleur* to find new relational aspects. Class relations, she emphasizes, do not rely solely on forms of property ownership, but also depend on relations of domination and control in the labour process. Drawing on Kearney's notion of class structuring subject positions within differentiated fields of value and power, she discusses the additional layers of foreign textile wholesalers, importers, and designers that now constitute the merchant class who profit from the expropriation of the labour of Teotitecos. With her interviews of some of the same women whom she interviewed in the 1980s, she gives

flesh and blood to the changing fields of consciousness. These, along with the stories of children who are part of the migration waves to cities and beyond to the United States, provide us with the many layers of meaning in this globalizing world.

Given the multiplicity of changes in their world, the retention of kinship and ethnic identities becomes a miraculous construction, now even more heavily reliant on women's reproductive work than in the 1980s. Women's need to overcome space adds to the significance of rituals that tie generations to the hometowns. Reading Stephen's book, I could appreciate the reasons why the *guelaguetza* figured so importantly in the rebellion of the teachers in the spring of 2006 when urban Oaxacans refused to enter into the government-sponsored *guelaguetzas* that were to attract tourists and danced with their own sympathizers to their own traditional tunes, and for their own ends.

*Zapotec women* can serve as a textbook in methodology as well as an ethnographic summary, and because of its straightforward writing and representation of real people, it would be welcome in graduate as well as undergraduate courses.

JUNE NASH *City University of New York*

VOM BRUCK, GABRIELE. *Islam, memory, and morality in Yemen: ruling families in transition*. xix, 348 pp., map, figs, illus., bibliogr. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005. £14.99 (paper)

By sheer coincidence, the historical conjuncture in which this book was published as well as the timing of its review provide one, if not the main, criterion for its assessment. The book's publication occurred soon after an uneasy ceasefire was agreed upon (spring 2005) between the Yemeni state and a group of rebels from the Yemeni Shi'a sect (Zaydi) located in the northern province of Sa'ada. This was subsequent to several months of armed clashes initiated by a Zaydi cleric's invocation of one of the sect's doctrinal imperatives, namely 'to ordain right and forbid wrong', which obliges its adherents to oppose injustice either through discursive means or through arms.

The political ramifications of the text, in terms of the extent to which it elucidates the socio-ideological underpinnings of the conflict, cannot be avoided in spite of the author's stated abstention from discussing 'recent political history', and her privileging instead the 'impact on individual subjectivity' of the adjustment

process of a defunct politico-religious elite caught up in a 'Tocquevillian shift' from a theocratic Imamate to a quasi-secular republican regime occasioned by the 1962 Revolution in north Yemen. Indeed, the book is an ethnographic portrayal of the socio-political adjustments to a post-revolution context undertaken by a group of *sadah* families selected on the basis of the author's acquaintance. Accordingly, the author's ethnographic locus is on the biographical or experiential itinerary of a cohort of high-ranking *sadah* (sing. *sayyid*) who held government posts in the Imamate. Her thematic entry-point into their life-world is through their strategic use of 'historicized memory', which is ritually invoked through the performance of *taqlid* (i.e. the recourse to the religious orthodoxies of the Zaydi creedal repertoire), as a guide in their adjustment to a condition of social status demotion and political adversity, the practice of which, according to the author, is a form of 'moral rearmament' that helps them 'transcend an ambivalent placement between a scorned past and a future of uncertain fulfillment' (p. 18).

The book's focus on the Zaydi *sadah* fills a gap in the ethnographic literature on Yemen, which has hitherto privileged the Sunni *sadah* in the eastern province of Hadramawt. The *sadah* occupy the summit of the traditional social status hierarchy in Yemen. While chapter 1 usefully describes the genealogical and other particularities of the Zaydi *sadah*, it does not articulate the differences with the Sunni *sadah* that would elucidate both their contrastive specificities and the latent political tension with the Yemeni state. Some of the intrinsic differences include the following: the *sadah* from both sects claim descent from the Prophet – however, the Zaydi *sadah* claim descent specifically, if not exclusively, from the progeny of the Prophet's daughter Fatima and his son-in-law Ali ibn Abi Talib, the martyred fourth caliph; the Zaydi *sadah*'s doctrinal commitment to *khuruj*, i.e. rising against an unjust ruler, finds no equivalent among the Sunni *sadah*, whose political attitude is one of quietism; the Zaydi *sadah* distinguished themselves by a cult-like dedication to religious learning, while the Sunni *sadah* are distinguished by their ascribed supernatural powers; and, finally, the Zaydi *sadah* are affiliated to a particular form of political regime, the Imamate, over which they are the hereditary rulers, while the Sunni *sadah* claimed no regime preference or any pretension to state power.

Subsequently, part one of the book sets the stage through a tantalizingly brief historical overview of the rise and fall of the *sadah* elite and the Imamate, which is followed up with an 'anatomy' of the structuring protocols of the *sadah's* social milieu. Part two consists of an illustrative case on the mechanism of memory formation through the evocation of 'fragments of childhood life stories' as the incubator of adulthood socio-political sensibilities; and more interestingly a discussion of kinship among *sadah*, in which the sharing of substance from a common progenitor is not a sufficient condition, but must be actualized through the pursuit of knowledge as the determinant of who is an authentic *sadah* and therefore deserving of social acknowledgement through formal inclusion in the genealogies of the 'houses of learning'. Part three illustrates how the *sadah* straddled the tensions between the ethical injunctions and behavioural constraints of the *taqlid*, and the exigencies to conform politically in the post-revolution context and the cultural expectations of a modern consumer economy. Part four is in effect an assessment of the *sadah's* attempt at political accommodation and social integration in the post-revolution context.

It would appear that the *sadah's* quest for 'alternatives ways of being a Zaydi and a sayyid which are compatible with both [one's] self-image and official ideology' remains inconclusive. Indeed, one *sayyid* laments the absence of political rehabilitation: 'Even if you lived abroad and changed your ideas about the Imamate, it will not be forgotten that you come from a certain family. You will always remain a reactionary' (p. 230). While this view may not be representative of Zaydi adherents in general, given the elite background of the author's informants, recent political events would seem to confirm the persistence of a deep political resentment, on one side, and of a chronic political suspicion, on the other. This is exacerbated by the selective, if not ambivalent, Zaydi doctrinal revision undertaken by some *sadah* scholars regarding the legitimate bases of rule and the role of *khuruj*, all too briefly reviewed in the penultimate chapter, and the state's continued practice of a zero-sum-game politics. The author's optimism regarding Yemen's 'capacity to forge an inclusive national identity that is coupled with impartiality in the public realm' (p. 254) may not be widely shared.

SERGE D. ELIE *University of Sussex*

