

Book reviews

Correction

Please note that in the Book Reviews Section of the December 2007 issue of the *JRAI* (volume 13, issue 4), the bibliographic details of the reviewed book, SIGNE HOWELL. *The kinning of foreigners: transnational adoption in a global perspective*, published on page 1040 of the issue, contained an error. The price of the book should be £45 (cloth) and £15 (paper).

Anthropology of ‘the senses’

EDWARDS, ELIZABETH, CHRIS GOSDEN & RUTH B. PHILLIPS (eds). *Sensible objects: colonialism, museums and material culture*. xiv, 306 pp., maps, illus., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berg Publishers, 2006. £50.00 (cloth), £18.99 (paper)

Over the last decade or so, a growing number of anthropological studies have focused on the senses in society. These studies give a critique of Western preoccupations with sight and hearing, once indicators of so-called ‘civilized’ societies, and move towards engaging with the multi-sensory channels of human sociality. This volume adds another to the list, with colonialism, museums, and material culture as its focus. It consists of papers predominantly from anthropologists, but with contributions from art historians, art experts, and archaeologists, most of which were presented at the symposium ‘Engaging all the senses’ held in Portugal in 2003.

The volume begins with an introductory chapter (Edwards, Gosden, and Phillips) which

guides us on a whistle-stop tour of material culture studies and its relation to an anthropology of the senses. We learn that different cultures create their own sensory orders; that sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste may be combinatory. Interestingly, the authors raise the possibility of considering pain and speech as senses. We move rapidly through recent intellectual debates in material culture towards what is described as the advent of the ‘sensory turn’ – a recognition in material culture of the multi-sensorial qualities of the artefactual world – before ending with a neat summary of key points to ponder. This of course sets the stage for the volume’s impetus: the multi-sensory dimensions of artefacts, colonial encounters, and museums around which the contributions are organized.

The first set of contributions leads with two papers examining the multi-sensory aspects of African modernity. Geurts and Adikah begin with an exploration of a local concept translated as ‘feeling in the body, flesh or skin’ to reflect on artefacts and enduring traditions in southeastern Ghana, while Buckley provides a novel examination of the relation between studio photography and citizenship in the Gambia through an ethos of elegance: the feeling of being cherished and wanted by the nation-state. Sutton’s contribution provides an extremely interesting insight into the interrelationship between the senses, skill, and memory in everyday cooking. Two short ethnographies of cooking in Greece and the US provide examples of contrasting social contexts for learning-how-to-cook. This paper stands out, much like the work of David Howes, in that its strength lies in the fact that in exploring both the technical and sensory aspects of cooking,

it urges us to consider pluralistic ways of knowing.

The sensory aspects of colonialism are addressed in the second set of contributions. Te Awekotuku leads with a study of Maori tattooing, considering pain as a sense. While this contribution provides useful historical and ethnographic detail, more could possibly have been provided about the process of gouging the skin as a transformative and sensory process rather than in terms of social memory and cultural identity. Indeed, the tactile skills acquired by Maori tattooists are left unremarked. Jonaitis tackles taste and smell in relation to pungent fish grease consumed by the Kwakwaka'wakw in British Columbia. In reading this material, one really gets an impression of the overpowering flavours that have offended the European palate. Barringer's exploration of mass ritual concentrates on the senses of sight and hearing. He considers the performative aspects of Empire in India and in London through musical performances and anthems.

The final contributions encourage us to think of museums as sensescapes. Classen and Howes examine the history of touch in museums, the formalization of seeing in exhibition spaces, and the consequent de-sensing of artefacts on display. While this paper provides some wonderful insights into sensory relations, the development of handling galleries in ethnographic museums seems to have been overlooked. Losche's paper concentrates on an analysis of the Margaret Mead Hall of Pacific Peoples at the American Museum of Natural History and how attempts to contextualize artefacts through sound, space, and light encountered difficulties. Feldman offers a thoughtful paper on the relation between bodies, objects, and the senses through a discussion of many Bushman casts and the thousands of shoes of Nazi concentration camp victims exhibited in museums, while Ouzman covers a range of issues in museum and archaeological practice, concluding with a discussion of the senses, story-telling, and identity formation in Southern Africa. This is particularly relevant to recent discussions by archaeologists on soundscapes.

Overall, the volume ought to be considered as a starting-point from which to explore further the anthropology of the senses. This is especially so as, while the contributors have obviously set out to highlight the role of the senses in society, rather frustratingly several papers tend to lose focus on the senses in their analysis. Perhaps this was deliberate; as 'sensible' objects, one could

possibly imagine that what things really want is not necessarily to draw attention to themselves but instead to shy away into the background.

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GEURTS, KATHRYN LINN. *Culture and the senses: bodily ways of knowing in an African community*. xvi, 315 pp., map, illus., bibliogr. London, Berkeley: Univ. California Press, 2002. £37.95 (cloth), £15.95 (paper)

Among the more subtle discussions of cultural differences can be found the idea that culturally conditioned experience might be grounded in culturally divergent modes of perception. The implications of this idea might seem merely reasonable to a phenomenologist but would definitely pose an epistemological threat to an old-school empiricist. The issue has remained peripheral not because of its potential significance but because culturally conditioned variations in perception are difficult to investigate. Nevertheless, in concert with classicists' discussions of mnemonic devices in oral historical epics, anthropologists have engaged in worthwhile reflections about the senses, often revolving around sensitivity to comparative differences in the transmission of knowledge when based in literacy or orality. Another area of reflection, more problematic methodologically though quite stimulating, has directed attention to kinesics and kinaesthetics, that is, to body language and to body awareness in communication and learning.

A highly worthwhile contribution to this area of inquiry is Kathryn Linn Geurts's *Culture and the senses: bodily ways of knowing in an African community*. She states her main thesis on her opening page: 'Ultimately, this book will argue that sensing, [or] ... "bodily ways of gathering information," is profoundly involved with a society's epistemology, the development of its cultural identity, and its forms of being-in-the-world' (p. 3). Her introductory chapter provides an overview of anthropological precedents on the themes of her research. The field location for her project is the Anlo-Ewe-speaking area of southeastern Ghana. It is difficult to convey the impressive detail with which Geurts portrays the Anlo Ewe 'sensorium', that is, its sensory ordering of perception and experience. She relies on a wide range of elaborately integrated data, and it is clear that she was profoundly involved in her fieldwork.

After a second chapter that provides ethnographic background on the Anlo Ewe,

Geurts organizes her discussion into four parts. The first part, chapter 3, focuses on Anlo Ewe conceptions of the senses, the linguistic categories with which Anlo-Ewe-speakers define their own ways of perception and experience. This chapter, where other studies might end, is where Geurts only begins. The second part of her presentation, chapters 4 and 5, focuses on what she calls 'moral embodiment and sensory socialization'. In these chapters, Geurts describes child-rearing from the perspective of kinaesthetics – in her words, how 'balance, movement, and a more generalized feeling in the body ... are critical components of an indigenous theory of inner states' – bolstered by extensive observations of customary practices and symbolism showing 'how these understandings are embedded in the child's earliest experience' (p. 84) In the third part of her discussion, chapters 6 and 7, Geurts broadens her focus to aspects of identity and personhood in Anlo Ewe culture at large. She traces the etymology of the name Anlo as a specific bodily posture to points of significance in Anlo history and cultural practice, and she provides a multi-dimensional discussion of the notion of balance (physical, psychological, literal, and metaphorical) from concepts of being human to manifestations in ritual and communal practice. In the fourth part of her discussion, chapters 8 and 9, Geurts both broadens and narrows her focus to examine notions of individual health and illness reflected against Anlo cosmological and religious models, particularly *vodu*, followed by an interesting reflection on such conditions as blindness, deafness, muteness, loss of mobility, or insanity, when aspects highlighted in her preceding discussion of the sensorium are compromised. In her final chapter, Geurts provides an interpretative analytic framework for her ethnographic presentation that revisits the ethnological situation she portrayed in her first chapter.

Culture and the senses is an ambitious book, grounded both in intensive field research and in multi-disciplinary learnedness. Geurts's area of inquiry poses difficulties because it requires the application of a variety of methods and types of data. Examining the sensory bases of knowledge in cross-cultural context is fertile ground for the appreciation of deep aspects of culture and cultural differences. We have so few systematic studies like Geurts's because few scholars have entered this uncharted territory with the idea of going beyond launching a few tantalizing speculations. It is to Geurts's credit even to have

attempted such a complex cultural analysis, but even more to her credit is the extent to which she has succeeded. Geurts's detailed descriptions certainly resonated well with my personal experience of the Anlo Ewe area. I hope that other scholars will want to engage the wealth of material she presents and the larger questions she raises within their own areas of familiarity or expertise.

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HOWES, DAVID (ed.). *Empire of the senses: the sensual culture reader*. x, 421 pp., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berg Publishers, 2005. £19.99 (paper)

It is always a challenge to review an anthology. Firstly, it offers an embarrassment of riches, making it a betrayal when chapters are left out of discussion. This is especially so in a collection so packed with exceptional contributions, from anthropology, ethnomusicology, philosophy, sociology, museology, geography, history, law, literature, and neurology. Secondly, anthologies are often rich in their parts but seldom coherent in their whole. Not so with this volume, one of many from the 'Sensory formations' series. Chapters are cannily selected to make connections and drive readers to their sources; the introduction provides overall theoretical framing and contextualization within a broad academic literature; and the organizational structure, with excellent section introductions and a final 'Sensory bibliography', makes it a terrific teaching and reference tool.

The anthology is divided into five parts. 'The prescience of the senses' deals with the senses and cognition in two chapters that develop ideas of synaesthesia, or the interconnection of the senses. In McLuhan's 'five sense sensorium' the senses are seen as being shaped by culture and technology rather than determined by biology, while Sacks's case studies describing the new worlds opened up for blind people by their condition challenge facile assumptions of disability by suggesting that it is through imagination that individual worlds are created. 'The shifting sensorium' historicizes perception in chapters by: Stewart, whose account of the senses in philosophy and literature cautions against sacrificing the aesthetics of expression to philosophical debates of the memory of experience; Classen, whose examination of how feminine sensibilities have led to suspicions of witchcraft suggests that not all aspects of existence can be forced into visibility; Mazzio,

who uses a seventeenth-century 'academic drama' to portray a social sensorium in which the personified senses vie to demonstrate their superiority over each other (the debut of a young Oliver Cromwell as Tactus provides irresistible trivia); Roberts, who traces how mathematical analysis replaced sensory analysis in the history of chemistry; and Corbin, who asks if the historian must remain 'a prisoner of language'. 'Sensescapes' features: Classen's critique of McLuhan's essentialization of the senses of sight and hearing; Geurts's challenge to neurobiologist Damasio's culturally naïve understanding of human capacity; Feld's riposte to anthropological theories of emotions that build embodied understandings on an assumed *a priori* social and cultural character; Kondo's description of 'the way of tea', focusing (as if to substantiate Feld's complaint) on meaning and exegesis rather than sensation; and Roseman's evocative account, displaying both irony and pathos, of Malaysian forest-dwellers' imaginative attempts to participate in a global capitalist economy.

The last two parts ('The aestheticization of everyday life' and 'The derangement of the senses') begin with a chapter on Thoreau's 'all sentient' body (Friesen), whose obsessive 'trail of scent' recalls Susskind's novel *Perfume* – a grim reminder of what might happen if our senses got the better of us. The 'olfactory turn' is continued through to museum design (Drobnick) and the establishment of scent-free facilities for those suffering from dystoposthesia, an intolerance to multiple sensorial stimuli associated with the toxins and alienation of industrial capitalism (Fletcher). The journey of the senses towards fully fledged pathology was prefigured in the studies of Strindberg (Ekman), and is evident among the homeless, struggling to minimize sensory experiences as the carriers of 'too much otherness' (Desjarlais). This state of affairs makes a materialist capitalist history of the senses imperative, indeed urgent, and Howes's ambitious chapter returns to Marx to identify the 'lack' (failure to 'acknowledge consumption') on which such a theory might be built. Howes's final question – 'what theory of value could possibly capture the "aesthetic plenitude" of the current conjuncture?' – is an invitation to further debate.

Howes's critical introduction makes two crucial points right away: that the human sensorium never exists in a natural state but is the product of culture, imbued with cultural meaning; and that it is hierarchically ordered. It follows then that, as well as giving evocative accounts of corporeal life, the 'sensual revolution' also entails the analysis of the social

ideologies conveyed through sensory values and practices; thus 'to question the sensory model is to question the nature of reality'. Furthermore, the 'intersensoriality' assumed by a cultural sensorium orders the senses into a 'racial hierarchy', 'regulated so as to express and enforce the social and cosmic order'. But even if the senses in different cultures are imbued with meaning differently, and structured in different hierarchical orders, are we justified in using such collectivizing expressions as 'Andaman Islanders certainly think so' to clinch matters insofar as these meanings are concerned? This would appear to take too much at face value, offering a cabinet of curiosities but leaving unaddressed the question evoked: that if the senses are locked into specific cultural meanings, where is the space for the 'free' body and personal aesthetic to express itself?

Howes recognizes that the contents of this book, and indeed the meanings and practices of the senses, cannot be brought under a single common denominator. As language is needed for expression, a paradox remains, but scholars must be vigilant not to allow a language-based model to dictate 'all cultural and personal experience and expression'. This vigilance, I would caution, may also lead astray: Serres's description of the language-bound body, 'preferring to dine on a printed menu than eat an actual meal', is not necessarily logocentrism, as Howes infers; it can also be seen as a desire to prolong the excitement of expectation, the imagining of a meal, which continues to engage the senses. Is a sensation imagined not a sensation?

The real danger of a focus on the senses is identified in Connor's observation – that Serres's world of the 'free body', enjoying sensations at leisure, is a 'monism of the manifold', solipsistic rather than relational. Is it because the senses are insufficient for communication, always turning inwardly? Are they more about a theory of value than a theory of communication? Whatever the answer, I came out of this reading with senses all agog: I could smell better, see better, taste better, feel better. Even if serious pathologies lie that way, at least it made me feel alive.

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KORSMEYER, CAROLYN (ed.). *The taste culture reader: experiencing food and drink*. ix, 421 pp., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berg Publishers, 2005. £55.00 (cloth), £19.99 (paper)

A common trap for reviewers of food books is the turn to food metaphors. We learn of a

'smorgasbord' of a book, a 'cornucopia' of a reader, 'rich' with 'delicious morsels', 'tasty snippets', and 'succulent selections'. I could go on. But the point is made: switching to a gastronomic register is neither original nor illuminating. If I called it unpalatable, you might respond it was just deadeningly pervasive.

Korsmeyer wants to explore the range of taste: a sensation both innate and profoundly cultural; a mode of distinction both evanescent and deeply rooted. A usually ignored universal, it is a perfect theme for an imaginative editor. Korsmeyer does not stay put in one discipline but wanders widely. Thus there are contributions by philosophers, biologists, gastronomes, sociologists, plus the odd oenologist, chemist, or zen master, as well as several anthropologists. Some contributions were written hundreds of years ago; others emerge in print here for the first time. As is now almost *de rigueur* in readers of food, the mood is occasionally lightened by the inclusion of a recipe or three.

Some papers are brilliant, with unexpected ideas jumping off the page. Trubek is good on the ramifications of *terroir* in France. Peynaud is excellent on taste perception. Gronow on the Soviet production of champagne and caviar as socialist kitsch makes some fascinating points. I wish I had written the section on artificial flavours by Classen and her colleagues.

Some papers are more leaden, with their authors clearly straining to prise out already tired insights. The trouble is, with a topic so eminently popular as food, academic writing about it can so easily verge towards the pompous or the platitudinous, for this is one topic in which we could all be experts.

The age of a few papers is already showing: above all, those tolling the end of taste, thanks to mechanization, modern markets, and marketing. But this is a death prematurely foretold, as the rise and rise of the organic food movement indicates. The fear, however, is that this recent lurch towards a self-styled gastronomic authenticity may just become yet another modern class-marker. A fine-grained knowledge of food becomes the latest hallmark of *savoir-faire*, while obesity-inducing, diabetes-provoking foods turn into a new symbol of the overfed, underprivileged. What next: hamburger chains or flavour industrialists sponsoring T-shirts which shout 'I am malnourished but proud'?

To sum up. This is a sufficiently captivating collection, with a good number of original

contributions and enough sparkling papers to put the study of taste back where it should be: on the tips of our tongues.

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PARKINS, WENDY & GEOFFREY CRAIG. *Slow living*. xii, 180 pp., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berg, 2006. £55.00 (cloth), £16.99 (paper)

Our uses of food are culturally fundamental for the ways in which we live and our forms of life: the economy of perception, memory and tradition, the ecology of everyday practice, material culture and tacit knowledge, the politics and conflicts related to economic interests and the ways of managing the market.

Slow living was intended by the authors, as stated in the preface, to serve as 'the first book-length study of Slow Food'. Nevertheless the reader should not expect a book-length ethnography of Slow Food. This book aims, rather, at contextualizing the philosophy and the impact of *slow living* 'in the global everyday' (to use a phrase frequently used by the authors), with respect to food, but also to time, space, pleasure, and politics. In other words, slow living is explored 'as a response to globalization and its perceived impact on everyday life' (p. 2). Slow Food is, therefore, only one possible example of the many 'oppositional modes' being developed – globally – as responses to globalization, and regional variations, say, from the American Voluntary Simplicity movement to the Italian Gruppi di Acquisti Solidale, would have made for an interesting comparative ethnography of such 'oppositional modes' that focus on 'the global everyday'.

In this work, though, a vast bibliography (covering, in the main, the approaches of sociology and cultural studies) aims firstly to reveal the many layers and distinctions implied in the conscious use of a 'slow' manifesto, rather than a draconian or nostalgic 'back to basics' approach. For instance, to live slowly does not mean necessarily to abandon the pace of contemporary life altogether, but rather 'a commitment to occupy time more attentively'; to live slow does mean to invest in pleasure and so also to indulge in, rather than to withdraw from, the complexities of food preparation and connoisseurship – an attitude apparently more ironic than ascetic regarding 'the global everyday'.

A 'slow' approach to the production, distribution, and consumption of food should

add a new dimension to the contemporary, Western search for a newly discovered sensory approach to everyday experience – one that recognizes not only the diversity of sensory worlds, but also their political importance in local and global conflicts, in the texture of local practices, and in the very substance of regional economies. Appreciating a local recipe means also recognizing a social, economic, and political background to the know-how of skilful local practices and of the efficiency of local competences that are handed down in time by genealogy or contiguity, apprenticeship or contamination. Slow Food can then be read as part of a wider phenomenon – which I have elsewhere called ‘the re-invention of food’ – involving a new culture of taste: a taste for genuine food and a taste for life involving much more than just food-tasting.

Practice is the ultimate dimension for investigating slow living as a conscious engagement with tradition, revival, and their ‘selective deployment’ *vis-à-vis* notions of authenticity and conviviality (p. 8). Nevertheless, the approach used to investigate practice here is mainly ‘textual and discursive’ rather than one based on ethnography and participant observation (though participant observation and interviews do form an important part of the research, for instance in the study of the network of Città Slow in chapter 4). In particular, the focus is on the interplay and cross-fertilization between levels of ‘personal practice, public values and social organization’ (p. 119), and how they can meld in a public debate.

For instance, the authors pinpoint public events as one core level of the *political* strategy of the Slow Food movement: events are well orchestrated, publicized, covered by the press and serve the core purpose of ‘*visualizing* its concerns’ (p. 120). Philosophical, aesthetic, and ethical cogency, political empowerment, and the ever-growing density and vastness of its networks of *presidia* are all brought to the fore and made visible in powerful *mise-en-scènes* such as the Turin *Salone del Gusto* or the accompanying event *Terra Madre*, a gathering of representatives from all the peasant communities that host a Slow Food *presidium* around the world. This is a powerful and successful strategy, which has nevertheless raised a few reservations. Firstly the ‘deleterious effects of sudden, substantial media coverage on sustainable gastronomy projects in remote areas’ (p. 122) shows that such media-market short-circuits are pervasive and Slow Food

cannot be considered the only result of their effects, especially when they *do* succeed in ‘bridging the gap between production and consumption’ (p. 133), as I argue elsewhere. Secondly there is the risk of getting ‘caught up in a commodification of the “authentic” experience’ (p. 122) as yet another design-merchandise made available for the high demand of affluent Western subjects. And thirdly, I would add, there is the risk of erasing the real actors from the scene – with their idiosyncrasies, internal conflicts, and particularities – while in the very process of celebrating them as protagonists.

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Art and archaeology

NUTTALL, SARAH (ed.). *Beautiful/Ugly: African and diaspora aesthetics*. 416 pp., plates, illus., bibliogr. London, Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2007. £17.99 (paper)

This is a beautiful book: an edited collection of essays, covering a wide range of approaches, beautifully edited, and full of interesting images. On the back cover the reviewers mention its ‘theoretical sophistication’. I must confess that this is not the main quality I found in the book. The introduction by Sarah Nuttall, ‘Rethinking beauty’, explores recent philosophical writings on beauty in American academia that vindicate the enlightened discourse of aesthetics. For Nuttall, beauty cannot be understood without looking at ugliness. The ambiguity between beauty and ugliness is particularly evident from an African point of view; the dialectical relationship of beauty and ugliness is mediated by relationships of power; and arguments that propose to define beauty without reference to ugliness would be ethnocentric. All these ideas are not really new: the criticism of ethnocentrism and disavowal of power in Western philosophy has been at the core of American cultural studies for the last thirty years. Having said this, this argument helps Nuttall bring together a wide array of essays that may have only a couple of things in common: they are about Africa, and they deal with the aesthetics of everyday life. By ‘aesthetics of everyday life’, I mean everyday judgements of taste; in this sense the ambiguity of beauty and ugliness, how one can become the other, is an interesting subject. It is not clear why other forms of aesthetic judgement

like the uncanny or the kitsch are not considered, in particular when they are so relevant to several of the topics discussed in the book – from sorcery to the use of mass-mediated images.

Still, the chapters are very interesting, in some cases fascinating. Mbembe's paper on Congolese *samba* connects the history of popular music in Congo to its recent history in a somewhat linear way that could have gained depth from some ethnographic engagement (or just some interviews with the musicians) and a more transnational, Atlantic understanding of movements in popular music. Indeed, very similar forms of popular music have been produced in Angola, Brazil, and Jamaica in very different political contexts. Dominique Malaquais's paper on a public monument in Douala and the adverse reactions of the local public to its 'recycling' aesthetics, which make African art popular in Europe, is fascinating. Pippa Stein presents the case of school children in South Africa reproducing the forms of traditional 'fertility' dolls when asked to make a sculpture. Not only are the dolls astonishingly beautiful, but the stories of the children who made them are also very sensitively presented. Mark Gevisser's autobiographical stories of race and sex in South African swimming pools offer very sharp insights on discrimination through aesthetic judgement. On a wider sphere of 'taste', several papers deal with food, and its transient meanings in countries where the excess of food is still a sign of wealth. A couple of papers on the Diaspora introduce the argument of the invention of an 'African' aesthetic in the New World, an argument that is not new but which may be relevant in contrast with the African cases. Michelle Gilbert's description of concert paintings in Ghana finally brings focus to the question of evil, sorcery, and the uncanny, marginally present in other papers. Mia Couto's tales about urban life together with J. Fox's pictures of balcony living in Mozambique close the volume brilliantly.

Two main topics emerge recurrently in the book: the aesthetics of the recycled, the *Système D*, the *friche*, and the aesthetics of evil, of sorcery and violence. Both topics have been critically addressed by several authors (Jean-Loup Amselle and Brigit Meyer among others), who argue that the Western interest in these issues is a renewal of the exoticist, orientalist gaze on an Africa that is seen not only as ugly, but also as perversely attractive, precisely because of its 'ugliness'. The reification of an 'African' aesthetics that this book seems to propose at some points does not

necessarily contradict the orientalist discourse. The fact that many of the authors are from Africa can be read in different ways: the dominance of a South African perspective, strongly influenced by American intellectual trends, is not necessarily a guarantee of scholarly independence. On the other hand, it must be said that most of the authors do engage in complex and nuanced arguments which cannot be reduced to celebrations of the creativity of African recycling or the beauty of witchcraft. This is a volume worth diving into, precisely because it is beautiful.

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SABLOFF, JEREMY A. & WILLIAM L. FASH (eds). *Gordon R. Willey and American archaeology: contemporary perspectives*. xii, 252 pp., maps, figs, illus., bibliogr. Norman: Univ. Oklahoma Press, 2007. \$34.95 (cloth)

In 2002, the American archaeological community lost one of its most renowned scholars in Gordon Randolph Willey. Jeremy A. Sabloff and William L. Fash are the editors of a thoughtful and timely volume worthy of its subject. Though a mammoth undertaking because of the breadth of work produced by Willey, this *Festschrift* is a model which others should follow and an important read for contemporary American archaeologists.

In an age of narrowing research topics, Gordon R. Willey's work stands as an outstanding example of synthesis and the investigation of the 'big picture'. His diverse interests ranged across the Americas and in topics including settlement patterning, ceramic analysis, transcendence, and ideology, all of which he built upon in his work. Throughout his career Willey remained steadfastly committed to the discipline of archaeology and the development of new models to investigate material culture and its production. His research has laid the groundwork for what American archaeology has become today. Consequently, this book is as much about Willey's role as teacher, mentor, and friend as it is about his prominence as an archaeologist.

Structured around ten of Willey's most influential writings, like *Method and theory in American archaeology* and 'The Classic Maya hiatus: a rehearsal for the collapse?' each chapter discusses and reviews Willey's conclusions in conjunction with today's

interpretation, stressing that his methods and theories are enduring and continuing to leave indelible marks on the practice of American archaeology. The chapters are presented in order of his fieldwork, starting with Willey's seminal research in the Florida Gulf Coast of the Southeastern United States (Jerald T. Milanich) through to his final work in the Mayan Lowlands (Patricia A. McAnany, David A. Freidel, *et al.*). As Sabloff and Fash make quite evident throughout the book, Willey was adept at conducting fieldwork and publishing results. The body of knowledge he produced remains commanding to this day. To the reader's benefit, excerpts from Willey's publications are included in all of the chapters.

Though Willey spent only a comparatively short time conducting research in areas such as the Viru Valley, Peru, in the 1940s and Panama not long afterwards, Sabloff and Fash had the insight to solicit chapters that discuss this work. As noted in 'Peru' by Michael Moseley and 'The intermediate area and Gordon Willey' by Jeffrey Quilter, both areas held Willey's attention throughout his career and served as foundational material for some of his most influential ideas expressed in works like *An introduction to American archaeology, volume II*. These chapters, as well as others such as Joyce Marcus's 'Great art styles and the rise of complex societies', demonstrate Willey's consideration of broader issues in the development of Mayan culture. Willey's progressive view on the influence of art and ideology, for example, makes his legacy in New World archaeology salient.

Sabloff and Fash's book is well edited and quite readable. The illustrations, graphs, and photographs are quite rich; the most notable photograph being of Willey with eyebrow raised, which appears in Toutellot and Hammond's 'Serendipity at Seibal'. The ten chapters are framed by a gracious introduction and conclusion by the editors, which underscores their immense respect for Willey. Of note are the references to Willey's life away from archaeology; his writing of archaeological mystery novels and love of egg-drop soup reminds us that there is life beyond academe. In sum, *Gordon R. Willey and American archaeology* is a wonderful addition to the collection of any archaeologist working in one of the many fields in which Willey did, as well as anyone interested in the history of the discipline.

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SAITTA, DEAN J. *The archaeology of collective action*. xx, 140 pp., maps, illus., bibliogr. Tallahassee: Univ. Press of Florida, 2007. \$24.95 (paper)

This slender volume is an interesting study concerned, as the Series Editor informs us (p. xiv), with reconstructing an aspect of the 'American experience', specifically the Colorado Coalfield strike and war of 1913-14, which included the now infamous Ludlow Massacre. Emphasis is placed upon reconstructing 'collective action' and chapter 1 sets out the theoretical framework and evaluates relevant, topical, archaeological epistemology, largely in relation to 'ownership' of the past. A critical historical archaeology is called for as a mechanism for emancipating groups for too long excluded by middle-class archaeology. This is a relevant point and Saitta is writing from a historical archaeological perspective, a disciplinary sub-area with a heightened sense of reflexivity in comparison to, for instance, prehistoric Near Eastern or African archaeology.

Chapter 2 sets out at greater length Saitta's thinking on the 'philosophical commitments' involved in such a critical archaeology. This is anchored within a self-defined 'Pragmatist' archaeological framework, the American intellectual legacy of which is admitted in relation to, for example, Peirce, Dewey, and more recently Richard Rorty. The premises of both objectivity and truth are rightly questioned and the development of a 'working-class' (p. 12) archaeology signalled. Yet here, perhaps, the privileged position of Saitta and his colleagues is all too apparent (and not fully acknowledged) in dealing with recent events, actions, and their material residues as opposed to the scraps and fragments most archaeologists have to deal with, which are further removed both chronologically and in terms of 'consciousness' than those discussed by Saitta. Hence his argument from the outset is constructed from a position of empirical strength denied the majority and allowing somewhat grander claims to be made.

Chapter 3 is concerned with the archaeology of collective action. The tenets of processual and post-processual archaeology are briefly outlined, perhaps unnecessarily, for this is material that should by now be well known to Saitta's assumed intended audience, that is, archaeologists. Agency theory is considered at some length, which is understandable in examining collective action, and some useful critical points made. Less pertinent are the

references to Hodder's work among the Baringo or Leone's on colonial Annapolis, again for the reason already cited, that this is well known. Conversely, 'a contextual theory of material culture' (p. 33) could have been more fully developed, for though we get a later reference to 'materiality' (p. 68), this area of current archaeological interest and relevance is largely neglected when it could have been profitably explored in relation to the data from Ludlow.

Chapter 4 is more successful in narrowing the focus on to historical archaeology, broadly defined, again in relation to strategies for exploring the 'archaeologies' of collective action. Chapter 5 provides a logical progression into the presentation of the empirical data, firstly historical evidence, and in Chapter 6, the archaeological data. Both chapters (and indeed the whole book) are clearly written and the data well presented, though it should be noted that some of the illustrations are a little murky and one at least, of an archaeological unit, breaks convention in lacking a scale (Fig. 6.7).

In general it is in the empirically grounded discussion that the strength of the volume lies rather than in the attempt at constructing a hermeneutic of collective action too broadly construed. For recurrently, and this is perhaps where the fault-line emerges between the grander claims and the specificities of the study, the American emphasis is apparent. This is relevant even insofar as the definition of class 'as a fluid set of processes' (p. 64) is proposed. This might be applicable in the Ludlow context (its universality even in relation elsewhere to the American 'experience' could be questioned), but is less so in other temporal and spatial contexts where issues of ascription could be much more important rather than those surrounding fluidity.

Hence chapter 7 is very successful for it concentrates upon the implications of the material considered with regard to how they resonate in public consciousness today, why the inequality of opportunity persists in America, and, briefly, how it influenced and affected Saitta himself. The success of the discussion is because it is tightly bound to the Colorado case study, whereas, in contrast, chapter 8 is less fulfilling in advancing claims which could be interpreted as too grand in their proposed potential impact. None the less, this is in part understandable for we all want our research to have 'impact', and, notwithstanding this criticism, Saitta is to be commended for providing us with an interesting study.

TIMOTHY INSOLL *University of Manchester*

WILLIAMSON, RONALD F. & MICHAEL S. BISSON (eds). *The archaeology of Bruce Trigger: theoretical empiricism*. xiv, 304 pp., tables, illus., bibliogr. London, Ithaca, N.Y.: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press, 2006. £60.00 (cloth), £18.99 (paper)

There are two common kinds of books about archaeologists. In a conventional *Festschrift* a collected gift of studies is offered *for* (it is hoped) the Master to bless and enjoy. Or biographical and analytical studies of the Master and his works are written years later – and necessarily therefore largely from reduced evidence as it chances to survive the papers, correspondence, and other secondary sources; a good example is Trigger's own fine book on Gordon Childe, shaped by the painful limits taphonomic hazard creates by the chance of which sources survive and which perish. This generous and intelligent book is a fine example of a genre we could more often benefit from – a book written instead from personal knowledge at the time, and even with the Master himself, Bruce Trigger, as a self-analyst. Pamela Smith's now-annual series of Cambridge 'tea and memories' meetings exploring recent historical themes in archaeologists' work are in the same spirit of recent and direct knowledge and memory, so equally of special merit.

The book's sixteen chapters are of quite exceptional and consistent merit. I specially enjoyed essays by Eldon Yellowhorn on 'the awakening of internalist archaeology in the Aboriginal world' – because we increasingly now hear indigenous voices speaking about the archaeology, but still rarely indigenous voices speaking about the archaeologist; by Randall McGuire on Marx, Childe, and Trigger; and by Toby Morantz on Trigger's ethnohistory. I enjoyed all.

Trigger was unusual in the great range of complex subjects he treated, always in depth, always well informed, always astonishingly thorough. Both Egyptian and North American, both archaeology and ethnohistory, both practice and theory, both single-authored books and the opening volume, in two physical volumes, of the enormous edited *Cambridge history of the native peoples of the Americas*. The one I remember most learning from is his *Native and newcomer: Canada's 'heroic age' reconsidered* (1985). His last full-length book, *Understanding early civilization* (2003), analysed over twenty domains of human social life in the forms they took across seven civilizations, amongst them Shang China and the Yoruba people of West

Africa alongside the familiar Old and New world examples: $7 \times >20 = >140!$ It is an uneven, as well as an enormous, book, because even at 770 pages they have each to be dealt with summarily, and really effective analysis was beyond the grasp even of this Master, I fear. An escalating problem for us, as knowledge of the particulars enlarges and multiplies, is the way in which these really ambitious works of synthesis, and especially works which neither propose grand theory in the abstract nor generalize from a narrow case study but prove actual pattern across the material evidence, seem to be slipping into the now impossible to do. But Brian Fagan, another Master of the Trigger generation and contributor to this volume, also proves it still can be done.

Faced with the thousands of unanswered e-mails in my inbox, I wonder not for the first time how a Master can be so productive. Not for lack of varied work at McGill in Montreal, where he was based nearly all his working life. But was working time really so much less crowded then?

Trigger's active working life, from graduate student at Yale in 1959 to his death in 2006, spans an era which may be remembered as one of 'biff and baff'. BIFF!: old archaeology is hopeless – we need a New Archaeology. BAFF!: New Archaeology is hopeless – we need a post-modern archaeology. And BIFF again!: ... Remembering some of those polemics, sometimes with cruelty of the criticism matched only by the weakness of the actual worked example of the good new way to work, I am easily persuaded that the more generous and quieter ways of Trigger's working are actually more productive as well as more collegial. That collegiality goes beyond the college for, as Martha Latta's essay reports, Trigger became uncomfortable with the degree to which archaeologists had contrived to distance themselves from the living First Nations: 'The Hurons are not a group of two hundred rim sherds. They are a living people who have ideas and concerns about their world and the ways in which they are pictured'.

Trigger was the leading archaeologist of his generation in Canada. Perhaps it helps to be Canadian, of a nation famously touchy about being mistaken for its US big brother, and famously aware also of the special place of indigenous people today in the face of dominant empires.

CHRISTOPHER CHIPPINDALE *University of Cambridge*

Ecology

KOSEK, JAKE. *Understories: the political life of forests in northern New Mexico*. xx, 380 pp., maps, illus., bibliogr. London, Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2007. £14.99 (paper)

Trained as a forester, a geographer, and an ethnographer, Jake Kosek is, at heart, a political ecologist. Inspired by his doctoral supervisors Michael Watts and Nancy Peluso, as well as by the timeless teachings of Raymond Williams, Michel Foucault, and William Cronon, he offers a beautifully written monograph on forest politics in northern New Mexico, a marginal periphery of an imperial centre. His analysis of the forest as constructed through a range of scientific and discursive practices may not be original, but his central message that nature, race, and nation are historically inseparable is a refreshing insight relating to this particular area.

Ideas of New Mexico run deep in Western imagination as one of the violent far west frontiers of nineteenth-century North American state-building, a romantic island of persisting American Indian and Chicano folk-ways, a heaven of hippy art and freedoms, and an axis of sacred wilderness. For archaeologists and anthropologists, it is the heartland of Kroeberian historical diffusionism and Stewardian cultural ecology. But the northern New Mexico that captures Kosek's political imagination is peopled with social actors we usually do not hear about: dispossessed, marginal Hispanics and Chicano activists, environmentalists, government foresters, workers from the not-so-distant nuclear military-industrial complex at Los Alamos, and dying piñon-juniper trees.

The New Mexicans Kosek worked with constitute and reproduce their collective identity not so much through the forest, but through 'the land', symbol of their historical roots and material source of their livelihood. It is with much empathy that the author reconstructs their memories of loss and dispossession, their sentiments of longing for land, and their sense of heredity, which all become 'central sites around which people organize and protest inequalities' (p. 50). Kosek's Hispano informants do not shy away from confrontation, especially with their favourite enemy, the Forest Service (in this region, public land is managed through one single state agency), which embodies in their paranoiac mindset the monolithic state. Chapter 5, my favourite in the book, brilliantly illustrates how local despair turns into oppositional

identity against deeply felt injustice. Smokey, the chapter's hero, is an iconic representation of the native wild bear, used as a cartoon character by the government in its forest fire prevention, and contemptuously dismissed by the Hispanic population as a paternalistic 'white racist pig' (p. 226). For Kosek, this is how 'forest policy and practices become inseparably intertwined with the reproduction of forms of difference'. However, like so many poor throughout the Americas, these fourth-world underdogs are forced to choose between either a politics of equal redistribution, or one of community and identity. The liberal dictate 'either class or ethnicity' stifles their subaltern politics, and, in the process, silences and reifies their voices. The plight of the dispossessed living at the doorsteps of affluence and privilege is painfully captioned by one of Kosek's informants (p. 57): '[O]utside of "Indian art" and "Indian gaming", we have become an invisible people, even to ourselves' (p. 57).

The flows of material and symbolic exchanges between the contrasting geographic spaces inhabited by the poor and the wealthy is particularly well rendered in chapter 6, which describes Los Alamos's nuclear economy. It is, we are told, the third site in importance in the world for nuclear research and industrial production. It is at Los Alamos that one comes fully to realize the importance of 'the material history of sentiments' (p. 25), the fact that nature is 'always already social' (p. 28), and that 'the weakness at the heart of environmental politics is that it does not take seriously the politics of nature' (p. 273). These realizations, including the idea that regimes of management of nature and people are always plural and interdependent, are used in the concluding chapter to further the debate on human agency and non-anthropogenic factors in the context of the uncertainties created by climate change. Will this emerging threat cause the rise of new emancipatory politics, and will these lead to new re-imaginings and possibilities, or, rather, will they degenerate into the same confrontations of nature, race, and class as those examined in this book?

LAURA M. RIVAL *University of Oxford*

MAIDA, CARL A. (ed.). *Sustainability and communities of place*. ix, 261 pp., maps, figs, tables, illus., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2007. £45.00 (cloth)

When I first opened this book, I received quite a shock. It is the latest volume in the Berghahn

'Studies in environmental anthropology and ethnobiology' series, under Roy Ellen's able general editorship. The theme uniting the contributions is the need to place communities in their local contexts in addressing sustainability, while simultaneously allowing for global circumstances; how they 'blend traditional sentiments with fully modern sensibilities ... to sustain ... sense of cultural identity amid large-scale dislocations' (pp. 9-10). While not a new theme, the contributors draw on some interesting ethnographic examples in discussing it.

It comprises three parts. The first, entitled 'Local and global knowledges', opens with a contribution from Claude Raynaut, Magda Zanoni, Angela Ferreira, and Paulo Lana on local communities around the Atlantic forest of Parana State, Brazil. They point out that both communities and forest have experienced considerable change, the ecology that conservationists seek to protect being heavily influenced by humans. They illustrate how different actors' views of sustainable development may differ and clash, policy privileging natural above social sustainability thereby leaving locals saying 'we count less than the *micoelão* monkey or the parrot'. In the second chapter, Thomas Thornton discusses the outcomes of the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act for local communities. He explores the intriguing possibility that local subsistence values spiritually tied to place might influence 'deracinated, competitive, short-sighted, and often corrupt' (p. 42) business corporations to prioritize sustainability. The next chapter, by Johanna Gibson, contrasts Australian customary land custodianship with capitalist property notions, nicely captured in an Australian musical where an Aboriginal retorts 'This land is me' to a rancher's assertion 'This land is mine'. She argues that legal frameworks need to accommodate such different resource requirements or 'obligations enriched by these inclusive systems of custodianship will be tragically inconceivable' (p. 78). The final chapter is another interesting contribution by Dario Novellino, which I recall as a lively Durham AID seminar, illustrating how the bureaucracy that surrounds local claims to resources inhibits sustainable cultural practices among the Batak of the Philippines. In their attempts to negotiate with the state and acquire legitimacy, they refer to *kultura* – a syncretic idea of cultural identity – which they fear is threatened by outside interventions.

The second part, entitled 'Local practices: adaptive strategies and state responses', opens with Krista Harper investigating the widespread perception in Hungary that all are vulnerable to the environmental problems attributed to the transformation from state socialism to global capitalism. She shows through a discussion of Roma health and civil rights that some are more vulnerable than others, arguing for attention to environmental justice for such marginal people. The second chapter, by Deborah Pellow, focuses on the part played by the preparation and consumption of food by migrants – in this case Nigerian Hausa to Accra, Ghana – in sustaining a sense of community. People express identity by sitting together eating prepared foods sold on the street. In the next chapter, Janet Benson discusses attitudes to the economic and environmental sustainability of farming in Kansas. Opinions vary between communities over the inherently unsustainable beef industry, dependent on overuse of groundwater supplies, generous government subsidies, and cheap migrant labour. The final contribution, by Barbara and Carl Maida, discusses the 'Save Open Spaces and Agricultural Resources' initiative voted for by residents of Los Angeles, who perceived a need to control urban encroachment on farm land. Such land use policy decisions, they argue, require the public be well informed about the issues.

The third part, entitled 'Social capital, civic engagement and globalization', opens with Kenneth Meter discussing lessons about participatory research from the 'Neighbourhood Sustainability Indicators Project' in Minneapolis. He argues that the experiences of devising and implementing systemic indicators of sustainability offer a robust model for urban environments. The next chapter, by Carla Caser, considers the 'built environment' on Mustang Island, Texas, employing Bourdieu's social capital concept to argue that the design of physical space influences neighbourhood social networks. She discusses how different social groups manipulate and manage their space and sense of place to increase their social capital and 'power'. In the penultimate chapter, Richard Westra discusses Japanese understanding of political economy, arguing that current globalization trends do not suggest a 'viable ecosustainable future', whereas Green theory and new socialist ideas do. The final chapter, by Snjezana Colic, discusses consumption and globalization, pointing out that socio-economic arrangements differ between societies whatever global trends.

The surprises include seeing no reference in a book dealing with local issues and sustainable development to the local/indigenous knowledge initiative, which addresses several of the topics discussed. And reference to social capital with no mention of development's Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, where it features prominently. Perhaps this is evidence that the discipline is now so broad we easily lose sight of current cognate work. But the real shock was to see myself rechristened Luis A. Sillitoe on the fly-page, not only disconcerting, but also out of character for this otherwise well-edited volume.

PAUL SILLITOE *University of Durham*

WALLEY, CHRISTINE J. *Rough waters: nature and development in an East African marine park*. xx, 308 pp., maps, illus., bibliogr. Oxford, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2004. £36.95 (cloth), £12.95 (paper)

As foreign tourists arrived at the newly developed eco-lodge on the remote island of Chole off Tanzania's coast, brilliantly painted white rocks lined their path to waiting bungalows. The visitors complained that the 'tasteless' painted rocks spoiled the otherwise natural experience. The rocks were not part of the original expatriate designed camp, but rather were added by Chole's resident staff, who saw them as a sign of development. The painted limestone rocks are just one of several provocative metaphors used to explore the contradictions of nature tourism and participatory development in Christine Walley's well-written and engaging book *Rough waters: nature and development in an East African marine park*.

The book examines the development of a marine park in Tanzania's Mafia island chain in the late 1990s. Drawing on the Manchester school of anthropology, Walley uses the concept of a 'social drama' or an extended analysis of conflict over time to examine competing interests in creating the park. By taking this approach she questions theories that posit a view where globalization creates new spaces for local participation by subsuming state power to less interested economic and non-governmental forces. She grounds the marine park controversy in the much deeper history of Mafia as a site of plantation slavery and cosmopolitan development and its transformation into a rural periphery. This book is a must-read for anyone interested in the ways that international development and conservation projects shape

state-society relations and vice versa. It makes important contributions to the fields of anthropology, geography, and history, as well as to inter-disciplinary scholarship in political ecology and development studies.

Walley shows how complex historical connections are replaced by a pervasive discourse about poor and uneducated locals who destroy their environment by reckless fishing practices, including dynamiting. Enlightened bureaucrats and international conservation groups propose a national marine park to safeguard the area's fisheries and attract new forms of eco-tourism to the islands. Given efforts over the 1990s to promote community participation along with foreign investment and international technical assistance, the park promises to be a model for community-based conservation in Tanzania. Indeed Walley starts her story with a 1995 meeting at which Mafia's residents wholeheartedly embrace the marine park. The book is at its best when showing why residents, deeply sceptical about government authorities and bureaucratic elites, would enthusiastically welcome the conservation project.

Through in-depth interviews with residents and by immersing herself in local politics, Walley is told that dynamite fishing is not the result of poverty and ignorance, but is the province of outsider fishermen collaborating with government officials. These outsiders are unswayed by local social pressure exerted through kinship ties, historically used to regulate fishing rights on the islands. Aware of the dangers of inviting the government to regulate their waters, Mafia's fishermen still believed that the internationally supported marine park was the best way to stop dynamite fishing, assert their rights as *wenyeji* or proprietors of the area, and provide employment to local youth. The presence of the international NGO WWF gave residents hope that their interests would be taken into account. Despite such assurances by its expatriate technical adviser, WWF was ultimately beholden to state agencies and their interests.

I particularly enjoyed chapter 4, where fish play a central role in Walley's discussion of local perceptions of nature. Readers might at first imagine that by increasing local demand for fresh fish, tourism could raise resident living standards. However, she shows why the commodification of fish leads fishermen and their families to eat less fish, and that the expansion of markets diminishes the nutritional quality of local diets. She also illustrates how

local claims for fresh fish encourages many fishermen to sell their catch at sea to large 'ice-boats' or to fillet the fish before coming ashore.

Walley's careful attention to how various actors – island residents, state officials, NGOs, and tourism industry expatriates – hold different meanings of key project terms like 'participation' and 'development' makes it a great book for teaching in undergraduate and graduate courses. The book contrasts two contradictory conceptions of participatory development. The first is an international model where all stakeholders are equal in determining the goals and outcomes of the project. Walley demonstrates why this technical understanding, embraced by WWF staff, naïvely wishes away historical political-economic social relations. The second view is grounded in Tanzania's history of socialist development, where participation meant rural people being set to work to fulfil the government's mandate. The book offers a compelling account as to why entrenched state-society models of participation are not easily shed by the good intentions of global projects.

BENJAMIN GARDNER *University of California, Berkeley*

History and linguistics

POLLOCK, SHELDON. *The language of the gods in the world of men: Sanskrit, culture, and power in premodern India*. viii, 684 pp., maps, bibliogr. London, Berkeley: Univ. California Press, 2006. £48.95 (cloth)

This is a large, ambitious, important, and exciting book, bursting with ideas at every level. It is hard to imagine how such a *magnum opus* could possibly have been produced by an academic working under the five- or eight-year cycle of RAE audit procedures. It asks some big questions about language use, and the relation of language to power, from approximately 2,500 years ago in South and Southeast Asian history right up to the present day. It does so in an explicitly comparative way, with two entire chapters devoted to the nitty-gritty of the history of language use and policy in Europe. A historian's feel for detail and difference is combined with a sociologist's drive to generalize (not to mention a deep engagement with metropolitan theory that even today is rather

unusual in an Indologist), and the whole is underpinned by a seemingly effortless command and synthesis of an enormous expanse of inscriptional and literary Sanskrit and related Prakrits.

Pollock's aim is to understand the role of Sanskrit at different periods and to explain its relationship to power. The book offers a new periodization, or at least an entirely new way of thinking about the periodization, of South Asian history. The richness of Pollock's documentation and the sheer number of diverse theoretical arguments being made may well limit the book's impact. Lesser mortals can only marvel at Pollock's skill in keeping so many balls in the air at the same time. It is not always an easy read. Yet it is also full of pleasing aphorisms, such as: 'Whereas some regional languages such as New Persian achieved transregionality through merit, and others such as Latin had it thrust upon them through military conquests, Sanskrit seems to have almost been born transregional' (p. 262).

The overall story is built around three radical disjunctures or cleavages in South Asian language history. The first occurred around 150 of the Common Era when Sanskrit, from having been a liturgical language closely identified with Brahmanical Vedic rituals and not used (even by the most orthodox) for public announcements, was suddenly transformed into a language of royal power adopted by dynasties 'from Kashmir to Kelantan' (p. 257). This form of culture-power Pollock dubs the Sanskrit cosmopolis. (Surprisingly – presumably because of his concern to avoid the religious models and explanations which have hitherto dominated discussion of South and Southeast Asian history – he nowhere alludes to the mandala model that underlay it.) A king's grasp of Sanskrit grammar, and the steps he took to support its study and preservation, were understood to be equivalent to his preservation of social order. Just how this form of Sanskrit spread so far and so rapidly Pollock admits is far from clear (it was certainly not, as in other empires, through military conquest or bureaucratic fiat). But that it did so, and that Buddhists and Jains, who for centuries had abjured the use of Sanskrit as inappropriate for their religious purposes, suddenly and enthusiastically took it up, are incontestable facts.

The second disjuncture – this one was spread over several centuries in most parts of the subcontinent – occurred roughly a millennium later when local languages were subjected to vernacularization: the processes that Pollock calls literization (being written for the first time) and

literization (being used for literature and praising power). All the while Sanskrit retained its position at the top of a complex hierarchy of languages, so that the notion of South Asians having a single 'mother tongue' has no sense. Pollock demonstrates that this process of vernacularization, under way in South Asia, as in Europe, long before modernization, industrialization, or print capitalism were even on the horizon, poses some very serious questions to well-known theories of nationalism that see its crucible in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The third disjuncture occurred following colonialism and the introduction of the idea – wholly foreign to South Asian ways of being – of 'Western linguistic monism', or what Pollock dubs 'linguism', which underlies the cultural and linguistic nationalisms of modern South Asia.

There is also a side-argument about legitimation. Though Pollock evidently, and probably rightly, decided that there was no way in which he could debate explicitly and in detail with previously advanced pictures and models of the sweep of South Asian history, at various points in the book he takes issue with Max Weber specifically on the question of legitimation. The combination of legitimation theory and instrumental reason, which he takes to be the scholarly conventional wisdom in accounting for the Sanskrit cosmopolis, is denounced as 'not only anachronistic but intellectually mechanical, culturally homogenizing, theoretically naïve, empirically false, and tediously predictable' (p. 18). Tediously predictable and naïve some scholars' handling of his Sanskrit source materials may have been, but Pollock's own interpretations show royal elites using Sanskrit as a way to buttress claims to rank and privilege. His fulminations against legitimation as an explanatory device will work only if he comes up with a more convincing alternative.

As Pollock himself has recently written, 'The measure of a book's importance is not how much it gets right but how much it gets you to think' ('Pretextures of time', *History and Theory* 46, 2007: 381). I am not competent to judge many of the detailed claims he advances in *The language of the gods*, but it does seem to me that no future work on South or Southeast Asian history can afford to ignore it. He gives us a new language and a new conceptualization in which to think about the periodization of South and Southeast Asia's past. Even anthropologists, who understandably may skim the earlier sections

with their detailed discussion of inscriptions and texts from over a thousand years ago, will need to acquaint themselves with his ideas on pre-modern cosmopolitanism, vernacularization, and indigenism.

DAVID N. GELLNER *University of Oxford*

STEIN, GIL J. (ed.). *The archaeology of colonial encounters: comparative perspectives*. xii, 445 pp., maps, figs, tables, bibliogr. Oxford, Santa Fe: James Currey; School of American Research Press, 2005. £17.95 (paper)

This book originated as a seminar entitled 'The archaeology of colonies in cross-cultural perspective', held between 19 and 23 March 2000 at the School of American Research (now known as the School of Advanced Research on the Human Experience) in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Gil J. Stein, symposium organizer and volume editor, sets the table by examining various paradigms previously employed in addressing 'colonies' and 'colonialism'. Employing the gloss 'colonial encounters' – an attempt to sidestep the obvious difficulties of distinguishing among the interrelated concepts of colonies, colonization, and colonialism – the participants encourage a more synthetic understanding of the interregional interactions that characterized ancient state-level societies and their constituent social groupings. By shifting to a broadly comparative focus, these contributors question and challenge the dominant role of the colonizer, seeking instead evidence of indigenous agency in colonial encounters. The seminar participants emphasize the dynamics of economic, political, and symbolic interactions across a broad range of ten colonial encounters during the prehistoric, pre-capitalist, and early historic periods of both Old and New Worlds.

Looking at colonial encounters in the ancient Mediterranean, Michael Dietler emphasizes the importance of archaeological data generated independently from documentary sources, and underscores the differing empirical and theoretical implications of each. Dietler also expresses discomfort with the 'shared inadequacies' of mega-concepts like 'Hellenization' and world-systems theory.

Janine L. Gasco compares and contrasts Spanish and Mesoamerican worldviews of the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries. Drawing upon her long-term archaeological study of the Soconusco region (modern Chiapas, Mexico),

Gasco emphasizes the diversity in Spanish colonialism as played out in the Americas and the Pacific.

Peter van Dommelen explores cultural hybridity in ancient Greek colonies as evident in the Phoenician and Carthaginian settlements in the Mediterranean. Drawing upon more recent iterations of post-colonial theory, van Dommelen distances himself from the conventional dichotomy between the 'colonizer' and the 'colonized', stressing the importance of situating colonial experiences within local regions rather than the 'colonizers' provenance'.

Stein's substantive contribution compares the fourth millennium BC Uruk colonies with the Old Assyrian trading colonies of the early second millennium BC. Although representing an 'unusual' economic strategy within the Mesopotamian world, these colonies were organized in very similar ways, and they offer a baseline for extrapolating the nature of colonization in other ancient societies.

Michael W. Spence employs practice theory to examine the Zapotec 'diaspora network' within the Classic-period of central Mexico. He uses Tlailotlacan, an ethnic enclave from the western margin of Teotihuacan (beginning circa AD 200), as a case study for understanding the construction of Zapotec ethnic identity. Spence argues that fine-scale considerations of the roles of individuals (and social groups) are obscured within the grand core-periphery models derived from world-systems theory and related theoretical positions.

Kent G. Lightfoot reflects on the interactions that took place during the School of American Research symposium, particularly the uncritical use of concepts comparing colonial systems of early capitalist Europe with those of non-Western and non-capitalistic settings. Drawing upon his own research on Spanish and Russian mercantile and mission colonial institutions of late 1700s and early 1800s California, he highlights the interplay of inter-ethnic, demographic, and chronological variability.

The next two papers address colonial encounters in the Peruvian highlands. Katharina Schreiber writes about imperial agendas and local agency (the 'multidimensionality') within the Wari empire (of the Peruvian highlands). Terence N. D'Altroy situates specific case studies within a broader comparative framework, demonstrating how Inka colonization reconfigured the social and ethnic landscapes of the Tawantinsuyu empire.

Susan E. Alcock examines points of convergence and divergence among four Roman

colonies in the eastern empire (modern-day Greece and Turkey), suggesting that the strategic role of colonies is perhaps less pervasive than previously believed. She argues for expanding the research agenda into the domains of everyday life (including burial practices, domestic architecture, foodways, and minor cults).

In the final paper, J. Daniel Rogers provides an over-arching, synthetic perspective on the archaeology of colonies, colonizers, and those being colonized. Because, by their nature, colonies are associated with states and empires, they provide an effective window through which to view complex power hierarchies.

Overall, the contributors emphasize the extraordinary degree of variability between and among various colonial encounters, in both the Classical world and during the European 'Age of Discovery'. They reject the globalizing generalities of world-systems theory, emphasizing instead the failures of single, homogeneous models of colonial practice and stressing the importance of shifting colonial agendas, political economies, cultural identities, and especially power relations. These papers also criticize the 'myth' of the colonizer-colonized dichotomy, which vastly over-simplifies the complex realities articulating the colonial homeland, the colonies themselves, and the indigenous communities within which the colonies were established.

DAVID HURST THOMAS *American Museum of Natural History, New York*

ZEITLIN, IRVING M. *The historical Muhammad*. viii, 181 pp., fig, bibliogr. Cambridge, Malden, Mass.: Polity Press, 2007. £50.00 (cloth), £16.99 (paper)

The originality of this book, by an emeritus professor of sociology at the University of Toronto, lies in its application of a sociological framework to the accepted narrative of the foundation of Islam. Four preconditions, he suggests, are necessary for the successful transformation of any small sect into a mass movement: widespread discontent, an ideology with resonance, charismatic leadership, and organizational planning. In the early Meccan phase, discontent was very limited; the Prophet Muhammad's message found little resonance with the majority; his leadership was rejected; and he relied on preaching and warning. But after the hegira to Yathrib (later Medina) in 622 CE, he found a Hobbesian state of war between

raiding tribes that provoked him to create a new pan-Arabian solidarity as an armed prophet of monotheism and a skilled diplomat and strategist. The Islamic conquest of the Near East followed as an organic outgrowth of Muhammad's teachings.

Though glancing at Hobbes and Machiavelli, Irving M. Zeitlin pays more attention to Ibn Khaldun's cyclical model of social conflict according to which groups of nomads periodically conquered the settled agricultural regions, bringing a new sense of justice and virtue to the function of governance, until after a few generations the rigour that was needed to establish sovereignty ebbed away amid decadence and corruption. According to Zeitlin's historical sources, Yathrib had come to be dominated by Arabian Jews who developed new methods of irrigation and cultivation, crafts, and practices of exchange.

Much of the remainder of Zeitlin's argument covers more trodden ground: how Judaism and Christianity, and the *hanifs* or pre-Islamic Arab monotheists, influenced foundational Islam, and how the Prophet retained virtually all the pre-Islamic religious institutions, such as Mecca, the Ka`ba and the Black Stone, pilgrimages, Ramadan, the name of Allah, jinns, while transvaluing them into a strictly monotheistic doctrine.

Zeitlin says in his preface that he began his effort to understand the Muhammad of history long before Islam became as topical as it is today. He disclaims any motives other than scholarly ones, and shies away from imputing to Islam any essential or eternal traits, such as a predisposition to wars of conversion. He concludes by noting that 'the Islamic Empire, like all empires, was only a temporarily successful phenomenon, while the Islamic faith, in contrast, has endured' (p. 164).

Zeitlin relies heavily on the Chicago scholar Fred M. Donner's admirably clear and persuasive *Narratives of Islamic origins* (1998), including Donner's sharp critique of revisionist or ultra-sceptical writers on the origins of Islam. One of the most sceptical of all was the late John Wansbrough – whose counterparts in anthropology are perhaps Leach on the Bible and Lord Raglan on the biography of heroes. Basically Wansbrough – in one of the most rococo of academic styles – set out to question the link between Muhammad and the Qur'anic materials, on the grounds that there is little independent historical or archaeological corroboration of events before about 800 CE. Zeitlin appears not to have read Wansbrough's

two books but is content to summarize approvingly Donner's critique of the ultra-sceptics. Yet Donner himself has written that 'the revisionist critiques are not a passing fad, but rather represent the beginning of a full-blown paradigm shift' (Director's Introduction, 'Islamic origins', NEH 2000 Summer Seminar, University of Chicago). It is likely that Wansbrough exaggerated his case, like many other intellectual innovators.

Zeitlin is quite happy to draw on the work of the second most radical of the revisionists, Patricia Crone, when she argues against the influential view of W. Montgomery Watt that seventh-century Mecca had become a commercial and financial centre at the crossroads of caravan trade. Watt held that it was the Meccans' transition to a mercantile economy that undermined the traditional order, generating a social and moral malaise to which Muhammad's preaching was the response. Crone thinks that Mecca was a pilgrimage site, its economy limited to supplying essential provisions. Crone's view, that Muhammad's later success was due to the divine validation of political structures and the creation of a militant people, fits neatly with Zeitlin's model. But a suspicion lingers that he may have been selective in his use of sources and played down the difficulties inherent in this extremely contentious field of study.

From the point of view of anthropology, Zeitlin's use of the modern category 'religion' seems to be unexamined and to carry an Abrahamic bias. Islam became 'more than a religion' in Medina after the victorious battle of Badr (p. 12), and the moral ideal of the pre-Islamic Bedouin 'had little or no religious character' (p. 53). However, Zeitlin's approach is novel and intriguing.

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Medical anthropology

ALTER, JOSEPH S. (ed.). *Asian medicine and globalization*. vi, 187 pp., bibliogr. Philadelphia: Univ. Pennsylvania Press, 2005. £29.50 (cloth)

This is an important collection of studies on a significant group of topics. Joseph Alter's introduction outlines two main sets of questions, one referring to the impact of the 'transnational hegemony of science', and of the global vogue

for alternative and New Age treatment, on national and transnational articulations of 'traditional' medicine, the other to the effects of transnational 'border-crossings' on how medicine is understood and theorized. Some of the questions here have already received considerable scholarly attention, with Alter one of the principal scholars involved; we have become increasingly aware, for example, that the 'Yoga', 'Āyurveda', 'Traditional Chinese Medicine', and so on, purveyed in the contemporary global marketplace are in large part recent products of modernist projects, heavily influenced by biomedicine and other aspects of contemporary society. This is not to deny the possible value of these or other reconstructed forms of Asian 'traditional' health-related practices, either for health or for the critique of biomedicine. The present volume, however, is primarily concerned not with such questions, but with opening up theoretical space for understanding the interactions between 'Asian medicine' and its increasingly globalized contexts.

The eight studies here, varied in content, approach, and chronological period, serve to bring many of the issues involved to the fore in a sustained and often engaging manner. The authors are mostly historians of medicine or medical anthropologists; five chapters are by US-based scholars, the remainder by scholars based in India (two) and the UK (one). Four chapters deal, broadly speaking, with South Asia and/or with medical traditions claiming origin in South Asia, including Deepak Kumar's comparative study of British health policy in colonial India and Dutch in the Dutch East Indies, and three with East Asia and Chinese-derived traditions; the remaining chapter, Alter's study of attempts by Indian practitioners of Chinese medicine to reclaim acupuncture as authentically Indian, directly raises the connections between the two regions.

The South Asian group includes two chapters on colonial medicine, both strongly influenced by post-colonial scholarship. S. Irfan Habib and Dhruv Raina focus on the proto-nationalist project of reconstruction of traditional medicine (Unani and Āyurvedic) on modernist lines in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including the creation of a new manufacturing and distribution system for Āyurvedic remedies. Kumar, as mentioned above, compares British and Dutch colonial health policies, over much the same time-frame. Alter's acupuncture study and Cecilia Van Hollen's chapter on the politics of 'traditional' Indian medicine for HIV/AIDS

have a more recent focus but the continuities are evident, with Van Hollen noting how Mahatma Gandhi's nationalist critique of medicine as capitalist consumerism (cf Alter's earlier *Gandhi's body*, 2000), has been reworked as part of the sales-pitch for indigenous 'Āyurvedic' HIV/AIDS remedies. There are some chilling moments in Van Hollen's chapter, such as her description of a clinic providing the controversial T.N. Majeed's 'ImmunoQR' therapy, where unmarried HIV-positive men are informed that after six months of ImmunoQR medication they can get married without risk of passing on the virus to their wives (p. 104). Martha Ann Selby's exploration of 'Sanskrit gynaecologies in postmodernity' moves somewhat into high comedy, both in the egregious unsignalled English rewritings of Sanskrit texts to which she points (menstrual blood becomes female ovum, subcutaneous worms are rewritten as purely metaphorical, and sexual desire is discreetly removed from the picture), and in the even more bizarre transformations that ensue when 'traditional Indian' approaches to women's bodies become part of the American New Age marketplace.

Two of the Chinese chapters deal with state health policy in the People's Republic of China. Nancy Chen's considers the complexities of recent Chinese state policy on *qigong*, first celebrated as a unique Chinese contribution to science but increasingly obsessed with the elimination of 'false' (i.e. 'unscientific' or politically problematic) versions of *qigong* as opposed to safe, biomedicalized versions. Her central focus, though, is on how science itself came to be seen as foundational within the Chinese nationalist project. Susan Brownell's study of Chinese cosmetic surgery's trajectory from dangerous bourgeois deviation to source of national pride demonstrates how the ability of biomedicine to appear as a relatively 'empty frame' (Brownell takes her cues here from John MacAloon's study of international sport as an 'empty form') has enabled it to be subtly appropriated as part of the nationalist project. Chinese cosmetic surgery claims technical superiority to Western versions while also presenting itself, even in the widely popular eyelid-reconstruction operations, as bringing out the essential features of Chinese ideas of beauty, rather than imitating the West. The remaining chapter, by Vivienne Lo and Sylvia Schroer on the concept of *xie* ('deviant') *qi*, is an intriguing account of how contemporary UK and European acupuncturists deal with practices deeply entangled with ancient

Chinese ideas of moral rectitude and demonic possession.

Alter's introduction is well worth reading in its own right, and concludes with a remarkable extended argument, building on his own previous work regarding positive conceptions of health in Āyurveda ('Heaps of health,' *Current Anthropology*, 1999), against 'medicine' itself as the most appropriate framing concept for the totality of Asian healing and health practices. Maybe, Alter suggests, 'alchemy' would be a better choice (in the sense of a set of 'experimental techniques dealing with embodied life and longevity'), in which case 'medicine' itself could be seen as a reduced, pragmatic sub-set of alchemical procedures, and 'clinic-based healing [as] a metaphorical instantiation, or fragmented mimetic reproduction, of immortality' (p. 18). Such an approach might help us to 'get past the problematic of Science as the modern yardstick for measuring medical legitimacy – its gold standard or touchstone, so to speak' (p. 19), and to open up space within which contemporary transformations of 'traditional' medical systems might be seen in other terms than how well or poorly they fit the scientific model.

The collection as a whole does a great deal to establish the need for such a space. It deserves to be widely read. If the issues here are truly taken on board by scholars, they have the potential to move the study of 'Asian medicine' to a new and considerably more sophisticated approach to its object of inquiry.

GEOFFREY SAMUEL *Cardiff University*

KARADIMAS, DIMITRIS. *La raison du corps: idéologie du corps et représentation de l'environnement chez les Miraña d'Amazonie Colombienne*. 451 pp., maps, tables, plates, illus., bibliogr. Paris: Éditions Peeters, 2005. \$79.20 (paper)

Bodies within bodies; making bodies. Men's faces and women's vulvas made of bats; human vertebrae and hips made of fish spines and heads; placentas made of stingrays; and umbilical cords made of worms – these are some features of human anatomy which, according to the Miraña of Amazonian Colombia, are made of other bodies. Dimitri Karadimas's book takes us through Amazonian myth, ritual, and practice, showing how men and women's bodies are made of a conjunction of bodies of plants and animals, an understanding that brings this 700-strong group

of hunter-horticulturalists surprisingly close to the Renaissance painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo. But Miraña ideas go beyond a composite view of human anatomy, since to them the bodies of plants and animals, and the bodies of man-made objects, houses, gardens, lakes, and stars, may hide within themselves a common humanity and transform into one another as well as contributing to make one another.

This is a book for specialists in body representation, political significance, and iconography which gives priority to the study of indigenous knowledge in its own terms and, at the same time, carries implications for current debates on shamanistic cosmologies. Bodies may be animal in some respects and vegetable in others, but they may ultimately be human when, beyond their skin-deep differences, they share a common internal anatomical structure. As a Miraña man explained after skinning a dead jaguar: 'Look, you can see he is a person, he has the same arms, the same guts; like us, he has a heart'. Hidden under the skin resides the human core called the 'tree of knowledge', made of the heart and the veins that connect it to the head – the tree's canopy – and the stomach – the tree's roots. The heart's main function is to 'improve blood', literally 'making it good'. The heart pumps blood, propelling it in circulation and passing to blood the strength derived from food in the stomach. A person's memory, health, emotions, and stamina derive from the movement of blood through the 'tree of knowledge'. Diseases of various sorts are also due to blood flow, especially to imbalanced blood heat caused by foul smells.

The author provides a wealth of information about how parts of animals and plants, their smells and heat, impact upon anatomy and blood, and are therefore bound to dietary restrictions. He gives special attention, on the one hand, to tobacco and coca, grown by men and consumed during nightly meetings to empower speech, and, on the other hand, to bitter manioc and chili, grown by women and used for cooking. Women's bodies, however, are subjected to stronger restrictions than men's bodies for they are seen as a major source of disease due to their heat, that is, their menses. Menstrual blood is conceived as a foul poison from which various animals and plants, including snakes, derive their own poisons. Surprisingly, however, copulation during menstruation is encouraged to secure pregnancy, a practice which, to my knowledge, is rare in Amazonia, since the menses are usually bound to sexual abstinence. According to the

author, this practice may reflect upon the Miraña's heightened war ethos and self-identification with blood feeding both animals and spirits.

Karadimas goes into great detail to reveal the anatomical links existing, for example, between women's genitalia, men's faces, and the bodies of bats. His findings shed new light upon indigenous American iconography far beyond the current Amazonian area, since representations of bats are salient amongst various Andean pre-Colombian groups. The author's novel readings of female genitalia, the placenta, and the umbilical cord with relation to facial features, especially teeth and speech, also resonate with findings from other Amazonian groups, such as the Eastern and Western Tukanoan, the Panoan, and Arawakan, amongst whom female reproductive organs are similarly associated with blood-feeding and poisonous beings. Karadimas's work therefore helps us draw a cross-cultural picture of the female body as the site of multiple agents linked to parasitism and predation. It also prepares the ground for future comparative studies of Amazonian and Andean iconography articulated around the relationships between reproduction, war, and bleeding using current ethnography to illuminate archaeology.

The reader looking for a more phenomenological or experiential approach may be slightly discouraged at first by the fairly abstract examination and renditions of myths. Although one wishes one could get to meet more subjectively embodied Miraña men and women in the text, the extraordinary wealth of analysis surely compensates for this apparent lack of material. Various theoretical questions remain unanswered, nevertheless, with regard, for instance, to how Miraña's understandings of blood and the body translate into gender relations in daily life in the current context of guerrilla and drug-related political turmoil and economic change in Colombia. One also wonders whether Miraña ethnography could help us to address the theoretical gap that exists between the perspectivist approach, pioneered by Viveiros de Castro, whose views stand against an analysis in terms of bodily substances, and the French structuralist approach, which, after Françoise Héritier, grants primary importance to the symbolism of blood and other fluids. Since the Miraña attach humanity to an internal anatomic structure enabling blood flow, they appear to fall into Héritier's camp. Yet, like most other Amazonian peoples, they also conceive of the skin as removable clothing, thus fitting

Viveiros de Castro's framing of perspectivism. There is, therefore, a need to articulate Miraña and other Amazonian people's notions of blood and gender with perspectivism to gain a wider and deeper comprehension of the Amazonian body.

LUISA ELVIRA BELAUNDE *University of St Andrews*

STEFFEN, VIBEKE, RICHARD JENKINS & HANNE JESSEN (eds). *Managing uncertainty: ethnographic studies of illness, risk and the struggle for control*. 283 pp., bibliogr. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2005. £30.00 (paper)

Managing uncertainty is an immensely readable book and yet extremely rich in theory. Rarely does a single book manage to achieve this feat. Theory has its presence not just in the introductory chapter but in all the eleven chapters of this book. Ethnography bridges the otherwise huge ontological and epistemological gap between the Scandinavian and African countries on which this book is based. A delay of five years in its final publication is easily excused when one sees the meticulous editing that has gone into the book. Except for one or two typographical errors the book is absolutely flawless.

In the chapter titled 'Matters of life and death' the editors deal extensively with both classical and recent theoretical literature relating to uncertainties of life. They also review important anthropological and sociological literature on health, illness, and politics of medicine. All this has a purpose – to challenge the concepts of control and uncertainty with the help of ethnographic data and by opening up new frontiers for theorizing on uncertainty. The editors argue that 'our attempts to control the conditions of our lives actually generate further uncertainty' (p. 28).

Jonina Einarsdottir's chapter is on how the matrilineal Papel in Guinea-Bissau deal with 'non-human' children. Through the 'case-stories' of Clara, Carlos, Marcelino and Celeste, the author shows how the mothers try to delay the inevitable – being diagnosed of possessing *iran* or spirit. Once so identified it is the responsibility of elderly maternal kins to 'erase' such children to avoid further misfortune to their lineage members.

Anne Line Dalsgaard deals in the next chapter with female sterilization in Northeast Brazil. She conducted her fieldwork in a low-income neighbourhood where almost every

man grew up either as a drug addict or peddler inflicting terrible violence on women and encircling them with a deep sense of fear and insecurity, which, she argues, motivates them to sterilize themselves as a means of security and control. The following chapter, by Tine Tjørnhøj-Thomsen, deals with the related subject of procreative technology, but the analysis is based on data collected from Denmark. She deals with the uncertainty of women suffering from infertility in their everyday encounter with the biomedical world and the clinical setting. She focuses on the permanent emotional and psychological trauma associated with infertility and childlessness, and its consequences for these women's identity problems, rather than on the potentialities of a technological intervention.

In chapter 5, Mette Nordahl Svendsen deals with existential and moral aspects of cancer genetic counselling in Denmark. She shows how, for the healthy relatives of cancer patients, the resistance towards taking a genetic test or undergoing counselling in order to eliminate the possibility of being genetically at risk may well arise from the fear of potentially damaging otherwise good family relationships. In chapter 6 Paul Wenzel Geissler narrates his research biography based on a number of years' experience on child health among the Luos in western Kenya, East Africa. He deals in particular with their social context in order to understand why he and his research colleagues were branded by the local people as blood-stealing killers, locally known as *kachinja*. He also shows how the Luos used the idiom of *kachinja* as a symbol to protest against, or reject, research practices that do not try to understand in full the historical relationship between the researcher and the researched.

Chapter 7 by Marita Eastmond deals with Bosnian Muslim refugees in Sweden. She shows how the bureaucratic system represents the traumatized refugees 'as lacking something, incomplete persons with diminished agency' (p. 155). On the other hand, the refugees are found to resist state medicalization in order to ascertain normality. The next chapter, by Vibeke Steffen, is also on resistance to medicalization, in this case to Antabuse medication for controlling alcoholism. Steffen shows how the users soon begin to cheat on use of the drug and claim, thereby, to have gained control over the drug itself.

Chapter 9 deals with the complex relationship between becoming mentally ill and acquiring the identity of a mentally ill person. John Aggergaard Larsen, the author of this

chapter, uses the biographies of Per and Eva – two young and first-time mental health patients in Copenhagen, Denmark – to show how diagnosis and psychiatric explanations help such persons to be more certain about themselves by facilitating comprehension of their behaviour. Chapter 10, by Hanne O. Mogensen, deals with biomedical healthcare in eastern Uganda and what people do to gain access to such care. More particularly the author argues that decisions to take a particular biomedicine are socially negotiated.

The last chapter deals with healthcare practices in Bunyole in Eastern Uganda. In this chapter, Susan Reynolds Whyte deals with the central theme of misery and the ways in which people try to overcome it.

The most important contribution of this book is its exposition of social agency. The only weakness that I can see in this volume is that it overplays the concept of uncertainty. Matters of life and death are not always as uncertain as the volume would like us to believe: there are matters that are completely certain, others are more certain than not, and some are of course absolutely uncertain. Life or death under total uncertainty would be unmanageable.

T.B. SUBBA *North-Eastern Hill University*

Migration and community

CREED, GERALD W. (ed.). *The seductions of community: emancipations, oppressions, quandaries*. xii, 320 pp., maps, figs, illus., bibliogr. Oxford: James Currey Publishers, 2006. £17.95 (paper)

At least twice every decade, social anthropologists and sociologists address 'the problem' of community. The problem lies in the word's lack of precision or specificity, and in the values which it is used to imply. Over more than fifty years, the scholarly literature has grown obese with attempts to define, theorize, criticize, abolish, re-create, and exemplify 'community', as a scientifically useful or usable term. It is, by turns, ideological, sterile, too restrictive, too vague. It is at odds with its colloquial use, or merely replicates it – thus doing little or nothing to establish its analytical or descriptive integrity. This writer has engaged reluctantly and periodically with the issue for forty years, on each occasion declaring publicly and grumpily that there is nothing more to be said about it.

But, of course, there is – witness this volume under review. Its basic propositions are sound: 'community' is a word in common use to express and (usually) to valorize a notion for which we do not appear to have any other wholly satisfactory alternative. Therefore, however variously, vaguely, deliberately, or lazily it is used, we are bound to pay attention to it. Secondly, we can expect, and should accept, that its use will vary according to social, cultural, geographical, and historical circumstances. Underlying the studies that constitute the book is their authors' irritation with what Raymond Williams described as the 'warmly persuasive' character of community – in short, that it is a 'hurrah' word.

In exploring the values that have been associated with it, and the political uses to which it has been put, Creed reviews the historical literature authoritatively, ranging widely across anthropology, sociology, and social history. He concludes that it is impossible to divest 'community' of its normative connotations, and that therefore social scientists should continue to worry about it. Worry? Anxiety about the mis/ab/use of the English language is a condition of life, even for those of us reared on Wittgenstein's injunction to look for 'use' rather than 'meaning'. That, really, is what the authors of the various cases in the book attempt, with varying degrees of effectiveness, and, regrettably, with the disregard now fashionable in anthropology for the intelligible use of English.

Kate Crehan examines the rhetoric of community in a regeneration project in 1980s inner London and poses the important question of whether this rhetoric empowers individuals or subordinates and coerces them. She concludes that the proposition of 'community' enabled collective action at the time, but that its efficacy was only momentary. In due course, it became a memento of a bygone era.

Mary Weismantel writes about *ayllu*, a Quechua term widely found among Andean cultures to connote a fundamental or foundational sociality, which Andean anthropologists have found to be as fraught with difficulty as 'community' but to which is attributed similar persuasive power.

Michael Watts's essay on Nigerian 'petro-capitalism' examines the tensions both within and among communities – which for him are means of real or rhetorical association or identification which we know by other terms: chieftainship, ethnicity, and the nation. It is unclear to me that anything is being argued

here beyond the incontestable proposition that Nigeria is a complex society.

There is a chapter by Aisha Khan on the applicability of 'community' to the Caribbean, providing the occasion for a critical rehearsal of the ethnocentric and ahistoric character of earlier analyses of the region. Susan Lees demonstrates the contestability and multivalency of 'community' through a study of the legal and political dispute that attended the attempt by a group of orthodox Jewish families to demarcate an *eruv* within their New Jersey town. Essays by Miranda Joseph and Peter Brosius on, respectively, debt and restorative justice and environmental conservation are both very scholarly but seem to be only tenuously related to the discourse of this book.

The best and most elegant chapter is contributed by the historian Gyanendra Pandey, in which, illustrating the changing uses of 'community' in post-colonial South Asia, he shows how it has been used to reconcile the apparently discrepant notions of primordial belonging and structure with those of the contemporary nation. He concludes that words with evaluative content are, by their very nature, susceptible to contradictory use and evaluation.

That seems to me a fitting conclusion to this book, and puts the problem of 'community' into appropriate perspective. The conceptual agonizing, the ponderous scholarship, do not resolve the problem, which, no doubt, will resurface again before long. It is a very small pinhead on which to accommodate so many dancing angels.

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University of Edinburgh*

KOVIC, CHRISTINE. *Mayan voices for human rights: displaced Catholics in Highland Chiapas*. viii, 238 pp., maps, figs, illus., bibliogr. Austin: Univ. Texas Press, 2005. £12.95 (paper)

This study is one of the first to address Highland Indians in the urban periphery. It presents a rich and compassionate account of Tzotzil Maya families who have been expelled from their community of origin on the basis of religious conversion and have settled at the fringes of the fast-growing San Cristóbal de las Casas. The book presents indigenous narratives of conversion, suffering, and 'the struggle for a dignified life' and places these in broader social and political developments in Chiapas.

The central objective of the book is to unravel the ways in which 'human rights' are appropriated by indigenous actors and are given meaning in their specific cultural and historical contexts of displacement and marginality. The author argues for an anthropology of human rights that contextualizes human rights claims socially and politically. Maintaining a 'distance' from cultural relativist critiques of human rights, she shows how the displaced Catholics have taken up and re-signified the human rights discourse and have found in it a way to frame their demands for human dignity. The analysis shows how local meanings of human rights are closely intertwined with understandings of faith and Catholicism, reflecting the 'option for the poor' of the San Cristóbal diocese (e.g. in the notion that 'rights are given by God', p. 109). A major contribution of the book is to connect the construction of *meaning* with the *practices* of human rights organizing, addressing forms of mobilization and the defence of rights. It places the Tzotzil Catholics in a broader and transnational human rights community that, through a network of local human rights promoters, reaches down to the community level. Thus, the study opens a window to further questions, concerning the way indigenous human rights promoters operate at the level of their communities, how their work resonates, and how notions of human rights enter practices of regulation and conflict resolution at the local level. Crucial issues in this regard are the rights of women or the enforcement of community rulings and responsibilities on individuals, which have become the subject of debate in many indigenous communities.

A further objective of the book is to explore the agency of the displaced Tzotziles as co-participants in the construction of the Catholic project in Chiapas. It presents a rich analysis of the encounter between the diocese and indigenous communities over the past four decades which invites further inquiry into the intimate ways in which the diocese shaped indigenous subjectivity. A definite merit of the book is that it takes the displaced Tzotziles seriously as believers. When discussing conversion, an interesting point raised is the fact that women were often the ones to take the initiative, finding in 'the Word of God' a space from which to challenge practices of alcohol abuse and domestic violence and 'construct new gender roles' (p. 25).

Finally, the book provides a critique of representations of the expulsions from indigenous communities in terms of religious

conflict exclusively. It is argued that the expulsions should also be understood as a reaction to political dissidents posing a threat to the traditional community leaders (*caciques*) and correctly highlights the complicity of the state government. The political subscript of conversion and expulsion is indeed crucial to the understanding of the dynamics of Highland communities. However, further layers should be added to the analysis of the micro-politics of expulsion, considering the role of kinship and inequalities in resources and wealth in producing intra-communal fault-lines (the main informants quoted on conversion are said to have been a relatively land-rich couple, but this is not elaborated upon). The book adds to the debate on the indigenous community in modern times. It highlights the strong commitment to community amongst the displaced Catholics, as a value and as an organizing principle, while also pointing to divisions, leadership crises, and community fragmentation. Whether these dynamics, found also in other parts of Chiapas, point to a crisis or a re-invention of community is up for debate.

This study with its focus on other important actors and discourses is a welcome addition to the scholarship on contemporary Chiapas, which has privileged Zapatismo. However, given that the displaced Catholics are bearers of a very similar agenda to that of the Zapatistas, the book would have benefited from a more explicit treatment of their place in the political landscape since 1994 and the way they relate to the EZLN.

GEMMA VAN DER HAAR *Wageningen University*

NOLIN, CATHERINE. *Transnational ruptures: gender and forced migration*. xviii, 246 pp., tables, bibliogr. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006. £50.00 (cloth)

Since Glick Schiller *et al.* reframed migration studies through the lens of transnationalism (*Towards a transnational perspective on migration*, 1992), we have had a surfeit of studies seeking to uncover the social connections that migrants maintain or develop across native, transit, and host countries that force us to re-think identity and belonging. Nolin, a social geographer who borrows heavily from anthropology, argues that in this body of literature insufficient attention has been paid to the ruptures, denials, and consequent sutures that characterize the traumatic experiences faced by refugees. To do this, Nolin draws on her multi-sited fieldwork

experience in Guatemala and Canada with Guatemalan refugees who have fled the political violence in that country since the 1970s, and also on the gendered features of these narratives. Her analysis is based on extensive interviews with Guatemalans in southwestern Ontario, Canada, and in Guatemala itself. Nolin also analyses Canadian immigration policy and testimonies from a UN-sponsored Commission for Historical Clarification, a kind of Truth Commission intended to heal the country, formed after peace accords between the government and guerrilla forces in the 1990s. As Nolin notes, the political violence that forced this migration and has had a subsequent impact on self-narratives and subjectivities of those whom she interviewed is connected to modern forms of nation-building and its racist and racist legacy of the colonial period that has been devastating for the indigenous Mayan population. A putative European-heritage Latino population has systematically and often perpetrated violence on Mayan communities throughout the country. The combination of the persecution of an urban professional middle class of union leaders, academics, and so on, and leftist-inspired guerrilla war has resulted in a steady flow of people making their way north, fleeing the violence. This tragic history has compelled over one million Guatemalans to flee north to Mexico, the United States, and Canada in the last thirty years, and the influx of asylum-seekers and the policies that constrain them are closely connected to the anti-leftist geo-politics of US foreign policy. Many of the 14,000 or so Guatemalans in Canada entered with the help of the American religious sanctuary movement and their Canadian partners, while a lenient, at least up until 1987, Canadian government policy towards asylum-seekers offered an outlet for desperate migrants that contrasted with US government efforts to deny asylum and deport Guatemalans.

The book is organized into three sections. The first section comprises extensive discussions of the field of transnational migration studies, how an analysis of gender is essential in studies of the migration experience, and the importance of reflexivity and activist scholarship especially when dealing with vulnerable communities. This is done through the lens of social geography with ample citations of key anthropologists who have worked on the conceptual terrain of transnationalism and those who have contributed to studies in Guatemala. For this reader much of this literature review read like a dissertation and, thus, could have been edited

down substantially. Section two presents in two chapters the historical context of violence in Guatemala and the subsequent implications of changing Canadian immigration policies for the opportunities available for migration and a discussion of the spatial distribution of Guatemalans in Canada. Regrettably, little discussion of irregular migration is offered here. Section three offers the richest material with in-depth narratives of several Guatemalans, exploring how migration is forced by political violence, and how its continuing threat and legacy found in the political schisms within the different Guatemalan communities present in Canada has led to the rupture of identities and communal life for the Guatemalans interviewed. For Nolin, refugee transnationalism offers a more subtle account of the challenges in identity formation, with feelings of belonging and possibilities for community connections often emphasized in the transnationalism literature.

Nolin's narratives certainly offer powerful testimonies of the difficulties her informants had with establishing a sense of community, and the persistent consciousness of the absence of Guatemala in their constitution of selves. Here, though, I think, we come up against inter-disciplinary limits and different expectations. In relating the 'living geographies' of Guatemalans, and the ruptures found therein, Nolin argues that face-to-face communities have yet to develop, and that weak ties are the more common form of sociality for Guatemalans in Canada; but within her own text she mentions areas I wish she had explored more thoroughly, and ethnographically. Nolin's own serious engagement with activism and its configuring effects on narratives for refugees, work in reception centres on behalf of asylum-seekers, and mention of Guatemalan folkloric groups offer numerous sites for further elaborations about new forms of identity, belonging, and constitutions of differing (ruptured) communities.

NICHOLAS DEMARIA HARNEY *University of Western Australia*

PORTES, ALEJANDRO & JOSH DEWIND (eds). *Rethinking migration: new theoretical and empirical perspectives*. vi, 453 pp., figs, tables, bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2007. £50.00 (cloth)

Rethinking migration contains papers presented at a conference at Princeton University. It is intended to be a companion volume to *The*

handbook of international migration: the American experience but with articles also focusing on or including the European experience. The volume's contributors address: state policy towards immigrants and their incorporation in Europe and the United States; an update on the phenomenon of transnationalism; the role of religion in migrants' adaptation; the varieties of immigrant entrepreneurship; and an analysis of methodological problems in the study of the undocumented and of the second generation.

Stephen Casteles argues that the contradictory and compromising nature of immigration policies in both Europe and the US is due to 'the contradiction between the national logic of immigration control and the transnational logic of international migration in an epoch of globalization' (p. 31). Migration policies reflect both the employer (pro-immigrant) and local worker (often anti-immigrant) stances as well as ongoing North (receiving countries)-South (sending countries) relations. James Hollifield shows how guest workers in Europe and temporary Mexican labourers in the United States became permanent settlers and thereby affected state immigration policies. He calls for states' recognition of the rights of immigrants.

In an article considering the implications of legalizing dual citizenship, Thomas Faist, Jürgen Gerdes, and Beate Ripple argue that permitting immigrants to naturalize without losing their original citizenship status helps to integrate them into the receiving country. They compare citizenship policies in Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Gary Freeman looks at 'incorporation regimes', distinguishing between traditional countries of immigration, guest worker countries, and countries affected by immigration from previous colonies. Modes of incorporation are held to differ by state, market policies (i.e. labour utilization factors), welfare programmes, and acceptance of cultural differences.

Three articles concerning transnationalism follow. Steven Vertovec focuses on socio-cultural transformation of identity over immigrant generations. He argues that parents' 'bifocality' and practices such as the sending of remittances will affect children's socio-cultural activities, interests, and identities. Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller deepen understanding of the dynamics of transnational social fields and point out that transnationalism brings with it a change in the functions of the state. Min Zhou provides an elegant typology of ethnic entrepreneurship, distinguishing between middleman minorities

and enclave entrepreneurs, and the ethnic economy and the enclave economy, but also examining the relatively new phenomenon of transnational entrepreneurship.

The next two articles focus on undocumented immigration. Douglas Massey and Chiara Capoferro examine the weaknesses in traditional census-taking in terms of tabulating numbers of the undocumented. They provide a number of arguments for the use of the ethnosurvey to measure the number and characteristics of the undocumented, as well as longitudinal changes in these characteristics. Friedrich Heckmann looks at smuggler networks of immigrants into Germany. He describes the reasons for their rise and persistence and their adaptation to state efforts to stop illegal immigration.

The following two articles are concerned with the adaptation of the second generation. Hartmut Esser distinguishes between individual and social structural assimilation or integration of this generation. He offers a sophisticated mathematical model to map the conditions under which second-generation assimilation will take place. Rubén G. Rumbaut argues that differences in the age of migration can be found in the adaptation process. He distinguishes between the 1.75 generation (migrated at ages 0-5), the 1.5 generation (migrated at ages 6-12), and the 1.25 generation (migrated at ages 13-17). He shows how these differences in age at migration to the United States affect immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Middle East, and Europe and Canada.

The final two chapters look at the role of religion in migrant incorporation. Charles Hirschman shows how both historically and contemporaneously migrants have used religion to bolster their identity and show their commitment to community-building in the United States. Riva Kastoryano examines the Islamic religion as 'an emergent type of corporate ethnicity in France and Germany' (p. 421), arguing that adherence to Islam is superseding identity according to national origin, despite the diversity of sects and ethno-cultural groups.

Rethinking migration has a number of innovative insights. The editors' purpose – to provide a companion piece to *The handbook* – has been at least partially met, though other companion volumes could be imagined. The book should be read by scholars of immigration to Europe and the United States and by those seeking theoretical insights into the

phenomena surrounding immigration in general.

TAMAR DIANA WILSON *University of Missouri, St Louis*

Social anthropology

CONKLIN, BETH A. *Consuming grief: compassionate cannibalism in an Amazonian society*. xxxi, 285 pp., map, illus., bibliogr. Austin: Univ. Texas Press, 2001. \$50.00 (cloth), \$22.95 (paper)

Beth Conklin's investigation of mortuary cannibalism amongst the Wari, a hunter-horticulturalist people of the Madeira-Marmore region of Brazil, provides a finely tuned insight into the emotional strength invested in food and how it permeates daily existence and worlds of the after-life. Food is the stuff of love both in this life and in the after-life. It is the means by which bodies are made to grow robust, enabling them to work and produce more food to feed self and kin. To the Wari, it is quite simply impossible to be healthy and yet sad or lazy. Health is willingness to produce and rejoice, surrounded by kin, showing good appetite and fluid blood circulation, conditions which are associated to deep breathing and an expanded heart. When one works in the gardens, forest, and rivers, one's breathing is deeper and heart-beat faster, with better blood flow. This causes the accumulation of fat. That is why hard-working men and women are robust. Illness, by contrast, is idleness and longing, two states which are perceived to induce isolation, weight loss, poor breathing, bad blood flow, and a contracted heart.

The body is thus the result of the love received and given, and it is always in the process of being made by others and making other people's bodies through acts of feeding. Memory is also grounded in food. When people are alive, they show how much they think about their loved ones by bringing them food. When they die, they are remembered by how much food they produced, ate, and fed to others, and their corpses become food to the living. Before definitive contact with Brazilian society, in the 1960s, corpses were effectively consumed during big mortuary banquets to which members of all surrounding Wari settlements were invited. Endo-cannibalism, that is, eating the body of

one's dead, was conceived as the only compassionate burial, necessary to enable both the departure of the diseased person's spirit to the land of the dead and the consolation of those left behind on this earth.

Several years after contact and the consequent prohibition by missionaries of performances of endo-cannibalistic burials, Wari men and women still attempted to perpetuate their rituals, explaining that the thought of their kin buried was too painful to bear and the feeling of their loss remained unappeased. During the mortuary banquets of the past, eating the cooked corpse was a service provided by the dead person's affines to his or her kin in acknowledgement of the embodied ties of love existing between those who shared food throughout their existence. Because several days might pass before all the guests arrived and lengthy speeches were made in the memory of the deceased, the corpse was often decomposed, and older people recall that the taste could be revolting. Eating followed a slow pace, with small bits of flesh being delicately eaten using wooden sticks.

But the Wari considered that the corpses of their loved ones also became good food to their own kin since, in their understanding, an aspect of the corpse transformed into the body of a peccary, an Amazonian boar with highly prized flesh. Peccaries were therefore human and during the hunt they offered themselves to their kin to be eaten by them, thereby fattening their bodies. Hence, the bonds of love created through the sharing of meals between kin were made possible by transformations into prey after death. Eating animal flesh, however, was not regarded as the most important means of accumulating body fat. Corn, especially corn beer prepared by women, was seen as the most nutritious food providing 'fat of our hearts'. It was also the safest food, since it did not imply contact with the blood of prey. Indeed, many illnesses were attached to contamination with the blood. To avoid this, people used to wash away all traces of blood, thoroughly cook meat, and use various plants as protection, especially vegetable perfumes and red body paint. Shamanism was also largely focused upon preventing and healing people after the revenge of animals brought about by blood contamination.

One of the various merits of Conklin's work is that it manages to dismantle the wall of exoticism surrounding endo-cannibalism by showing, through a study of Wari narratives, its day-to-day emotional base. Hence,

endo-cannibalism regains a human face and the encompassing logic of loving through food is made evident. Conklin's book does not engage with current anthropological debates at great length, but her findings bear important implications, especially with relation to the meaning of predation and emotions. As for her approach to the place of love, feeding, and memory in daily life, it is clear that Conklin owes much to the studies of what has been called the British school of love in Amazonia, headed by Overing, Gow, Santos Granero, and McCallum, amongst others, although she does not claim any affiliation. Classically, compassionate endo-cannibalism was analysed by Clastres and Carneiro da Cunha, but in these authors' views, the corpse was transformed into an other, an enemy, and therefore endo-cannibalism did not differ much from exo-cannibalism, that is, the eating of the bodies of enemies. The Wari used to practise both types of cannibalism, but as Conklin, and also Vilaça show, they differ radically in their emotional texture. The bodies of enemies were eaten without delay or speeches, the flesh swallowed with great voracity and anger.

What remains to be explored is the significance of emotions for Amazonian perspectivism, as framed by Viveiros de Castro and other authors. If, according to Conklin's study, the peccary hunt should be understood as an expression of love linking the realm of the dead and the living, it appears that the shared humanity attributed to prey in Amazonian shamanistic cosmologies may rest upon their emotional capabilities, as well as on their being able to take a subjective position. Emotions, and especially love and anger as two key forms of affect relating to food, body, and memory, would therefore have major cosmological implications.

LUISA ELVIRA BELAUNDE *University of St Andrews*

GYATSO, JANET & HANNA HAVNEVIK (eds).
Women in Tibet. xii, 436 pp., tables, illus.,
bibliogr. London: C Hurst & Co., 2005.
£45.00 (cloth), £20.00 (paper)

Tibetan studies has been a major growth area in recent years, but the focus has remained primarily on the familiar domain of Tibetan religion and on the rapidly growing sub-field of Tibetan medicine. One could not say that gender issues have been entirely neglected, but in comparison with other major Asian cultures the literature in this area is not well developed

and we are still some way from an adequate anthropology or history of women in Tibetan societies. The present volume, a well-produced collection of eight excellent studies (three by anthropologists, including Henrion-Dourcy's ethnomusicological study) which have little more in common than that they are all in some sense about 'Women in Tibet', illustrates the problem. Why, by 2005, do we not have thematically coherent volumes dealing with more specific topics – the culture of gender in contemporary Tibetan societies, for example, or the role of women in specific periods of the history of Tibetan Buddhism?

To their credit, the editors do not conceal the problem, noting that at this stage we hardly even know 'what it is that we don't know' and presenting the book as 'not much more than a preliminary step' in the growth of our knowledge (p. 1). Certainly there is little sense of a unified agenda about this collection. Whether by choice or necessity, we have here eight studies of largely distinct topics with little thematic overlap, though a few individual Tibetan women are mentioned in more than one of the chapters on contemporary Tibet (the Gesar bard Yumen or Yumi, first mentioned by Diemberger as a kind of female oracle, turns up again in Henrion-Dourcy's chapter as a singer, and finally in Barnett's as a political figure).

Having said this, we should be grateful for what we have here. The first three papers, all substantial and original, are historical: Helga Uebach on court ladies during the early Tibetan empire (seventh to ninth centuries CE), Dan Martin on women spiritual teachers in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and Kurtis Schaeffer on the autobiography of an eighteenth-century female hermit. Martin's has, perhaps, the widest implications, noting the tendency for women to disappear from Tibetan religious literature, and the importance of using sources as close as possible to the times in which they lived.

Of the five papers on the modern period, Tashi Tsering presents a useful if essentially descriptive survey of women in Tibetan medicine, focusing on three women doctors in late twentieth-century Tibet and India. The difficult relations between the refugee doctor Lobsang Dolma Khangkar, perhaps the best known of the three in the West, and the Dharamsala medical authorities, are instructive. The ethnomusicologist Isabelle Henrion-Dourcy studies six women singers from the Tibet Autonomous Region, two of them now living in the West. Her case studies are detailed and

insightful, but so varied as to allow for few generalizations. Robert Barnett's substantial (eighty-one pages) essay on women and politics in contemporary Tibet should attract considerable interest. Barnett deals with women's roles both in formal state politics and in the underground resistance, mainly in Lhasa and the Tibet Autonomous Region, suggesting that both groups of women can be seen as 'involved in the same project: contributing to or creating narratives or rituals ... which, by means of a "politics of difference", sustain or promote certain notions of the nation and of nationality' (p. 291).

The two most specifically anthropological chapters are by Hildegard Diemberger and Charlene Makley. Diemberger discusses female oracles or spirit-mediums, using material from Lato in southwestern Tibet. She gives a detailed background to this largely female role, an assessment of how it has been transformed through recent history, and a persuasive case for a specifically feminine source of ritual power within Tibetan society, grounded in the Tibetan ecology, and existing largely in the interstitial spaces left by the male-dominated structures of secular and monastic power. This chapter is a very significant advance in our understanding of Tibetan spirit-mediumship, Tibetan popular religion, and women's roles in Tibetan village society, and will be required reading for future scholars on these topics. It also has important comparative dimensions, as with Diemberger's nuanced critique of Ioan Lewis's peripheral-central distinction.

Makley's chapter is another important and original contribution, complementing and extending her work elsewhere (e.g. her significant article in T. Huber (ed.) *Amdo Tibetans in Transition*, 2002). Using an analytic frame influenced by Judith Butler and the 'performance of gender' school, Makley examines nunhood and gender at the former monastic settlement and frontier trade-town of Labrang in contemporary Amdo (Northeast Tibet). She provides the clearest account yet of the logic of Tibetan monastic celibacy, but what remains with the reader is the harsh reality of the lives of the Labrang nuns today, the object of constant derogatory gossip from both men and women about their imagined sexual transgressions, but in reality forced to starve themselves through constant fasting rituals in order to earn a bare subsistence. Makley convincingly describes how the verbal attacks on the nuns mirror local lay Tibetans' anxieties regarding the multiple threats posed by social change and Chinese modernity

to the monastery-household nexus, 'the very core of Tibetan social worlds' (p. 284).

Overall, this is an important collection of papers for Tibetanists, with several contributions of wider interest. There is certainly enough to justify the book's purchase for most major academic libraries. It is to be hoped, though, that this 'preliminary step' will stimulate others to take up the various projects relating to gender in Tibetan societies to which it contributes, and that future collections will be able to adopt more coherent and unified approaches to more clearly defined sets of questions. If there is one thing that this book succeeds in demonstrating, it is the critical importance of gender issues for understanding many aspects of Tibetan society, including Tibetan religious life.

GEOFFREY SAMUEL *Cardiff University*

JACKSON, JASON BAIRD. *Yuchi ceremonial life: performance, meaning, and tradition in a contemporary American Indian community*. xviii, 345 pp., maps, tables, illus., bibliogr. London, Lincoln: Univ. Nebraska Press, 2003. £60.00 (cloth)

Books like *Yuchi ceremonial life* drew me to study anthropology from the start. Based on years of participant observation and in-depth interviews with Yuchi ceremonial leaders, Jason Baird Jackson gives us an absorbing, detailed ethnographic account of Yuchi ceremonial life. Although firmly supported by the ideas and methodology of cultural and linguistic theory, this is foremost a book for and about Yuchi people. It is for the Yuchis as Yuchi leaders enlisted Jackson as their ethnographer to record, videotape, and otherwise document Yuchi ceremonies, stories, and dances. It is also a book about the Yuchis in that Jackson, in good anthropological style, transports the reader to the stomp grounds of Oklahoma and serves as our reliable and knowledgeable guide to, and translator of, Yuchi ceremony and ritual.

After introducing us to the Yuchis and the small sub-set of Yuchi people who participate in the stomp-ground ceremonies, Jackson then takes us into the stomp grounds with histories and detailed descriptions of the three ceremonial grounds currently in use by Yuchi participants – the Polecat grounds, the Duck Creek grounds, and the Sand Creek grounds. Next, Jackson details the structure of Yuchi ceremonial leadership, the etiquette of ceremonial oratory, and generally how to behave while at the stomp grounds. The second half of the book is devoted

to the Yuchi ceremonial cycle, beginning with a chapter on the football game that signals to the Creator that the ritual cycle is about to begin.

Next are the stomp dances. In this chapter Jackson emphasizes the intra-Yuchi and inter-Indian social interactions within which the ceremonies and dances are embedded. In the chapter on the Arbor Dance, Jackson highlights the importance of purity and renewal in Yuchi ceremonial life as well as the function of ritual that holds the Yuchi community together by enunciating in ritual acts and oratory Yuchi shared cultural norms and values. In the chapter on the Green Corn Ceremony, the climax of the Yuchi ceremonial cycle, Jackson focuses on story-telling and oratory as living traditions. Finally, the Yuchi ceremonial cycle ends with the Soup Dance, a ritual dance devoted to thanking the ancestors and to inviting them to participate in the ceremonies.

Yuchi ceremonial life is multi-faceted and polysemic, but primarily today it is about being Yuchi. As his Yuchi collaborators told Jackson, being Yuchi is not about blood, it is about participation. By participating in the rituals, Yuchis become Yuchi. Yuchi ceremony, then, serves to reinforce Yuchi identity and separateness, something that they have been doing for at least two hundred years. Sometime in the eighteenth century, the Yuchis attached themselves to the Creek Confederacy, but they have since held to their separate identity. Today, they are not a federally recognized group, and are considered and governmentally administrated as a sub-set of the Muskogee (Creek) Nation in present-day Oklahoma. As Jackson shows, Yuchis share much about contemporary ritual life with the Creeks and other Woodland Indian people such as the Shawnees and Iroquois. And at almost every phase of the ritual cycle, both Yuchis and non-Yuchis are invited to and expected to participate in the ceremonies. In turn, Yuchis are expected to and do participate in non-Yuchi ritual events. However, instead of resulting in pan-Indian ritualism and an overall melding of separate Indian identities, Yuchi and non-Yuchi participants use their co-operation to maintain simultaneously both their separateness and similarities. Through intimate participation in both Yuchi and non-Yuchi ritual events, Yuchi people maintain distinct Yuchi ceremonial ways through their own intra-Indian comparisons of ritual events while also reinforcing their social ties and cultural similarities with non-Yuchis. Jackson underscores the fact that in cultural reproduction and change there are complex

interplays by which cultural borrowing and sharing simultaneously blur and reinforce social boundaries and identities.

Mostly, though, Yuchi identity and separateness are also reproduced and maintained in Yuchi oratory, and Yuchi oratory permeates *Yuchi ceremonial life*. In his analysis of speech acts, Jackson borrows from anthropological theory on discourse-centred interpretations of ritual in order to track the process of 'traditionalization', whereby Yuchi leaders, by reflecting on and connecting contemporary ritual life with a meaningful past, convert cultural forms into tradition. In a complex turn, tradition is then used to authenticate ritual as being specifically Yuchi. Through the telling and re-telling of stories by modern Yuchi leaders, narratives take on their own natural history and encode changing cultural practices that are used to make and re-make tradition. Seen in this way, Yuchi ceremonies and stories are not static, age-old practices, but rather practices that are dynamic, changing, malleable, and configured for living in the modern world. In Jackson's hands, then, *Yuchi ceremonial life* is not an anthropological story about cultural continuity; it is not a salvage ethnography documenting quickly eroding sacred practices; rather, it is a Yuchi story about the historical process of negotiating and reproducing Yuchi identity, culture, and tradition in the modern world.

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NORDSTROM, CAROLYN. *Global outlaws: crime, money, and power in the contemporary world*. xxi, 234 pp., illus., bibliogr. London, Berkeley: Univ. California Press, 2007. £13.95 (paper)

This is a peculiar book, in part because it is about a topic anthropologists rarely study, networks of crime. The crime at issue ranges from street children who sell smuggled cigarettes in a war zone to money laundering and trade in unlicensed goods such as CDs and branded clothing. It is also peculiar because Carolyn Nordstrom reports, and appears to take, a number of different stances towards those networks in what may be more a work of public affairs than one of description and analysis. While the topic is networks of crime, the descriptions are of individual places and activities taken to be part of networks, especially international networks. So, Nordstrom devotes a lot of attention to border-crossings and transport, particularly marine transport. And the

situation she describes is one in which, in many ways, borders might as well not exist.

She describes security seals on shipping containers and how easy they are to fake. Similarly, she describes the difficulty, perhaps impossibility, of inspecting shipping containers, and the laxity of security at ports more generally. These are, as she notes, designed to facilitate rapid movement rather than to check it. She describes her voyage on a freighter that visited a number of United States ports and then crossed to Europe. From before she entered the first US port to after she left the European port she was never asked to identify herself. Even when she flew out of that European country no one noticed that there was no record that she had ever entered it.

Tales of shipping containers and her own border-crossing are the most straightforward examples of the book's many instances of illegal trade and the apparent inability or unwillingness of governments to deal with it. These range from wrongly stating the contents of a shipment in order to incur lower customs duties, to transcontinental trade in protected varieties of fish. However, this breadth raises a question about what Nordstrom is trying to do, for she appears to lump together all trade that violates law, and so fails to distinguish the trade in pirated CDs from the trade in people. All of these may violate a statute, but people worry about some much more than they do others, and policing practices reflect this discrimination, as they have done for as long as there have been police.

In a larger sense, the tales of those uninspectable containers may lie at the heart of what some readers, at least, will see in this book: an inversion, and indeed celebration, of one of the most visible public concerns of the present decade, and of many decades before – a concern with categories and boundaries. The neat categories of the illegal (bad, disreputable, illegitimate) and the legal (good, reputable) simplify the world, and people become anxious when these categories are threatened. Nordstrom argues that this distinction is not much use in practice: the bulk of trade that violates law is carried out by large, reputable corporations as part of their normal operations. The same with boundaries. Current concern in many countries indicates that people get anxious when boundaries weaken or dissolve. Nordstrom shows, though, that when it comes to transport, national boundaries generally are weak and often are effectively non-existent. The notion of boundaries, then, is not much help in trying to make sense of how the world works.

It is not very contentious to say that boundaries and categories are less secure than they appear in the daily press and government statements. Nordstrom uses this insecurity to argue for the present failing of the modernist project of nation-states and an orderly, rational world. As she notes, in many ways the workings of the world simply do not conform. Instead, she wants us to look at transnational flows and what she aptly calls 'il/legal' trade, at the border-crossings rather than the borders, at the category violations rather than the categories.

Global outlaws intrigues. The tales that it contains are always interesting and often fascinating. Nordstrom's point about the permeability of borders is compelling. But while it will intrigue, it is not clear that it will satisfy, because it offers too little consideration of how we ought to proceed, either intellectually or politically. This book, then, offers us a number of interesting tales about covert international transport and trade, combined with descriptions of those who are part of it or who seek to stop it. What it needs is an intellectual frame that would turn these tales into a coherent argument.

JAMES G. CARRIER *Indiana and Oxford Brookes Universities*

RIVAL, LAURA M. *Trekking through history: the Huaorani of Amazonian Ecuador*. xx, 246 pp., maps, tables, figs, illus., bibliogr. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2002. £46.00 (cloth), £21.00 (paper)

Ever since Pierre Clastre's study of the Guayaqui of Paraguay, in the 1960s, the debate as to whether the Amazon rainforest was home to groups of people entirely dependent on hunting and foraging, without agriculture, has been divided between those who argued that heavy reliance on foraging resulted from agricultural regression and those who saw foraging as an original cultural feature in its own terms. Laura Rival's study of Huaorani livelihood addresses the issue through an account of the history of a people who made of trekking their dominant way of existence, relying for subsistence on foraging and yet also practising some agriculture.

In 1956, a Huaorani band in the Curaray area was encountered by Evangelical missionaries and two years later various bands were brought to settle around the mission. Other bands have remained in the forest, refusing 'peaceful' contact up to the present. In the last two

decades, they have indisputably become the most famous people of Ecuadorian Amazonia. Trapped in their own forest by encroaching colonists and oil workers, the Huaorani have repeatedly engaged in attacks against oil camps and settlers, stealing their goods and, sometimes, spearing them to the ground in dramatic death. In the local imagination, their iconic savagery reveals their being prototypical *auca*, wild Indians roaming in the forest, as opposed to those living by the main rivers, providing labour and crops to white patrons and traders. Rival's book explores their forest history using both archival materials and the memories of those Huaorani men and women who now speak Spanish, send their children to school, and have great fear of their ancient enemy bands who remain in the forest.

The book provides an insider's view of the Huaorani's daily routines, the ceremonial performances, and the war expeditions of the past and present. The rhythm of their existence was and is still kept by means of trekking, even when living in close contact with other indigenous Amazonians and colonists. They spend most of the day wandering through the forest within a 5 to 20 kilometre radius from the communal house, moving from tree to tree rather than touching the ground, gathering seeds and fruits for food and other uses, such as fishing, and actively managing the environment, transporting wild seeds to hunting tracks and natural clearings, and encouraging their growth to supply their needs. Agriculture as such is devoted almost entirely to manioc (*Manihot esculenta*) and peach palm fruit (*Bactris gasipaes*), and the Huaorani devote only a small portion of their time to these activities for they require considerable physical effort and pain.

The author argues that the Huaorani's simple agriculture is not the result of the loss of techniques and crop species requiring better gardens due to encapsulation by colonists who force them to keep moving in the forest. Rather she suggests that Huaorani agriculture is and has historically been incipient, a feature which she suggests puts them in the same category as hunter-gatherers. Whilst I agree with the idea that agricultural regression might not be an appropriate concept, it seems to me that Rival's rich ethnographic data are not being fully taken into account in considering her own theoretical arguments and, therefore, some threads remain loose. For instance, with regard to peach palm trees, on the one hand, she shows that these trees are territorial markers of personal identity, group memory, and kinship continuity. Peach

palm gardens grow in places where people settled for a while and they keep producing long after those people have moved out to other locations and even die. Whenever ancient peach palm gardens are found, people rejoice, remembering their ancestors and eating the bountiful fruits they left for future generations. The seeds, however, are not planted using a direct technique to introduce them in the ground. Rather, they are left to germinate somewhere close to the hearth after cooking and eating them. This leads the author to conclude that the Huaorani do not deliberately cultivate peach palm trees, but that their culinary activities favour their germination and propagation. I find the idea of non-deliberate cultivation puzzling given her own emphasis on the salient social significance of peach palm trees, and especially of the fact that these are regarded as property transmitted through the generations.

A similar impression is given by Rival's discussion of manioc cultivation. She argues that manioc cultivation is incipient because gardens are small, attended infrequently, and only sweet manioc is produced. Yet she states that Huaorani manioc is known as the sweetest and juiciest manioc of the area, so much so that it is often eaten raw. One cannot help but wonder whether such sweetness could have been the result of agricultural selection, entailing a considerable level of specialization. Generally, though, manioc is consumed on great festive occasions, such as weddings and other gatherings with neighbours and allies. The tubers are boiled and mashed into a paste to make manioc beer, although it is drunk before strong alcoholic fermentation occurs. The author states that the great social significance of manioc is similar to that of peach palm fruits, and that both crops help to limit the fragmentation of Huaorani society into small separated bands. It is therefore clear that Huaorani social existence is heavily dependent on the collective ritual consumption of both crops and that their cultivation, although it may not take a great portion of their time, is crucial to their livelihood.

The author's rich ethnographic analysis and theoretical discussion provide key arguments and materials to re-think further Amazonian people's relationships to the environment, and to break away from pre-determined views about the difference between agriculture and foraging, and even hunting and fishing. As Posey claims for the Kayapó, all these activities feed into one another and entail close interaction between

people, plants, and animals as disseminators and carers as much as foragers and predators in the food chain. This is also the case amongst people who may be known as consecrated agriculturalists, such as the Secoya (Airo-Pai), Huaorani neighbours to the east, amongst whom I carried out fieldwork. They attend their gardens every day and have a large variety of crops, including bitter and sweet manioc, corn and plantain, and yet they conceive of the environment as 'giving', and value highly the abundance of food while investing in peach palm trees very similar notions of personal identity, memory and social continuity as do the Huaorani. Comparison with other groups who spend little time in agriculture, such as the Jodi of Venezuela, studied by Zent, who spend less than 20 per cent of their time engaged in this activity, is also needed to find alternatives to the conceptual binary opposition between foragers and agriculturalists that currently informs our analyses.

LUISA ELVIRA BELAUNDE *University of St Andrews*

SCOTT, MICHAEL W. *The severed snake: matrilineages, making place and a Melanesian Christianity in Southeast Solomon Islands*. xxxiii, 379 pp., maps, illus., figs, bibliogr. Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 2007. \$45.00 (paper)

This book about Arosi on the island of Makira is welcome on several fronts. Of the main Solomon Islands, Makira has been the least researched – this is the first deep ethnography from the island since Charles Fox's *The threshold of the Pacific* (1924). Theoretically, Scott presents engaging arguments about the interplay of Melanesian ontologies, place, and practice, and he also makes a valuable contribution to the burgeoning study of indigenous Christianities.

Within anthropology particular ethnographic topics sometimes become entwined with specific theoretical approaches, and when those approaches become *passé*, the topics themselves, important as they may be, can be relegated to the margins of study. A striking recent example is kinship, which for years virtually disappeared from many departments' curricula. Early on, Melanesianists found that African-derived kinship models did not fit well with what they observed on the ground, even where people said their groups were based on unilineal descent. A quite different approach to understanding Melanesian identities has emerged, inspired most famously by Roy

Wagner and Marilyn Strathern. It conceives of persons not as defined by fixed identities but rather as composites of their multiple and fluid social relationships. Scott does not urge a return to classic kinship theory, and he grants the relational approach's value for understanding aspects of Arosi life. But a central argument of his book is that Melanesianists today give insufficient attention to indigenous models that ground identities in deep ontologies, including but not limited to those based on descent. Broadly following Sahllins, Scott presents Arosi as a case study of what he calls 'onto-praxis', 'the organization of praxis as the situational engagement of social agents with ontological categories' (p. 20). He contends that crucial aspects of Arosi life can only be understood from this perspective.

At first glance Makira appears a hard case for this argument. Early in Scott's research, Arosi life seemed amenable to the relational approach. People portrayed their former matrilineages, or *auhena* – independent in origin and grounded in exclusive ancestral territories – as defunct. Starting in the nineteenth century, Makirans suffered severe depopulation from disease, and beginning in 1918, colonial officers responded by enacting social engineering schemes that displaced people from their ancestral lands into coastal villages. Arosi told Scott, and each other, that their *auhena* anchored in fixed territories had been lost to this history. Their lives were now ordered not by *auhena* identities and ancestral places but by relationships of co-operation, marriage, and exchange between families that shared shallow patrilineal links to matrilineages, and resided on lands of other, now extinct *auhena*. 'We are all people who have come from elsewhere' (p. 64).

But as individuals began taking Scott into private confidence, they revealed that such relationships were, by themselves, inadequate, and shared their concerns with a deeper ontological model. Each confided that their original *auhena* was far from dead, and was in fact the true owner of the coastal land on which they now resided. They buttressed their claims with renditions of lineage narratives and evidence from ancestral sites, objects, and names. These claims to living *auhena* status contradict each other, and must remain covert since their public declaration sparks discord, and because of an ethical catch-22: true *auhena* generously allow others use of their land, and to proclaim *auhena* status insinuates that others reside on the land only at one's pleasure, a

stingy assertion that itself belies the speaker's legitimacy as a true *auhena* member.

Scott explores how social action is generated through the interplay of these discrete models of societal ordering, and competing Arosi interpretations of the landscape and its residents' standings within it. The situation is more complex still because the polygenetic model of separate *auhena* origins and statuses coexists and mingles with Christian models of monogenesis, and the idea that Arosi truly belong to and should behave as 'one lineage united under God and the Church' (p. 35). Scott examines historical strategies of Anglican missionaries who highlighted Arosi myths that implied a single origin and identity, and he analyses diverse and creative 'ethno-theological' readings of Christianity found in Arosi today.

Still another ideological strand here is that of *kastom*, and Scott reconstructs its origins in the Maasina Rule movement of the 1940s. Above all, movement members feared that foreign invaders would take Makiran lands if ownership was ambiguous. Dread of massive land alienation continues to animate Arosi desires to establish true *auhena* ownership. The Arosi ideological skein is far more complex than I can impart here, and Scott does an admirable job of disentangling it. His study will greatly interest anthropologists and historians of Melanesia and beyond.

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TAN, CHEE-BENG (ed.). *Southern Fujian: reproduction of traditions in post-Mao China*. xviii, 190 pp., map, tables, illus., bibliogr. Hong Kong: Chinese Univ. Press, 2006. \$42.00 (cloth)

This publication examines major anthropological developments in the southern Fujian region of mainland China. It is a highly important piece of work for the following two reasons. First, it represents a successful long-term collaborative effort between anthropologists in mainland China (Wang Mingming, Fan Ke, and Ding Yuling) with anthropologists outside of China (Tan Chee-Beng, Siumi Maria Tam, and Kuah-Pearce Khun Eng in Hong Kong and Pan Hongli in Japan). Given China's imperative need for international academic exchange, this serves as a good example for future collaborative efforts. Second, this book marks the maturation of anthropology as an academic discipline in China. Except for the three Hong Kong-based anthropologists (Tan, Tam, and Kuah-Pearce),

the remaining four (Wang, Fan, Pan, and Ding) represent the first crop of post-Mao, foreign-trained anthropologists who will join the backbone of anthropology in contemporary China. With the assistance of their tutelage, anthropology can once again be considered a well-respected academic branch of science, after having been long suppressed during Mao Tse Tung's reign. Their involvement in empirical social research is also needed in order to assess the roles of cultural tradition in China, as the country forges a new path of development.

Since 1979, China's post-Mao reforms, under the policy of 'Reform and Openness', have seen the revival of many traditional local practices in the southern Fujian province of China that were suppressed during the Maoist era, such as Daoist rituals, ancestral worship, lineage organizations, local cults, and so on. The retrenchment of the state's intervening hands in people's daily lives has created a much more tolerant and flexible environment in southern Fujian than in most other places in China. This is because the local government has created policies to encourage overseas Chinese to invest in China's emerging industries. Amid dramatic social changes our anthropologists, based on ethnographic fieldwork data, not only portray the cultural practices that are being revived, but also identify three major issues that enlighten us regarding the complexities involved in life within post-Reform China.

The first issue is whether current state-initiated reforms are truly beneficial to the preservation or revival of the local cultural traditions. Wang, in chapter 1, takes a cynical view and argues that state officials are willing to tolerate 'backward' or 'superstitious' local practices as long as they can lure back overseas Chinese investors and produce tangible economic benefits. However, Wang's utilitarian argument is not shared by two other researchers whose studies are included in this publication. In chapter 4, Tan's study in Yongchun shows that many traditional practices, including ancestral cults, village temple worships, and seasonal festivals, have occurred here recently, even though this region does not have many overseas Chinese, is relatively poor, and lacks policies towards attracting external investments.

Fan, in chapter 2, counter-argues that it is the local community that takes advantage of the state's policies and it uses the policies to re-create its long-lost cultural heritage. In this interesting case study of a southern Fujian Arabic

community (who are no longer Muslims), Fan describes how people with the surname of Ding have reconstructed their Arabic ancestry through genealogy, claimed their minority status through the government's ethnic classification system, and proceeded to 'restore' some of their allegedly lost traditions.

The second controversy that emerges in this volume is: 'Who provides the inspiration or leadership for the revival of local cultures?' Pan in chapter 3 suggests that it is elderly men, through their newly formed Old Folks' Association (LRH in Chinese), who provide the leadership roles for cultural revival, and they further serve as mediators between state authorities and local society. The opposite view is presented by Kuah-Pearce in chapter 5, who argues that it is women who serve as 'custodial guardians of rituals and religious practices in South China' (p. 121). A close reading of her narratives, however, does not provide much concrete evidence to support this argument.

The third controversy in this volume is the changing status of women and whether this has had an impact on the traditional patriarchal family. The last three chapters, by Kuah-Pearce, Tam, and Ding, all address these issues. They all agree that women in southern Fujian have generally adjusted well throughout the era of dramatic social change; and they have been toughened during the recent transitions, and have developed effective coping strategies for self-preservation and taking care of their families. However, both Tam and Ding believe that even though women have more freedom and decision-making power, they do not challenge the gender-biased system. Tam even suggests that these women have been unconsciously reinforcing patriarchal society through the reproduction of their husbands' patriarchal family. Kuah-Pearce, on the other hand, feels that women have become the new driving force in social development.

This collection of research sheds new light on our understanding of contemporary China through the analysis of culture reproduction. By examining the dynamic interaction between the state and local southern Fujian society, the authors attempt to identify the actors and agents who are initiating social change, and their possible impacts on the long-term development of Chinese culture and society. Their empirical work is likely to be highly valued by future researchers not only in China, but also internationally.

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WILSON, TAMAR DIANA. *Subsidizing capitalism: brickmakers on the US-Mexican border*. xiv, 213 pp., tables, illus., bibliogr. Albany: SUNY Press, 2005. \$51.00 (cloth), \$19.95 (paper)

In this clearly written account Tamar Wilson combines poems, stories, and concise analysis to reveal both the structural constraints and the agency of brickmakers in the northern Mexico city of Mexicali. Following an introduction in which Wilson describes her methodology and post-modern creative style, the first chapter is a brief story about the life of a brickmaker couple, beginning with their arrival and the wife's participation in a land invasion. The story conveys the struggles of this hard-working couple and the support they give and receive from their neighbours and kin. Several other chapters (4, 6, and 8) similarly use stories or poems effectively to convey various aspects of brickmaking and brickmakers' lives.

Chapter 2 is a useful discussion of various approaches that have been used to understand the informal sector. Wilson criticizes Marxist and neo-Marxist approaches for their limited recognition of agency but acknowledges the utility of these approaches in analysing how the informal sector subsidizes capitalism. Relying on a 'modified "capitalist-populist" ' approach, neo-Marxist and world-systems theories, and a Chananovian model, she stresses Cook's (*Peasant capitalist industry*, 1984) concept of 'endofamilial accumulation', which she ultimately links to class dynamics and the transition from petty commodity production to petty capitalism.

After describing six strata among brickmakers in chapter 3, ranging from piece-rate workers to worker-owners, Wilson compares the roles and lives of brickmakers with those of peasants. She suggests that both groups subsidize capitalism and both can also experience class differentiation based on access to the means of production and different stages in the family life cycle. In chapter 5 she describes and analyses the family labour involved in brickmaking. She argues that because of the neo-patriarchal structure of the family, the significant contributions of women and children are invisible. Although this point could be developed further – for example, by examining the patriarchal structure beyond the family and the growing literature showing a more dynamic pattern of gender relations, which are suggested by the realities she describes – the examination of this invisible labour is important. Chapter 7 distinguishes what Wilson calls tight from loose patriarchal structures. Tight patriarchy can

provide the basis for endofamilial accumulation through the deployment of family labour. In the loose structure the wife does not participate in brickmaking but rather pursues other economic activities such as running a small store. Here one might wish for more data, especially on family decision-making and the distribution of earnings. In chapter 9, 'The heterogeneity of subsidies', Wilson compares garbage-pickers with brickmakers and argues that although similar in many respects, the former are more like 'disguised proletarians' than petty commodity producers because their access to the means of production, expensive vehicles for transporting the materials they collect, is more limited.

Although Wilson begins chapter 9 by pointing out how brickmakers prefer their work in the informal sector because of 'self-imposed rather than other-imposed discipline', she ultimately concludes that brickmaking is not counter-hegemonic. First, it is a form of what Kearney ('Class and identity', in *History in person*, eds D. Holland & J. Lave, 2000) calls 'jujitsu' domination, in which the efforts of workers 'insure that the products of their labor benefit the capitalist system'. Second, there 'seems little counterhegemonic consciousness', as shown in the desire of most to become brickyard owners, that is, 'part of the system'. This argument could be developed further with more data demonstrating that ownership is desired for its capitalist profit-making and accumulation rather than for what Sylvia Yanagisako (*Producing culture and capital*, 2002) calls non-capitalist imaginaries.

In the 'Epilogue', Wilson describes recent changes in brickmaking, especially increased organization and union participation. She comes to the ultimate conclusion that the efforts of brickmakers subsidize capitalism directly by providing cheaper bricks for capitalist construction of malls, office buildings, and housing, and indirectly by providing cheaper bricks for workers' self-built communities, thus reducing the wages capitalism must pay to workers. These cheaper contributions of labour are made possible by self-exploitation and the exploitation of family labour.

In sum, despite some shortcomings, the book provides an important addition to the literature on the informal economy, especially on family labour and family accumulation and how such labour subsidizes capitalism. Its clear and concise manner makes it useful in courses on the anthropology of work, urban anthropology, and poverty.

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Theory

ALEXANDER, JEFFREY C., RON EYERMAN, BERNHARD GIESEN, NEIL J. SMELSER & PIOTR SZTOMPKA. *Cultural trauma and collective identity*. ix, 314 pp., fig, table, bibliogr. London, Los Angeles: Univ. California Press, 2004. £42.95 (cloth), £16.95 (paper)

This book emerged from a dialogue amongst researchers in the humanities and psychological sciences at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, California. The point of departure of this debate is a recognition of the embeddedness of the notion of trauma in everyday language. The authors focus on expressions such as 'traumatized populations or organizations' or 'national trauma'. In other words, they highlight the trend to extend the scope of the primarily psychological notion of trauma to collectivities. Many social scientists might advocate a critical deconstruction of such conceptual slippage in media and political discourses. Yet the contributors build upon such lay discourses on collective trauma to develop a new concept of cultural trauma, from an academic and largely sociological perspective. In other words, this book provides different perspectives on an emerging theoretical framework in which the concept of 'cultural trauma' plays a critical role.

The volume includes a theoretical chapter (by Neil Smelser) which explores the link between psychological or psycho-analytical definitions of trauma and the concept of cultural trauma. Subsequent chapters offer case material for a more detailed exploration and definition of cultural trauma. The selected examples concern four historical events central to Euro-American political consciousness: slavery, the Holocaust, post-communism, and September 11. The concept of cultural trauma thereby becomes a heuristic device to ask questions about events that shock the foundations of a social world, destroy a social fabric, and entail a loss of identity and violation of fundamental cultural presuppositions. The work of Cathy Caruth (*Unclaimed experience: trauma, narrative, and history*, 1996) informs the analytical angle throughout this volume, and provides, as it were, a blueprint to make the leap from psychological trauma to cultural trauma. Cultural trauma is then explored through concepts such as collective memory and identity, collective repression and guilt, or collective consciousness.

As an anthropologist I am very interested in questions about the cultural effects of a social fabric maimed by war or disaster. However, I am aware that the prism of the trauma and memory discourse favours concepts such as 'collective memory' and obscures less obvious conceptual avenues. This volume obviously draws upon Connerton's *How societies remember* (1989) and Halbwachs's *On collective memory* (1992 [1941, 1952]), and the reader only receives a glimpse of other dimensions of maimed cultural and social fabrics, such as the destruction of trust (p. 144), the acceptance of impunity (p. 19), or other affected cultural expectations.

However, such topics, which are slightly peripheral to the book's main discussion of 'cultural trauma', become particularly important when the research questions are extended to non-Western societies. In the introduction, Jeffrey Alexander briefly considers 'these recent outpourings of mass murder in the non-Western world' (p. 25) and he asserts the universal relevance of the notion of cultural trauma. There is no doubt this group of researchers would generate valuable analyses of non-Western societies through the lens of cultural trauma, yet I am concerned with the blind spots such a paradigm might generate. Thus I would query the effects of catastrophic events on cosmologies, ritual, and culture-specific power relations. In particular, I would suggest adding questions about the specific effects of a global counter-insurgency culture on inter-generational dynamics and the transmission of culture. Universalizing questions about collective memory, identity, and guilt as it were take for granted the primacy of modern or modernized identities and political systems.

The book, however, initiates an extremely important debate about the impact of twentieth-century warfare on culture, or, in the authors' words, the issue of 'cultural trauma'. I would recommend this book to social scientists interested in cultures of violence. The argument brings up many further questions. One striking example concerns Karl Jasper's notion of metaphysical guilt. This aspect of cultural trauma denotes the demise of trust in the progress of Western civilization in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Barbarism 'in the heartland of modern European culture' (p. 144) thereby turned into a global trauma of humankind, and this book makes one think about the cross-cultural conceptual ramifications of such a postulated demise of trust in European civilization.

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HARTIGAN, JOHN, JR. *Odd tribes: toward a cultural analysis of white people*. ix, 359 pp., illus., bibliogr. London, Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2006. £15.95 (paper)

From the 1980s onwards, there has been increased interest among anthropologists in researching the racialized position and identities of white people. This could be seen as one response to the unease which resulted from confronting the colonial tradition from which anthropology emerged and its continuing post-colonial concern with examining the lives and conditions of 'Others' 'out there'. However, John Hartigan's wide-ranging and challenging book questions the idea that it is necessarily easy to move away from the distanced and objectifying anthropological gaze through this shift in focus. Using examples which range from Charles Booth's study of poverty in London to cultural representations of 'white trash' in contemporary US popular culture, Hartigan asserts the dominance of the racialized lens through which poor whites have been studied. Whilst this raises potentially uncomfortable questions for the researcher, Hartigan is reclaiming a space for anthropological or ethnographic work on the study of race. He argues that it is only through extended examination of cultural forms and the everyday that the continually shifting ground of race can be mapped. The book constitutes an important and critical engagement with what is sometimes called 'whiteness studies'. It is based on an assertion both that whiteness can only fruitfully be regarded as integral to the study of race and also that it is imperative to move away from a unified or hegemonic idea of whiteness (and therefore race itself). A central concern of the book is to show the ways in which race and class are co-constructed and interdependent in both their ideological construction and lived experience.

In particular, through extended and fascinating examination of the historical and continuing contemporary uses of the concept of 'white trash', this book traces the ways in which race and class intersect in order to mark out the shifting boundaries of whiteness (and race). White trash is traced back to its origins in the economy of slavery (in which it meant non-slaveholding whites). From the outset, an economic condition was naturalized as a reflection of an essential, degenerate nature. Uses of white trash are mapped alongside other terms drawn from the eugenics movement (such as feeble-mindedness, imbecile), the concept of

the underclass, and other cultural forms such as hillbilly and redneck. The popular uses of the term in cultural forms, including in novels, films, and music, are also explored. The book argues persuasively that throughout its history (and despite recent attempts to reclaim white trash as a positive or transgressive identity), white trash sustains notions of pollution and degeneracy of whiteness. Hartigan also traces the key role that ideas of family and dysfunctional or degenerate family have played in white trash. However, he could perhaps have traced more clearly the gendered as well as classed contours of this relationship. White trash, the book argues, is perhaps more about middle-class fears and fantasies than anything else. Hartigan is not concerned so much with establishing an authoritative definition of white trash, but rather to 'analyze the work the term performs in marking and negotiating the social distinctions that inform racial and class boundaries in the United States' (p. 123).

The exploration of the complex relationship between race and class is given further depth by drawing on Hartigan's own ethnographic work. Using his research in Detroit, Hartigan convincingly traces the varied and varying way in which race is lived in a context that is highly racialized, and yet not all social encounters are necessarily about race. For poor whites living in urban Detroit, where they are now in the racial minority, race is clearly always present as a social category, but not always dominant: '[R]acial meanings are often quickly rendered and asserted in Detroit, but there are also many situations in which they are suspended, held in abeyance, or simply do not come to mind' (p. 212). The challenge is to construct an understanding of race and whiteness that is alive to its presence and salience but also sensitive to ambiguities and nuances in its operation. This is a challenge that Hartigan extends to anti-racist practitioners and researchers, who, he argues, risk essentializing both whites and whiteness. For Hartigan, the key solution to this problem is to have a rigorous awareness and analysis of the situated, local nature of whiteness and its changing role in cultural dynamics. In treating whiteness as a cultural artefact, he argues that 'it is constituted in daily life through symbols, images, discursive logics and interpretive repertoires, narrative genres, various forms of body work and discipline and all the other arbitrary conventions that characterize cultural constructions' (p. 283).

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LYON, DAVID. *Surveillance studies: an overview*. viii, 243 pp., bibliogr. Cambridge, Malden, Mass.: Polity Press, 2007. £55.00 (cloth), £15.99 (paper)

The British government has been planning for several years to introduce identity cards for all people resident in the UK. Against the background of perceived security threats and a shrinking welfare state, senior police officers have argued that 'we have to go to a place where we do know who people are'. For the proponents of identity cards, if people 'have done nothing wrong they had nothing to fear'. According to the British Home Office, biometric identity cards will create a universal form of citizenship, free from racial and class distinctions, by showing 'that everyone belongs to our society whether they were born here, have chosen to make their home here or are just staying for a while to study or work'. Opponents, on the other hand, have called biometric identity cards a fundamental invasion of privacy that heralds the rise of an all-knowing surveillance state. People have marched through London with supermarket bar codes tattooed into their bodies, protesting at what they see as the Orwellian future promised by the new cards. According to some, the new system of identity cards and databases will create a 'total life history of every individual, to be retained even after death'.

The spectre of a universal, or near universal, system of identity cards raises important questions about the forms of knowledge produced by identity cards and how they transform the relationship between citizens-subjects and the state. However, a reading of David Lyon's introduction to 'surveillance studies' suggests that the image of an efficient and all-knowing state, implicitly held by both advocates and critics of the identify card scheme, seems misplaced. Rather, the potential danger comes from the ambiguity of identity documents, and their openness to abuse both by state officials and by their holders. Lyon argues that we need to avoid a 'Big Brother' approach to understanding surveillance and instead need a theory of multiple types of surveillance, which are often the products of contingency, incompetence, and mission creep, rather than directed by a single hand. There is a real danger of taking the claims about particular surveillance technologies at face value, and assuming that simply because their manufacturers claim they will produce seamless forms of knowledge, this is really the case. As

Lyon argues, surveillance can hide as much as it reveals, and rather than simply revealing information, it creates new forms of knowledge. Furthermore, Lyon stresses the importance of paying attention to the 'embodied persons' of surveillance. Surveillance is not just an abstract system of information-gathering, but is aimed at a specific type of person, and in turn allows (or forces) them to act in particular ways. It is therefore important to understand what types of person are produced by surveillance practices, how the objects of such practice understand and experience these practices, and what spaces for resistance or accommodation are created. As such, identity documents will not necessarily produce an all-knowing state, but new opportunities for people acting in the state to demand to know who we are. It is in this process that racialized and class-based notions of entitlement and belonging can re-enter the relationship between states and citizens.

Lyon is one of the leading theorists of the 'surveillance society' and has published widely on the topic. This book represents an overview of the field, but is nevertheless original and insightful in its own right. Above all, it is written in a clear and precise manner. Interestingly, Lyon argues that 'surveillance studies' take place at the intersection of sociology, geography, and politics, but fails to mention anthropology. There seems, however, to be plenty of space for mutual engagement. The field examines not only classic anthropological issues such as classification and personhood, but also more recent concerns such as the conditions of knowledge production and the social implications of technological innovation.

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MAUSS, MARCEL (ed. Nathan Schlanger). *Techniques, technology and civilisation*. xiv, 178 pp., illus., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2006. £27.00 (cloth)

Camille Tarot once referred to Marcel Mauss as 'the illustrious unknown'. If this is true of the French-speaking world, which has long benefited from fuller scholarly treatment of Mauss's life and texts, the remark applies even more to his Anglophone reputation. In the second half of the twentieth century Mauss became almost exclusively associated with his essay *The gift* (1925). As Lygia Sigaud has pointed out, this essay's renown as a key work of modern anthropology owes more to the efforts of Lévi-Strauss and Sahlins than to its original

reception by Mauss's contemporaries. Moreover, its central message – that the principle of the archaic gift is still intrinsic to capitalist economies – has been replaced by the commonplace understanding that 'our' self-interested markets stand opposed to 'their' gift economies. It seems that Mauss's fame has grown in inverse proportion to knowledge of his actual writings.

It should therefore be a matter of some celebration that his occasional writings on techniques and technology have been published in English. Nathan Schlanger is an archaeologist based in Paris and Cambridge and thus well placed to perform this task. His introduction is substantial, being partly based on earlier published work. He points out variations in the conception of techniques and technology, settling for a traditional French approach to techniques as the objects and technology as their cultural rationale. A lot hinges on Mauss's historical relationship to Durkheim, with technology as a major marker of their differences. Durkheim started out with a friendly and nuanced attitude towards historical materialism, but his sociology marginalized technology (along with much else), and this was confirmed by his 'religious turn'. In the process, he stepped back from engaging fully with modernity, and this was reflected in his neglect of techniques.

Mauss was never simply his uncle's man; but the First World War set him off on a radically new path, partly in response to the horrors of the conflict, partly because of Durkheim's premature death. He engaged fully with modern society, throwing himself into political journalism, taking up the nation as his main object of research, and committing himself to a totalizing vision, to the idea of *l'homme total* and its counterpart, the 'total social fact'. Three-fifths of the political writings assembled by Fournier (*Écrits politiques*, 1997) belong to the period 1920–5, at the end of which Mauss wrote *The gift*. Anglophone anthropologists are scarcely aware of any of this, and it is to Schlanger's credit that, with this volume, he compels wider recognition of Mauss's socialist modernism. He raises the idea of 'civilization' in this context, showing that Mauss was open to the currents of world history while rejecting both extreme diffusionism and narrow nationalism. Mauss came to give special emphasis to techniques in his teaching and writing, suggesting that, as a source of what is fundamentally equal in humanity, they should be a major preoccupation of ethnography. His desire to confront the world

of machines directly gave rise on occasion to a degree of romanticism, but it certainly flew in the face of contemporary Durkheim-inspired trends in anthropology, which took refuge in rural exotica. We are reminded finally of Mauss's humanity and humility, from which few would care to dissent. Whether he left us with an inspiring programme for studying technology, however, is more moot.

Schlanger's introduction is judicious and informative, but the pickings from the great man's *oeuvre* are unavoidably slim, not just in size, but also in their content. Of the 192 pages here, Mauss's original writings account for 57 per cent. A long essay (forty-four pages) on 'Technology' based on 1935 lectures appeared as chapter 4 of the *Manuel d'ethnographie* (1947). This *Manual of ethnography*, edited with an introduction by Nick Allen, will be published shortly in the same series. Two essays – 'Civilisations: their elements and forms' (1929/1930) and 'Techniques of the body' (1935), which is already well known in English translation – constitute a third of this material; the rest is a series of short fragments. Introduction, apparatus and illustrations add up to the remaining eighty-two pages.

Like many others, I have fond memories of reading 'Techniques of the body'. The intellectual climate has moved strongly in Mauss's direction over the last few decades, and there are lots of interesting sociological anecdotes here: about British soldiers who cannot use French spades, and girls in Paris and New York walking like Hollywood actresses. But he does not take them anywhere. Forced to bear the weight of being the most complete expression of his interest in techniques, the piece just does not stand up. It turns out to be conceptually confused, methodologically unrealizable as a project, and not even sociological in any systematic sense – a dead end, in other words, which has deservedly led to no further work in this line. There are signs in his later work that Mauss no longer cared for intellectual rigour, if he ever did. For example, he tells us that the original stimulus to his interest in this topic was an article on swimming in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*; but he cannot be bothered to look up the name of its author! There is even a question about how soon his mind began to deteriorate. But I suspect that the problem with this essay and much else here has a more specific cause. In *The gift*, Mauss rejected Durkheim's sociological reductionism and embraced a vague notion of human totality; but in doing so, he lost analytical focus and even his

sociological roots. Here and elsewhere in this volume, his attempt at being systematic ends up as an arid classification, offering today's readers even less intellectual nourishment than before.

This collection is notable for the publication of a slender extract from a posthumous publication, 'La nation' (1953). This sixty-page article came from a book proposal of 1920, when Mauss set out to study the two great ideas of the post-war world, 'nation' and 'socialism', and their unity as the nationalization of socialism (an idea he borrowed from the British Fabians, especially the Webbs). Schlanger's excerpt is limited to a few pages concerning the idea in general, that of civilization and technology. Like everything else Mauss started as a book-length project, this was never finished. When taken with the bulk of the *Écrits politiques*, however, this focus should be central to any assessment of Mauss's mature work as a social thinker in the line of Jaurès and Blum. It is a sign of how removed twentieth-century anthropology became from reality that it was possible for Anglophones both to celebrate Mauss as an icon and to remain ignorant of his genuine intellectual concerns. The present volume in its small way begins to redress this unfortunate situation, and the editor is to be congratulated on his initiative. Of course, when we look more closely at what Mauss did and did not do, his iconic status may be somewhat tarnished. But his general example still has the power to inspire, and maybe that is what counts.

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NASH, JUNE (ed.). *Social movements: an anthropological reader*. xiv, 344 pp., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Blackwell Publishing, 2004. £60.00 (cloth), £17.99 (paper)

In recent years there has been a re-emergence of interest in social movements – the collective resistance by people that rests in the terrain between mass revolution and everyday forms of resistance, and that offers marginalized people an alternative political voice to that which is offered by mainstream development, political parties, or Marxism-socialism. An anthropological reader on social movements is a welcome contribution to a synthesis and analysis of this interest.

Nash's reader is a collection of case studies from across the world – the essays focus on Central America, Mexico, Guatemala, Bolivia, Brazil, the United States, Thailand, Afghanistan, Egypt, Southern Africa, Papua, Sri Lanka, and

India. The movements under consideration range from women's groups, fair trade organizations, and indigenous rights activism to religious reform groups and the scouts. The issues covered are also diverse and include land rights, women's rights, anti-privatization of water, HIV, and radical Islam. As such the reader brings together an important range of case studies that will be a point of reference across many disciplines – anthropology, but also geography, sociology, development, and political science.

In reading together such a rich and diverse range of case studies, one is left with more questions than Nash can answer about the rising academic interest in social movements. Firstly, what is particularly new about such movements? Nash's volume (e.g. Kashmir, Sylvian) shows how class-consciousness still matters and that, contrary to the proposal of some of the new social movements theorists, cultural issues are not necessarily the central motivating force of social movements. While these continuities with older forms of mobilization emerge, Nash's collection is guided by the assumption that social movements are a new form of response to the recent tensions created by globalization processes (e.g. the fragmentation of society, de-territorialization, and privatization). This common assumption begs explicit analysis. How do the examples here relate to older forms of mobilization and articulating politics in the same regions? What, if any, are the comparative historical continuities and changes between the mobilizations analysed in the current context of globalization and those of earlier periods?

Secondly, what are the ethical and analytical implications of comparing, beneath a single lens, collective organizations as different as a right-wing government-sponsored scout movement, religious reform groups, and indigenous rights activists? For instance, what happens when the political work of one movement undermines that of another? How are the conflicts and politics between these different organizations played out? What implications do such tensions have on how we theorize social movements or even on how we frame what counts as a social movement? What are the analytical advantages/disadvantages of treating these very different kinds of phenomena as one? If, as Nash proposes, 'the growing autonomy sought by the participants' (p. 22) is one of the themes that unites the social movements in the book, how do the tensions between structure and agency play out comparatively, over space

and time, in these varying organizational forms? Do all the different forms equally enable their participants 'a voice and space of their own' (p. 22), and to what extent is the issue of autonomy dependent on particular historical and social processes and contexts?

Thirdly, what is the relation of social movements to other forms of resistance? Social movements are often proposed as an alternative to more violent armed rebellion. For instance, the 'peaceful' Sarvadaya Movement in Sri Lanka (Bond) is included here whilst the Tamil Tigers are not. Yet, it is clear that many of the movements here have a direct relation with armed rebellion of class struggle. This is demonstrated not only by the choice of cover photo of the People's Front in Kathmandu, Nepal, but also by some of the chapters. For instance, women's activism in Andhra Pradesh (Reddy) is intimately tied to the emergence and spread of the extreme left-wing armed revolutionary Naxalite movement. In what ways does ethnographic research enable us to blur the lines that are often drawn between social movements and revolution? What are the analytical and political implications?

And finally, what should the anthropologists' roles be in studying these movements? Nash tells us that her 'main preoccupation in organizing this anthology is to document, through case studies of social movements, the ongoing task of building the institutional networks needed to transform the policies required to ensure social justice in the globalization process' (p. 4). This is an activist anthropologist agenda – to provide activist weapons by 'generating a new vocabulary for engaging with, documenting and analysing such movements' (p. 4). Yet, the best of the case studies in the volume use ethnographic research to show the complexity of particular situations which warn against a simple celebration/support of social movements. One notable contribution in this respect is that of Sylvian. An analysis of indigenous rights activism in the context of the San, Sylvian's research warns against their culturally essentialist representations that stress indigenous people's unique relation to the land. These cultural representations exclude the material implications of political economy and class exploitation faced by the San. Such ethnographic analysis raises important questions as to the role of anthropologists in social movements that the introduction to such a collection might fruitfully have discussed. Should our priorities in researching social movements be our activist positions and inclinations? Or should

they be our commitment to grounded holistic ethnographic scholarly research? What are the implications of these positions in the ways in which we frame, pursue, write, and use our research?

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ROSS, MARC HOWARD. *Cultural contestation in ethnic conflict*. xix, 360 pp., maps, tables, illus., bibliogr. Cambridge: Univ. Press, 2007. £45.00 (cloth), £17.99 (paper)

Explanations of ethnic conflicts rarely draw on cultural accounts, according to Marc Howard Ross; and if they do, they tend to invoke culture in simplistic and unsatisfactory ways. Ross, a political scientist, nevertheless has a soft spot for anthropologists, whose concepts of cultural worlds and their consistent attention to the centrality of symbolic meaning in accounting for ethnic (and other) conflicts, in his view, add an important dimension to the understanding of ethnic conflicts.

Ross's book consists of an empirically wide-ranging attempt to substantiate his view of ethnic conflict, which is based on a 'psychocultural' model according to which conflicts are not caused by cultural differences, nor merely expressed through an overt, instrumentalized cultural idiom, but connected to symbolically meaningful life-worlds in ways which ultimately have a direct bearing on the conflict dynamics. He talks of the ambiguity of historical narratives, the importance of education in developing shared, fixed identities, the significance of ritual events and symbols such as flags, and, in a way indebted to Victor Turner, about the expressive and instrumental poles of collective symbols as they are employed in politics. His cases range from the fraught but peaceful Castilian-Catalonian relationship, the competing historical narratives of post-apartheid South Africa, and the marching season in Belfast, to conflicts over Muslim headscarves in France and historical narratives in Israel/Palestine.

The argument, strongly informed by anthropological theory, is mainly directed against the so-called 'realists' of political science, whose view it is that conflicts are fought over scarce resources conventionally defined (usually land, economic resources or political power), but it may also be invoked against currently fashionable Darwinian approaches to conflict or simplistic (and dangerous) cultural determinism. Ross succeeds in demonstrating that the conflicts he describes as ethnic do, indeed, have

competition over scarce resources at their core, but that a scarce resource may just as well be self-esteem or recognition as it may be land or political sovereignty.

The book is an admirable piece of work, and it is an important contribution to – and a corrective to much of the mainstream literature in – the political science of group conflict, but it is not flawless. Notably, the use of the term ‘ethnic’ in the title and elsewhere is unfortunate. Many of the examples and some of the main cases in the book (such as the *foulard* controversy in France) have no ethnic element. A wider concept such as identity politics would not only have been more accurate, but would also have encouraged the author to explain the particular form of the groups that emerge. Since neither ethnic groups nor other abstract collectivities are natural, the prevalence of particular principles of identification needs to be explained or at least mentioned as something that needs to be accounted for. By connecting his contested narratives, and their existential appeal, to historical events and their implications for the conditions of life in the societies in question, Ross would have come closer to the cultural life-worlds which are at the centre of his explanation. This would also have brought his work closer to anthropology, which in this case would not have been a bad idea.

It may also have added depth to the theoretical position if the author had distinguished properly between culture and identity. He fails to problematize the uneasy fit between cultural differences and ethnic contrasts (at the core of this dilemma is the fact that culture is continuous while identities are discontinuous), and, as a consequence, his important final chapter, ‘Culture’s central role in ethnic conflict’, conflates conflicts over political recognition and power (e.g. the South African case) with conflicts over meaning or values (e.g. the *foulard* affair).

It would not seem appropriate to lament the lack of more references to relevant anthropological research in a political science book which, in fact, takes the intellectual project of anthropology seriously. This is also not a problem with the book; instead, I should like to have seen the author engage with the macro-sociology of the state – the state being the common denominator of all his cases – and the social philosophy of groups, individuals, and rights. This would have enabled him to highlight the uniqueness of contemporary identity politics, based on the institutional dimensions of modern states as it is, and to probe deeper into

the nature of group identification and its relationship to cultural differences.

Anthropologists, and not just political scientists, should read Ross’s book, even if the theoretical position he develops is a close relative of familiar anthropological perspectives. Partly, the book is recommended for its wealth of empirical cases, some of them described in admirable detail; but more important is the convincing demonstration of a skill at which anthropologists used to be rather highly accomplished, namely that of systematic comparison.

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SKALNÍK, PETER. *Anthropology of Europe: teaching and research*. viii, 243 pp., tables, bibliogr. Prague: Set Out, 2005. (paper)

The essays collected in the volume *Anthropology of Europe: teaching and research*, edited by Peter Skalník, build upon a workshop held in the East Bohemian village of Dolní Roven in 2003. The contributions, which are grouped into two general sections (‘Theoretical texts’ and ‘Research reports’), vary widely in topic, amount of detail, and quality. Most of the articles consider in an integrated manner both teaching and research, grounding broader theoretical questions – for example, historical distinctions between ethnology and anthropology, the contemporary status of ‘culture areas’, or the debate over native anthropology – in concrete discussions about the politics of hiring, funding, and specific efforts to create common curricula and build new European institutions for anthropological knowledge (such as the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology).

Several essays in the first section critically interrogate the definition and meaning of Europe, particularly in the context of European (EU) integration and the transition from state socialism in Eastern Europe. The authors put forward ambitious agendas for an anthropology of Europe, even as they differ significantly over how best to understand and study the object of analysis (Europe). Andrés Barrera-González, for example, contends that much of the previous anthropological work on European societies represented anthropology *in* Europe rather than an anthropology *of* Europe. Barrera-González argues that to realize the latter requires restoring anthropology as the ‘“science of man” and/or society’ (p. 10) in extensive dialogue with other social sciences (particularly sociology). This vision of anthropology contrasts sharply with

that of other authors, such as Hana Červinková's embrace of the postmodern notion of anthropology as cultural critique, Hana Novotná's focus on global-local articulations within a postmodern frame, and Chris Hann's attention to *longue durée* processes. Likewise, Barrera-González states his disagreement with Chris Hann, who in his piece urges the reconceptualization of the field as Eurasia. Unfortunately, the opportunity to debate seriously the adequacy of the concept of Europe itself (as opposed to the issue of how to define it) that might have played out in these pieces does not materialize; Barrera-González, for instance, embeds his complaint with Hann's ideas into a footnote, rather than engaging the issues more centrally.

Other authors take as axiomatic the notion of a European anthropology, focusing instead on what cultural commonalities might unite and thereby define Europe. Drawing on Morgan's kinship classifications, Patrick Heady draws distinctions between Scandinavian, central Western, and Mediterranean patterns of kinship terminologies, highlighting remarkable continuities between residential patterns and family structures (even as he gives virtually no attention to either the political manipulation of kinship ideologies or the status of kinship in Eastern Europe). Davide Torsello, reflecting on fieldwork in the Slovak village of Kráľová nad Váhom, suggests that a focus on questions of trust can usefully inform broader study of Europe. Hana Novotná instead argues for popular culture as a common denominator of European identity, especially in light of the rapid disappearance of the rural, agrarian societies that engaged previous generations of anthropologists. In keeping with this shift away from the rural, Ždenek Uherek focuses on broad differences in urban networks that have historically characterized various sub-regions of Europe (such as the Mediterranean, Central Europe, and the Balkans). Uherek then localizes from broad questions to a specific analysis of

urban culture in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and in particular Sarajevo, failing to return to the larger issue of how an examination of urban culture can help anthropologists sharpen their theoretical and methodological approaches to Europe.

Notably, several of the specific case studies (such as Magdalena Elchinova's analysis of myth and group boundaries in Bulgaria and Macedonia) do not address explicitly the volume's themes. As examples of anthropological research on Europe, these articles offer material of interest but the reason for their inclusion in the book does not prove clear. Peter Skalník instead makes a strong case for the importance of critical re-studies in anthropology, both in Europe and beyond, and contributors offer (uneven) insights from re-studies in Varsany, Hungary (Mihály Sárkány) and Dolní Roveň (Skalník, Chapurukha M. Kusimba, and Jiří Šubrt). Several authors – including Rajko Muršič, Hana Červinková, and Chris Hann – emphasize the political value of a revitalized, public anthropology in and of Europe, particularly in the post-socialist transition societies. Shocked by crude racial depictions in contemporary Slovene textbooks, for example, Muršič urges that anthropological knowledge become a key part of public school curricula.

The contributors to the volume display varying levels of optimism or pessimism about the future of anthropology in and of Europe. Much of the collection's critical analysis focuses on post-socialist societies in Europe, raising the question as to what degree the volume really points towards a comprehensive agenda for the anthropology of the wider European context. The essays do not possess enough coherence to satisfy this reader, and the selection of topics appears somewhat hodge-podge. This shortcoming, however, may follow out of the very fragmentation of anthropological studies of Europe that the contributors hope to rectify.

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