

Book reviews

Correction

Please note that in the Book Reviews Section of the June 2009 issue of the *JRAI* (volume 15, issue 2, p. 428), the year of Ralph Bulmer's death was mistakenly given as 1999 (review of Ian Saem Majnep and Ralph Bulmer's *Animals the ancestors hunted*). He actually died in 1988.

Archaeology, art, and visual culture

ALGAZE, GUILLERMO. *Ancient Mesopotamia at the dawn of civilization: the evolution of an urban landscape*. xviii, 230 pp., maps, figs, illus., bibliogr. London, Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, 2009. £20.50 (cloth)

An uninitiated reader may not realize that this book is the continuation of a much-discussed debate within circles studying the prehistoric archaeology of the Near East. The author himself devoted a monograph to this very subject in 1993 (*The Uruk world system: the dynamics of the expansion of early Mesopotamian civilization*), with the same publishers. The 1993 book encountered a somewhat critical reception (as the author admits), but it was Daniel Potts in 2004 who cast serious doubts on the central thesis ('The Uruk explosion: more heat than light?', *Review of Archaeology* 25: 2, 19-28). Potts comments that studies on this theme 'rehearse the same arguments and summarize the same data over and over again' (p. 20). His article is not listed in the bibliography of the present volume.

Bearing in mind that the book handles a contentious subject, let me proceed to outline the fundamental arguments behind the so-called 'Uruk expansion' in the fourth millennium BC. The basic assumptions are that the climatic conditions in fifth and fourth millennia Mesopotamia were wetter than now and began drying out in the third millennium BC, by the time writing was in full swing. The abundance of river-water in the region during prehistory did much to encourage the rapid expansion of irrigation-based agriculture, and agricultural surpluses encouraged the growth of urban civilization as well as trade with other regions, less well-endowed agriculturally. Another result of highly successful agriculture was the development of various types of industry, such as textiles, which changed from producing linen garments made from flax to wool garments. These were much less labour-intensive to produce, and wool was also more receptive to dyes than was flax. Wool was produced from sheep grazing on less fertile or marginal land while more productive irrigated fields could be used for food production. Rivers themselves were as important for transportation and communication as they were for irrigation, since boats could carry much greater weight-loads of products than could donkeys or overland transport in general, thus lowering the costs of traded goods. Imported trade goods consisted mainly of wood roofing beams, a problem in Southern Mesopotamia because of a general lack of trees, as well as various types of precious and semi-precious stones, and wines.

These observations in the book are drawn from a variety of different kinds of evidence, some of which is archaeological and some rather more theoretical and speculative. The author's

more theoretical suppositions hark back to antiquated economic ideas promulgated by Adam Smith in the eighteenth century and David Ricardo in the early nineteenth century, neither of which, in my view, is very convincing within the context of prehistoric archaeology. The author, for instance, relies upon the widely accepted notion of 'elites' in Uruk and elsewhere who direct economic and social structures, although this notion of 'elites' is woolly and unclear, mostly underpinned by the iconography of a larger-than-life figure who is assumed to be the ruler. This may well be true, but little more can be said about how decisions were made in prehistoric society, or by whom, and the entire subject turns into a cul-de-sac. A second assumption is that Uruk established colonies or 'outposts' in Syria and elsewhere, far from Southern Mesopotamia, as trading or commercial centres, since traces can be found in certain sites of Uruk-style buildings, pottery, wool industry, and metal-working, and these sites are not characteristic of the local environment. The idea of a Mesopotamian diaspora specifically connected to Uruk is seductive but not actually provable, since there may have been other Southern Mesopotamian cities with trading interests abroad, nor do we have any written records to support these assumptions.

In fact, most of the conclusions to be reached in this study could be based upon documentary evidence rather than on theoretical speculation. The author has done an excellent job of referring to early glyptic art on seals and sealings as ways of illustrating his points, and this type of evidence is of crucial importance.

Representations of different types of prehistoric occupations and material culture is mostly drawn from Pierre Amiet's seminal work, *La glyptique mésopotamienne archaïque* (1961). Other kinds of evidence can be drawn from the many archaic texts now published by Robert Englund ('Texts from the late Uruk period', in *Mesopotamien: Späturuk-Zeit und Frühdynastische Zeit* (eds) P. Attinger & M. Wäfler, 1998, 15-236), which offer precise data regarding the consumption of fish, beer, various grains, and other commodities, as well as designations of various kinds of professions, and much more. Despite the enormous difficulties in understanding and interpreting these data, much can be gleaned from earliest writing about social and economic organization of prehistoric Sumer. Of course, using such materials raises questions as to whether inferences can be drawn from later evidence about earlier periods. How

much can we infer from archaic writing about prehistoric Sumer, particularly since writing itself may have encouraged and facilitated some relatively rapid and significant changes in the economic and social order? The author recognizes these potential changes, noting the ability in earliest written records to formulate abstract concepts, as well as allowing for a more precise institutional or historical memory of events, transmitted over generations. Nevertheless, although Algaze appears to subscribe to Lévi-Strauss's notion that the basic function of writing was to enslave other human beings (p. 138), he does not clearly explain whether the new scribal profession belonged to the 'elite' or not. Did scribes influence the 'elite' or merely record what was happening? This example is instructive in showing how very little we actually know about the structure of prehistoric society, even after we are helped by the advent of written records.

This turns out to be a rather controversial but nevertheless useful book which summarizes many different points of view and theories about prehistoric Mesopotamia, taking into account major themes and topics currently being discussed. Although many inferences are too far-reaching to be supported by the available evidence, this monograph nevertheless offers an engaging narrative and a somewhat rosy picture of life in early Sumer, attempting to explain the birth and development of early urbanization and complex social structures. In any case, this is a book that one can recommend to students.

MARK GELLER *University College London*

BECKER, CYNTHIA J. *Amazigh arts in Morocco: women shaping Berber identity*. 239 pp., maps, plates, illus., bibliogr. Austin: Univ. Texas Press, 2006. £29.00 (cloth)

Cynthia Becker's *Amazigh arts in Morocco* is focused on the Ait Khabbash section of the famous Ait 'Atta tribal confederation in Southeastern Morocco, and more specifically on women's contribution to the maintenance of an insular communal identity. Becker argues against the prevalent notion that women in the Muslim world are limited to a private, domestic sphere, and she attempts to show how women's material and performance arts are central to the public affirmation of 'Ait Khabbash ethnic identity'. The book is richly populated with photographs, archival and contemporary, mostly black and white but some in colour. It includes a large number of songs and poems rendered in

Berber (mostly Tamazight), and translated by the author's husband. At the time of publication, Becker was Assistant Professor of Art History at Boston University, and the book seems intended for an audience interested in art history, the role of art in cultural survival, or the ethnic landscape of Morocco.

Amazigh arts begins with the assertion that 'women rather than men were the artists in Berber societies' and that this is 'unlike Arab groups in North Africa'. Some will find this broad assertion troubling, but it accurately reflects the thinking of activist Berbers in Southeastern Morocco. By 'art' the author is here referring to textiles and tattoos, though in the course of the book much attention is paid to the aesthetics of weddings. Clearly art is gendered, and throughout the book Becker explains what each colour, motif, or practice symbolizes, usually 'beauty' or 'fertility' in the case of women. The importance of fertility is linked to the propagation of the Ait Khabbash as a group, which is the social level the author focuses on as 'ethnic'. The other main locus of identity seems to be 'Amazigh', the much larger, transnational Berber community, though the Amazigh dimension is only emphasized in the final chapter.

The first five chapters form the core of the book. These deal with textiles, dressing the body, dance performances, the adornment of the bride and groom at weddings, and the wedding ceremony. They are marvellously detailed and take the reader methodically through the sartorial art of the Ait Khabbash and each small step in their elaborate matrimonial ceremonies. This is a sort of intricate ethnographic scrutinizing largely missing in contemporary anthropological work.

Chapter 6 then turns to the legacy of slavery among the Ait Khabbash, and the art of the *ismkhan*, the descendants of slaves incorporated into the Ait Khabbash tribal group. This is the shortest chapter in the book and perhaps the most problematic. The *ismkhan* are curiously both part of and outside of the 'ethnic group' that is the focus of the volume. *Ismkhan* are included in that they share the name Ait Khabbash and many customs, but they may not intermarry with the non-*ismkhan* and seem to organize their identity very differently than the rest of the 'group'. Becker notes that *ismkhan* are valued for their healing abilities and thus 'enjoy a relatively high status'. She presents these relations as an ethnic division of labour rather than through the lens of race or racism.

The final chapter examines contemporary Amazigh art, especially painting. Here Becker aims to connect the themes of the rest of the book to the new Amazigh movement, especially the valuation of women as symbols and conservators of culture, and the importance of the language, Tamazight. She explores celebrated Amazigh artists from the region and the way they put their heritage to work in new artistic media and changing socio-political conditions.

Overall Cynthia Becker has given us a fine-grained portrait of the symbolic expression of the Ait Khabbash, taking us through the intimacies of their marriage rituals and even into the sanctuary of the groom's tent on the wedding night. Clearly her personal involvement in the society in question brings us a more vivid picture than an outsider might achieve, though of course this also frames what sorts of discussions are likely or possible. Given the specificity of much of the book, it would be profitably read alongside Remco Ensel's *Saints and servants in Southern Morocco* (1999), Katherine Hoffman's *We share walls: language, land, and gender in Berber Morocco* (2007), and, for a sense of how women's lives are changing more broadly in Morocco, Rachel Newcomb's *Women of Fes* (2008). While not an anthropologist, Becker none the less contributes to a remarkable body of new ethnographic work tracking the transformation of Moroccan society.

DAVID CRAWFORD *Fairfield University*

BOONE, ELIZABETH HILL. *Cycles of time and meaning in the Mexican Books of Fate*. xxvii, 307 pp., figs, tables, plates, illus., bibliogr. Austin: Univ. Texas Press, 2007. \$55.00 (cloth)

Of the surviving indigenous Mesoamerican manuscripts, the Codex Borgia and related divinatory almanacs most inspire the intrigue we feel when faced with something from a profoundly different culture. In these screenfold hand-painted manuscripts (c.1200-1521 CE), gods squat with clawed hands emerging from skeletal bodies. Knives slice through sacrificial victims, and deities wear distinctive face-paint applied with informed precision. The sight of blood arching through the sky and pouring directly into the mouths of enthroned gods incites horrified fascination. Numerous dots with anthropomorphized figures mark the ancient calendar, while more captivating still

are the narrative passages occurring in otherworldly locations. The urge to decipher and understand is palpable, but the foreignness consistently reminds us of its possible futility. However, in *Cycles of time and meaning in the Mexican Books of Fate*, Elizabeth Boone takes up this gauntlet, resulting in unprecedented insight into the strange workings of these esoteric texts.

As Boone acknowledges, the divinatory codices attempt to make concrete through symbols the ideas of priests and diviners, but, as she says, symbols communicate 'something whose totality can perhaps never be adequately expressed' (p. 4). While she acknowledges the manuscripts' opacity, she nevertheless presents one of the most lucid explorations of their content, organization, function, and meaning. She explains the multiple calendrical systems that functioned simultaneously, and she does this in such an exceedingly clear fashion that even the uninitiated can follow the system with relative ease. The reader achieves a solid understanding of the 365-day calendar for celebrating public events, the 260-day calendar for personal guidance, and smaller rotational systems of twenty and thirteen days. Using ethnographic data, ethnohistorical texts, and visual material, Boone artfully reconstructs the original consumers of these books, the highly trained sages who interpreted the texts for their clientele, as she offers evidence of the use of the manuscripts to determine the name of a newborn infant or the destiny of an elite male.

Boone's use of a comparative approach helps illuminate the commonalities between the texts. She carefully identifies the systematic visual vocabulary of the manuscripts by providing tables of key iconographic elements that structure the texts. These tables are useful tools for independent investigations of the manuscripts because Boone clearly illustrates the visual system of day signs, supernaturals, human and animal actors, and locative markers such as temples and rivers. The discussion of reading order explicates the often complicated manuscript arrangement and further invites readers to understand how diviners could derive multiple meanings and associations from the imagery and tailor the interpretation to specific circumstances. A compelling result of this comparative method is Boone's discussion of the visual integration of time and space. She demonstrates that in Mesoamerican thought, temporal movement was analogous to spatial movement, and she presents several examples

where artists depicted rich cosmogonic tableaux of the four cardinal directions and the centre. Her meticulous identification of the various directional iconographic elements offers fertile soil for future investigations into precise understandings of the Mesoamerican worldview.

Perhaps the greatest lasting contribution of the book will be Boone's innovative reanalysis of a particularly perplexing but also visually stunning section of the Codex Borgia. Unlike the rest of the codex, which is calendrically based, this portion of the manuscript is narrative in format. Boone acknowledges that she builds upon the important iconographic contributions of earlier scholars, but she refutes interpretations of the section as a cycle of festivals to interpret it convincingly as a creation narrative with the important Mexican god Quetzalcoatl as the creator god. In a fascinating visual analysis, she identifies eight episodes in the creation cycle. The story is one where the world bursts forth in a blast of energy from a sacred turquoise bowl. Time, space, and the gods appear through the metaphor of birth, sacred bundles are opened to reveal the precious agricultural gifts of rain and lightning, and the ritual instructions for warfare and sacrifice are made explicit. Typical of Mesoamerican thought, a god is sacrificed to bring light and time to the newly dawning era.

The explanation Boone offers for the Borgia's narrative pages is the final triumphant note to a book that beautifully invites readers into the complex religious texts once wielded by the elites of ancient central Mexico. *Cycles of time and meaning* brushes away the impenetrability by schooling its readers with a clear and engaging text, easily read diagrams and tables, and fascinating interpretations. What was once off-putting to even many Mesoamericanists is now made accessible to numerous scholars.

ANNABETH HEADRICK *University of Denver*

HEADRICK, ANNABETH. *The Teotihuacan trinity: the sociopolitical structure of an ancient Mesoamerican city*. xiii, 210 pp., maps, figs, illus., bibliogr. Austin: Univ. Texas Press, 2007. \$55.00 (cloth)

Teotihuacan, one of the largest cities in the Precolumbian world, possessed a cosmopolitan population and exerted its influence militarily or otherwise over much of central and southern Mesoamerica. Despite this critical position in Mesoamerican cultural history, scholarship has

yet to identify its political or religious organization conclusively, or the language and ethnicity of its population (this volume favours Nahuatl). These are the sizeable obstacles confronting the student of this spectacular and enigmatic city.

Annabeth Headrick tackles these issues and received scholarship, which has largely posited that the city was a peaceful, harmonious one, by identifying three competing spheres of influence in the political landscape of Teotihuacan: the rulers, kin-based lineages, and military orders. After introducing Teotihuacan, Headrick challenges the long-held belief that depictions of rulers are lacking by suggesting that images of the so-called 'Great Goddess' are actually those of rulers (Fig. 2.8; pp. 26-33). If this reassessment is accurate, the corpus of ruler portraits greatly increases and Teotihuacan corresponds more closely to what is known of political systems and their representation in other Mesoamerican societies. Appealing because it explains the iconographic diversity of Great Goddess images, this hypothesis nevertheless requires further exploration within Teotihuacan's iconographic corpus. Chapter 3 investigates the systems of kinship-based lineages housed in the city's numerous apartment complexes and skilfully examines the artistic and archaeological evidence for effigy bundles that would have preserved the remains of important ancestors. Evidence from Teotihuacan and other Mesoamerican societies makes for a very convincing argument that expands the understanding of an often-neglected category of imagery. The fourth chapter probes the nature of the city's military institutions, especially in comparison to the Aztecs' Jaguar and Eagle military orders. Based on the phenomenon of nagualism documented in many Mesoamerican societies, Headrick suggests that murals depicting the warriors in animal costumes and animals as warriors were to be read as the human warrior transformed into his nagual. This is an interesting idea, but it would have to be demonstrated how an entire class of people came to possess the same nagual: a phenomenon to my knowledge not documented in other Mesoamerican societies. Four additional chapters explore the connective tissue between these social institutions (chap. 5); the mythological underpinnings of the system (chap. 6); the state's coercion of warriors (chap. 7); and finally the raising of the world tree ritual category (chap. 8).

As with any work, there are specific errors that should be noted. For instance, Headrick

contends that *ch'iebal*, the Tzotzil term for a class of sacred mountains, is possibly formed from the root *che'*, meaning tree in Yucatec Mayan, even though *te'* is 'tree' in Tzotzil (p. 48). For a variety of linguistic reasons this cannot be the case. An erroneous etymology would be a minor point were this analysis not used as evidence for interpreting the Tepantitla murals (Fig. 2.7), which Headrick sees as a representation of the 'sacred-tree mountain in which the ancestors and soul companions of a lineage resided' (p. 49). Loose handling of the linguistic evidence undermines her claim, which if presented differently would be perfectly acceptable. Similarly the mythology derived from Classic Mayan inscriptions relies on translations that the majority of epigraphers no longer entirely accept. For instance, the transliteration and translation of *wakah-chan*, 'stood-up-sky', is better analysed as *ti' chan*, 'edge/mouth of the sky' (p. 149), a change in interpretation which has consequences for Headrick's final analysis of the Tepantitla murals and her general argument about the ritual raising of the world tree. Additionally, missing from the translation of the Quirigua Stela C mythological text (p. 11) is the critical line *jehljaj k'ob*, 'the hearth was changed', which follows the date. The inclusion of this line would have enhanced an already highly insightful discussion of Teotihuacan's particular use of cosmological patterns and mythological imagery found throughout Mesoamerica.

Considering the lack of direct textual evidence and the ambitious scope of the volume, it is unsurprising that many of Headrick's points, while compelling, are not always convincing. In some instances the frequent citation of analogies from other Mesoamerican and world societies dulls the edge of her observations. The most convincing arguments rely on evidence internal to Teotihuacan, with comparative materials used to underscore the pervasiveness of cultural patterns throughout Mesoamerica rather than being the argument's primary supporting data. However, the tentative nature of some of the interpretations should not be viewed negatively, and Headrick should be congratulated on her ability to place her suggestive explorations of the art and society of Teotihuacan clearly within and in contrast to current theories. This book lays a valuable foundation for new ways of approaching political, martial, and religious representation at Teotihuacan.

MICHAEL D. CARRASCO *Florida State University*

SEGRE, ERICA. *Intersected identities: strategies of visualization in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Mexican culture*. xiii, 316 pp., illus., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2007. £50.00 (cloth)

This is a difficult and sometimes dense work. The first two chapters explore the articulation of Mexican *costumbrismo* (a literary and visual genre focusing on customs and human types) and its critics in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century print medium. It juxtaposes the work of Guillermo Prieto, an exponent of *mestizaje* (the mixing of European and indigenous races), in chapter 1, with the writings of Manuel Altamirano, himself indigenous and a minister in the Díaz government, who championed a 'national autochthony', which was distinct from *costumbrismo*'s stereotypes and allegories. Segre traces this peculiarly Mexican romanticism to nineteenth-century *cuadros de costumbre* (depictions of local landscapes, street scenes, patriotic ceremonies and religious rituals, ethnic types and historical subjects). She argues that at a time when it was more common for writers to lament the lack of or difficulty in creating a national identity, *cuadros* provided the germs for a national genealogy that partly derived its style from travel writers and illustrators like Humboldt, Stephens, Catherwood, and Waldeck. Contributors to this early popular literature also evinced an interest in the camera obscura, daguerreotypes, magical lanterns, and early aerial photography, linking, early on, an interest in ethnology with photography that would undergo different formulations over time but, nevertheless, remain an important source of cross-fertilization between the arts and sciences.

The contretemps between appearance and essence rehearsed to different effect in the juxtaposition of Prieto's *mestizaje* and Altamirano's irreducible indigenism is further identified within the history of Mexican cinema and photography in the opposition between reproductive and critical and creative cultural production. Chapters 3 and 4 provide an introduction to Mexican cinema, contrasting its classical period in the 1930s and 1940s – largely represented by Emilio Fernández, often regarded as its founder, and focused on the idolization of an indigenous, rural arcadia – with the 1950s, when cinema was refocused on the experience, and sometimes folklorization and comical stereotyping, of the processes of urbanization and industrialization. Seen as a 'tabloid newspaper for the illiterate masses', in Juan

Tablada's words, cinema became a new medium for propagating a revolutionary cultural nationalism by providing the allegories, metaphors, and visual style to idealize an enduring and romanticized countryside, free from social change, at the very time when, under the zealous reforms of Cardenas, rural change had never been more widespread and transformative. Even when the cinema refocused on city life, *costumbrismo* in the figure of the immensely popular comedian Cantinflas, or the well-received urban adventures of gentlemen-cowboys, remained a powerful trope.

The next two chapters examine Mariana Yampolsky, Graciela Iturbide, and other modern photographers, including Flor Gaduño, Nacho López, Pedro Meyer, and Gerardo Suter, who, dissatisfied with the nationalist cultural politics of photography, redirected its former reproductive function to make it a creative and critical agent of production. Beginning by looking at 'surface and inscription', another orchestration of appearance and essence, followed by the topos of veiling, and, finally, that of fragmentation and ruin, these latter chapters examine the emergence of a mature and independent photography finally freed from *costumbrismo* and state-sponsored national identity projects. This is found, for example, in the monumental work of Benítez and Benzi, *Los Indios de Mexico* (1968), where photographic documentation of indigenous subjects is supported by fieldwork experience and an appreciation of their real social and economic conditions.

While, as the author admits, there is no necessary relation between the order of the chapters, one can discern a general thematization of the work around Mexican political and cultural debates on tradition and modernity. The uses of the picturesque and *costumbrismo* reoccur constantly in different guises, together with references to the latter's critics and its inherent contradictions both within the development of cinema, photography, and literature, and more widely in the context of national projects of economic and social development.

The work has two shortcomings. Firstly, its use of generalization to assume, uncritically, that what was happening in nineteenth-century Mexico City was also the norm for the rest of the country is regrettable. Secondly, the author's failure properly to ground photography in the complex and changing social and political situation that characterized the last decades of

the twentieth century makes the text more difficult and less coherent than it need be. Nevertheless, with its focus on the mechanical arts and their role in articulating and problematizing the changing relations between Mexican tradition and modernity, Segre's work provides a useful addition to English expositions on this crucial period in modern Mexican history.

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Biography

ST JOHN, GRAHAM (ed.). *Victor Turner and contemporary cultural performance*. ix, 358 pp., bibliogrs. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2008. £47.50 (cloth)

Cultural anthropologist Victor Witter Turner has left us a powerful and diverse set of intellectual legacies. Frederick Turner (in *Victor Turner and the construction of cultural criticism* (ed.) K. Ashley, 1990) provides a most vivid description of Victor Turner as a 'prophet of apocalypse' (p. 155) wandering across disciplinary boundaries as if they did not exist, conversing easily with elders of each in their own language, only to be seen later, several disciplinary fields away, engaged in new conversations. Turner's collective body of work is full of paradox. On the one hand, Turner was a great proponent of structure. He explicated the structure of ritual (separation, transition, or liminality, reincorporation). He laid out the structure of conflict (breach, crisis, redress, reintegration or recognition of schism). He explored the structure of symbols (from ideological pole to sensory pole), and the structure of symbolic analysis (expert exegesis, operational meaning, positional meaning). Yet, it was also Turner who gave us anti-structure, liminality that dissolved structure, and liminoids who lived outside of structure.

This most recent examination, *Victor Turner and contemporary cultural performance*, consists of an introduction by the editor and seventeen articles by twenty authors, under four subheadings: 'Performing culture', 'Popular culture and rites of passage', 'Contemporary pilgrimage and communitas', and 'Edith Turner'. The volume seizes upon the twenty-fifth anniversary of Turner's death to interrogate vigorously the relevance and applicability of Turnerian thought in the twenty-first century.

The volume is not a love-fest or a *Festschrift*, but rather a serious intellectual engagement with the Turnerian enterprise.

The introduction by St John alone is worth the price of the book. Dense with the jargon of scholarship, freshly minted phrases, theoretical labels, and esoteric framings, as it need be to describe the work of Turner, who made a prodigious impact across a spectrum of disciplines: from anthropology, sociology, history, and religious and theological studies, to cultural, literary, media, and performance studies, to neurobiology and behavioural studies. Turner lived in a world of poetry and pilgrimages, experimental theatre and orthodox religions, classical literature and postmodern thought. His intellectual output truly transcends conventional categories.

Part one, 'Performing culture: ritual, drama, and media', is essentially a reconfiguration of Turner in response to contemporary performance theory. J. Lowell Lewis makes the case that communitas, which Turner saw purely in liberatory and redemptive terms, can likewise provide the context for rejection and revulsion. Ian Maxwell continues the critique of communitas by unpacking the story of a Jewish historian swept along in the performative 'flow' of a Nazi event who actually found herself with her hand in the air shouting 'Heil Hitler!' Michael Cohen, Paul Dwyer, and Laura Ginters examine Australia's use of the media and 'performances of reconciliation', including the opening ceremony of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, to address national anxiety spawned by a history of dispossession and displacement of indigenous inhabitants. Mihai Coman discusses the utility of liminality in framing studies of media production and media consumption. Simon Cottle shows the useful juxtaposition of 'social drama' and the media's treatment of a racist murder in Southeast London.

Part two, 'Popular culture and rites of passage', mostly illuminates inconsistencies in Turner's distinction between the liminal and the liminoid as relevant to explicating several contemporary rites of passage: modern sports (Sharon Rowe), electronic music and trance tribes (Graham St John), international backpacking (Amie Matthews), and wilderness immersion experiences for theatre students (Gerard Boland).

Part three, 'Contemporary pilgrimage and communitas', puts Turner's ideas in motion. Lee Gilmore examines the journey to 'Burning Man', a New Age gathering in the Nevada desert that is supposedly an escape from commoditization.

Carole Cusack and Justine Digance snap our attention back to the role of commodities as young girls go shopping for identity in a mall, seeking out corporate logos as tribal identifiers. Sean Scalmer examines the movement of Satyagraha (Ghandi's non-violent tactics against the British in India) to Britain itself in the 1950s as a style of protest against nuclear proliferation. Margi Nowak looks at parents of special-needs children, sharing their narratives of vulnerability on-line, and moving from scared neophytes to well-seasoned advocates.

Part four, 'Edith Turner', clearly acknowledges Victor's wife as co-author of everything he wrote. Additionally Matthew Engelke, Barbara Babcock, Douglas Ezzy, and Jill Dubisch go on to show that engagement with Edith's own work provides the necessary framing to understand fully that of her late husband.

This volume is a wonderful exercise in rethinking Turner through the lens of our increasingly digitalized and mediatized world. The only shortcoming might be the emphasis on breadth, rather than depth. The articles are very brief. Each author has space just to sketch out an interesting framing of a Turnerian idea, but hardly enough to mobilize sufficient evidence for a thorough demonstration of that frame's utility.

JAMES A. PRITCHETT *Michigan State University*

WORSLEY, PETER. *An academic skating on thin ice*. xi, 281 pp., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2008. £22.00 (cloth)

This vivid and attractively written memoir of a long and (for an academic) eventful life never loses sight of the truth that every biography is set against a wider history. Bearing in mind Dr Johnson's dictum that every man thinks less well of himself who has not been a soldier, I must admit to a certain envy for that generation – of whom Peter Worsley is one of the last survivors – who found their way to anthropology as a result of their war experiences. They had a much more diverse engagement with 'the Other', and that in ways closely tied up with the currents of world politics, than most of their successors. And none of his age-mates was more engaged throughout his career with the wider world-historical picture than Worsley.

Born in 1924 into a middle-class Catholic family in genteel Wallasey, across the Mersey from Liverpool, Worsley went up to Cambridge in 1942 to read English. Within a few weeks he

had, with little fuss, both shed his Catholicism and joined the Communist Party. A year later, he was called up and opted to join the King's African Rifles, which took him to East Africa and then to India, though the Hiroshima bombing cut off the prospect of active service against the Japanese. Resuming at Cambridge in 1946, he switched to anthropology – though was dissatisfied with the old-fashioned stuff he was taught – and on graduation returned to Africa, this time as an education officer with the ill-fated Groundnut Scheme in southern Tanganyika. On the side he worked on the language and traditions of the Hehe.

Starting as a research student under Max Gluckman, Worsley found that as a CP member he was repeatedly debarred by MI5 from working in colonial territories. His plans for fieldwork in Central Africa and then (having moved in frustration to the Australian National University, Canberra) in the New Guinea Highlands, came to nothing. So he did his Ph.D. on Aboriginal kinship in northern Australia and later had to write his classic study of cargo cults, *The trumpet shall sound* (1957), entirely from the literature. MI5 struck again after Worsley's return to Manchester, embargoing an appointment at the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, and at Gluckman's suggestion he decided to migrate from anthropology to sociology, joining the department at Hull. One feels this may have been the right course anyway, since his political activism – after 1956 he was prominent in the New Left – inclined him to a social-structural analysis of historical situations that drew more on Marx and Weber than the theoretical traditions of social anthropology. His most widely read book, *The Third World* (1964) – the term itself, adapted from René Dumont's *tiers monde*, was largely given its wide currency by Worsley – was finished just before he moved from Hull to a sociology chair at Manchester and proved to be the defining text of a new specialism, 'the sociology of development'. The impression of a sociological takeover of erstwhile anthropological territory was confirmed by his provocative 1970 paper, 'The end of anthropology?'

Most autobiographies lose some momentum after the early years. The mature figure we know substantially through his work, and it is the story of what made this possible that fascinates us. It seems typical of Worsley, too, that he is less interested in recording the high plateau of his professional career at Manchester – negotiating student unrest, the politics of running a large and successful department, the round of

reviewing and examining, his editorship of the leading sociology textbook of its day – than the continuing expansion of his intellectual and regional horizons: from the role played by his Manchester colleague, Teodor Shanin, in deepening his knowledge of the Eurasian peasantry, to his extensive travels and academic contacts in China, Latin America, and elsewhere. It shows in the mature statement of his views, *The three worlds: culture and world development* (1984), which had less impact than *The Third World*, perhaps because it came near the end of the era when the ‘second world’ was an international force. The ‘culture’ in the title reminds us that Worsley was still an anthropologist among sociologists. He continued to publish important work on topics such as medical anthropology and indigenous knowledge systems, leading to his undeservedly neglected book *Knowledges: culture, counter-culture, subculture* (1997). Few anthropologists have struck out so boldly, and written across such an extraordinary range as he has. This memoir discloses the intellectual vitality and generosity of spirit which underlay that achievement. A final grouse addressed to the publishers: the book really should have been better edited and provided with an index (which the Berghahn website falsely claims it has).

J.D.Y. PEEL *School of Oriental and African Studies*

Diaspora, migration, and nationalism

BASHKOW, IRA. *The meaning of whitemen: race and modernity in the Orokaiva cultural world*. xix, 329 pp., illus., bibliogr. London, Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, 2006. £40.00 (cloth), £16.00 (paper)

This ethnography of the Orokaiva of Papua New Guinea is a rich, detailed, beautifully presented, immensely enjoyable, and thought-provoking book which advances a general and important argument about racial stereotyping and the formation of racialized categories. Bashkow examines the cultural construct of ‘whitemen’ for the Orokaiva. The construct seemingly refers to light-skinned European people: that is, according to Bashkow, how social science approaches to race would interpret it. For the Orokaiva, ‘whitemen’ is a category associated with traits that are independent of white

persons. These qualities include broad notions like modernity and development, but they centre on Orokaivan concepts.

Whitemen have ‘lightness’ – they are unencumbered by kin obligations; they make money easily; they organize people and objects into effective combinations that get things done; they perpetuate their renown through durable objects and knowledge; and they move around easily, extending their influence across space. Lightness is enviable, but also suspect, as it means lack of obligation and absence of sociality. Whitemen have ‘soft’ bodies, which have not been hardened by labour and the forest, yet they also have wealth; they achieve this through their ability to avoid infighting and jealousy, characteristics that the Orokaiva think fundamentally undermine their own efforts to achieve wealth and modernity.

Whitemen have access to ‘brightness’ – the desirable beauty of bodies and things – but they avoid the jealousy that brightness generally entails. They display their bright goods without fear of the envious claims and sorcery attacks that the Orokaiva see as marring their own social relations. Whitemen consume light, wet, and weak foods – store-bought goods such as rice and tinned fish – which form their bodies, help give them their lightness and construct their modernity, but also disconnect them from the land.

On this basis, Bashkow argues that race is not about persons at all, but about objects – although he includes in this rubric ‘institutions, places and styles of activity’ (p. 246). Bashkow recognizes that the objectification of persons might be an especially Melanesian trait, but contends that the process has broader applicability. Race is not a matter of categories of people, thought to have essential characteristics or phenotypes, but is instead a performative process, something people do using material objects. There is no nod to Judith Butler here, but a footnote acknowledges Mary Weismantel’s *Cholas and pishtacos* (2001), which made a similar argument for the Andes.

I think Bashkow’s notion of ‘person’ – as something independent of institutions, places, behaviour, and objects – is something of a straw man, but the basic emphasis on racialization as a process that imbues not just bodies, but all these other realms too is convincing and useful. Bashkow maintains that the persistence of race, despite its refutation in biology, cannot be explained by inequality alone (although he later contradicts himself rather by arguing that race can only be overcome by tackling inequality), or

by the inscription of race on the body, as the bodily signs of race are 'arbitrary' and insufficient' (p. 251). Instead, it can be explained by the way 'race is symbolically constructed in objects, places, institutions and activities that are independent of persons and hence materially appropriable' (p. 252). Bashkow attributes the resilience of racial stereotypes to this construction, rather than to the nature of human categorization, even as he contends that self/other category construction is a universal human trait (which one might reasonably take for a reason for such resilience).

I applaud Bashkow's argument – which he takes further and deeper than many other performative approaches to race – and the brilliant use he makes of Orokaivan ethnography to sustain it. Yet there is a sense of a baby being lost with the bathwater. The idea that race is not only about 'persons' is, in my view, basic to an understanding of racial thinking, which connects bodies to behaviour (and environments and objects). The idea that race was not, in the nineteenth century, also about bodies is untenable, and I would argue that, nowadays as well, racial thinking invokes notions of bodies, blood, and, increasingly, genes and connects them to extra-corporeal dimensions. Also, Bashkow's dismissal of the inscription of race on the body (which may be arbitrary in principle, but is not therefore powerless) flies in the face of the significance of visibilization that various scholars, from Fanon to Bhabha, have emphasized. But I would thoroughly recommend this book to everyone interested in the concept of race.

PETER WADE *University of Manchester*

HANSEN, METTE HALSKOV. *Frontier people: Han settlers in minority areas of China*. ix, 267 pp., map, tables, bibliogr. London: C. Hurst & Co., 2005. £25.00 (cloth)

As pointed out by Eileen Walsh in a recent review article, '[T]he anthropology of China's periphery is pushing itself into a central position in the anthropology of China' ('Anthropology of China's frontier', *Social Anthropology* 17, 2009, 109–14, p. 109). Like much of this work, Mette Halskov Hansen's *Frontier people* aims to shed light on the socialist state's ongoing project to 'open up' and 'civilize' the frontiers. However, while most ethnographies of the Chinese peripheries discuss ethnic minority populations – the main objects of the 'civilizing project' –

Hansen focuses instead on the livelihoods and experiences of Han settlers, who at certain moments have been constituted as key agents of this project. Hansen demonstrates the complexity of the relationships between settlers, the state, and indigenous ethnic groups, as well as among settlers. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork as well as on fiction and documentary sources, she produces a rich account of the experiences of Han migrants, which successfully undermines 'monolithic' (p. 243) images of the PRC's civilizing project, be it the positive one produced in official Chinese discourse or the negative one circulating in popular Western media.

Hansen has done research on Han immigrants in two quite different regions. The first is the subtropical Sipsong Panna, a Tai autonomous prefecture bordering on Laos and Burma. The second is Xiahe, the centre of a largely Tibetan area in the highlands of Gansu province in China's northwest. Hansen's central point is that Han migrants, whether in Tibetan or Tai regions, do not constitute a homogeneous group but that their experiences of migration and relations with non-Han populations are shaped by the circumstances and time of their migration as well as by socio-economic factors. In particular, Hansen contrasts the state-organized migrants sent between the 1950s and 1970s, and often ideologically motivated to 'support the borderlands', to migrants arriving since the 1980s on their own initiative in search of economic opportunities. Among the former group, she draws attention to 'class' distinctions between cadres and workers on the state farms, as well as to generational differences between settlers and their descendants. She also includes accounts of the less intensive Han settlement that occurred prior to the 1950s in her two areas. Her depiction of the social distance between, on the one hand, the descendants of these earlier migrants, who are often integrated into the local cultures, and the post-1950s Han migrants, who are not, contributes to her wider point concerning the heterogeneity of Han immigrants in ethnic minority regions.

The first substantive chapter, chapter 2, describes the patterns of Han migration and employment opportunities in Xiahe and Sipsong Panna. Chapter 3 discusses the ways in which different groups of Han migrants have adapted to the frontier situation, and is particularly strong on migrants' education strategies. Chapters 4 and 5, in my view the two best chapters, deal with Han immigrants' different

and changing notions of place and belonging. Chapter 4 describes Han settlers' discursive constructions of 'home' and the ways in which these related to everyday practices and relationships. The fifth chapter is a fascinating account of how 'social differentiations between Han immigrants were constructed on the basis of different reasons for migration' (p. 158), and describes also how the children of state-sponsored migrants in Sipsong Panna struggled to be accepted as 'locals'. Chapter 5, 'Han immigrants' images of ethnic minorities', demonstrates that these images do not simply reflect 'dominant discourses' in China on ethnic minorities, but are shaped by Han settlers' own motivations for migration and by their position in the social hierarchy.

By discussing and comparing two frontier situations, Hansen is able to write somewhat more authoritatively on 'Han settlers' than would have been the case had she focused on either Sipsong Panna or Xiahe. On the other hand, this requires her to devote a good deal of the text to describing the economies, ethnic make-up, education structures, migration patterns, and so on, in the two areas. Had she concentrated on only one area, she would have had space to provide more of the ethnographic portraits and migrant voices which make the latter half of the monograph so compelling. While this reviewer would have preferred two monographs to one, *Frontier people* is without doubt a first-rate contribution to the study of Chinese migration and ethnicity, and a valuable addition to the growing anthropological – and historical – interest in China's peripheries. The book is also relevant to the broader anthropology of migration, and in particular to scholars working on colonizers and colonial cultures, not least in contexts of 'internal' colonialism.

JAKOB A. KLEIN *School of Oriental and African Studies*

HARVEY, GRAHAM & CHARLES D.

THOMPSON, JR (eds). *Indigenous diasporas and dislocations*. x, 199 pp., maps, tables, illus., bibliogr. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005. £47.50 (cloth)

Indigenous diasporas and dislocations describes indigenous religions as increasingly mobile and interactive, both complementing and challenging the cultural fabric of the host societies. The notion of the indigenous community, which traditionally encompassed

the local and the native, is brought in contact with the notion of diaspora, which used to be associated with the dispersed and the rootless.

Contributors to the volume demonstrate that the indigenous religions are neither 'rooted' in their locality, nor estranged and disconnected from their host societies. Instead, an engaging narrative of intertwining, sometimes colliding practices invites the reader to partake in the exploration of the truly global communities.

The impetus for this book arose in the engagement of the contributors with the indigenous peoples both 'at home' and in diaspora. The volume celebrates the 'agency of those ... generous hosts and partners in dialogue' (p. 4). Rather than positioning themselves as merely academic editors or contributors, the authors engage in dialogue with the community members and with the host society. Each dialogue addresses questions of indigenous and global identity.

The three parts of the book represent different aspects of indigenous religions and their practitioners' identities: from (re)formation of identities to maintenance and performance of identities and to contesting the disappearance of indigenous beliefs and practice.

The first part of the book reflects upon and challenges the postcolonial, diaspora and border theories. Polarization of the terms 'indigenous' and 'global' is contested, and the fluidity of complex identities is emphasized. The (re)formation of identities occurs through the constant tension, symbiosis, and interchange between the 'global' and the 'local', the individual and the collective. Andrea Avaria Saverda, in the chapter on Mapuche rural migrants in Santiago, reflects that identity is a 'constant state of re-construction and self-elaboration, defined by relationships inside and outside ... cultural communities' (p. 57). In the chapter on the Maori diaspora, Graham Harvey speaks of the performances of the Maori's own 'inherited and self-chosen identities' and 'hybrid-forming gap' of performance space (p. 133). The malleability, fragility, and strength of identity challenge the presumably opposing categories of place and movement, migration and settlement. Olu Taiwo, in the chapter on the influence of the Yoruba's diaspora, speaks of 'plural non-linear identities', which defines the existential experience of the Orisha as 'relative', open, and undefined (p. 118).

However, as some contributors to the volume argue, the volatility of postmodern identities

should not be over-exploited. Paul Johnson, in his contribution to the volume, reflects on the contemporary characterizations of the world as 'sheer unbound flux and flow', noting that it is 'nevertheless clear to even the most sober observer that territory and boundaries are a central concern of our time' (p. 37). Despite the transience and mobility of modern communities, people still long for home, for a place to belong, for fulfilment of a – perhaps illusory – dream of their own cultural uniqueness.

Kenneth Mello's contribution on the Wabanaki Indians' relationship with the land in the second part of the book, 'Maintenance and performance of identities', recognizes a similar theme. Wabanaki have more or less successfully resisted 'modern life' in favour of 'traditional activities, understandings, and relationships' and 'have attempted instead to hold on to ceremonies and spiritual relationships that locate them in their world and define them as people' (p. 102).

The third part of the volume, 'Contesting disappearance', continues to assert the importance of roots, place, and home. In describing her (native) Lumbee Indian community in North Carolina, Malinda Maynor notes the strong relationship that her people still have with locality and home: 'Why do we maintain such personal ties to places so far distant? Why do many of us return home? And what do these ties say about how our identity as Indians is maintained?' (p. 153).

(Post)modern theories of identity are illustrated by lively ethnographic description. Contributors to the volume provide often very personal accounts of the sight, feel, sound, and smell of the regions and practices they describe. Local folklore and daily routine, poetry and hardship all figure into these rich anthropological narratives. In her chapter on the diaspora of the 'Ocean Island', Katerina Martina Teaiwa recites a popular song about the experiences of the Gilbertese labourers, both celebrating the work and opportunity and revealing hidden nostalgia. Other authors use speech, poetry, and story fragments to illustrate their narratives.

The volume provides rich ethnographic illustrations from diverse geographic regions. These range from Oceania, the Caribbean, and most of the world's continents where indigenous religions flourish. Contributors to the volume explore 'historical and contemporary negotiations of modernity' by contemplating the nature of globality. The complex interaction between indigenous beliefs and those of the

host society provides a valuable context to the study of global cultures.

HELEN KOPNINA *University of Amsterdam*

Economics livelihoods, and development

DE LA PRADELLE, MICHÈLE. *Market day in Provence*. xv, 266 pp., maps, illus., bibliogr. London, Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, 2006. £22.50 (cloth)

Whenever I visited the farmers' market in north Oxford, I had a strong impression that customers were pleased to be there. It was a chance to affirm an identity they wanted to have and be seen to have. This seemed almost as important as buying the produce.

This essentially social value of markets is the central point of de la Pradelle's book, a magisterial study into the complexity of the commonplace. To her, the weekly gathering along the narrow streets of Carpentras, Provence, is an opportunity for stallholders and buyers to stage petty performances: a bit of ribaldry, a lot of banter, and speedy response. The more skilled these playlets, the more enjoyable they are to participants, and onlookers.

Of course this contemporary version of an ancient market is an anthropologists' mix of historical continuity, staged authenticity, and lived experience. It is an open-ended public ceremony. Indigenes use it to reaffirm their place and their market. For Parisian second-homers, it is a means to advertise their knowledge of local ways.

Every seven days, the market re-creates a myth of community. Hierarchy is put aside for a few hours, as an egalitarian strolling of the stalls becomes the order of the morning. Locals may well know that they are collectively engaging in make-believe, but in effect they complicitly conspire not to break one another's Friday bubble of fun.

This is indigenous aesthetics masquerading as economics, with a municipal employee as the master of ceremonies, choosing where to place stalls each time, to get the right mix, the right buzz. Denizens want to be entertained, and proud. He does not want to let them down.

The dark star which gives this gathering its edge is the truffle, for Carpentras is the most

famous market for the most prestigious variety of this smelly tuber. De la Pradelle gives a superb structuralist analysis of it as nature untamed, and of the secretive style of its sale. But she provides surprisingly little on exactly how brokers manage to keep the circle of buyers so firmly closed.

This is a relatively short book. At times, the author seems keener to give the results of her study than the ethnographic details on which they are based. The danger becomes that comments on participants' motivations, unless backed by quotes, can appear as psychologizing. Personally I was also disappointed there was nothing on the views of the African or neo-hippie traders, though I accept that may be a quirk of mine. After all, de la Pradelle was writing a concise ethnography, not an encyclopaedia of a Provençal market.

De la Pradelle carries her learning very lightly. She is more concerned to amuse readers than score points off some unknown Parisian colleague. Her text is exemplary, written in a scholarly but delightful style which refuses to take Anthropeak seriously. Of course, her literary style is seductively, deliberately charming. It is an insidious soft-sell, as mannered (albeit gifted) as the ploys of the stall-holders she portrays. A small difficulty with this approach is that, at points, it is hard to know if the humour was intended or not. One woman visiting a stall openly wonders about 'the last time I had thrush'. Let us presume she is referring to the bird some French people eat.

The translation is excellent. My only query is that, by the end of the book, I still did not know what is meant by a 'notions stall'. Enough to make a postmodernist mind boggle.

Ethnography as entertaining as this would make excellent reading for students in the anthropology of economics, and for those hard-nosed economists who still regard us all as rational, asocial actors. By the same token, it makes me wonder just how little of our buying behaviour is governed by price. Are we more premodern than we like to think?

And yet, and yet. Despite all the sparkle and the chuckles, one niggle will not go away. If I had given an account of this book to my mother, a market *habitué* whose eye was as sharp as her education was short, I am sure her response would have been, 'The French government paid her to state *that*? She must have been clever!'

JEREMY MACCLANCY *Oxford Brookes University*

GOW, DAVID D. *Countering development: indigenous modernity and the moral imagination*. xiii, 300 pp., illus., bibliogr. London, Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2008. £51.00 (cloth), £12.99 (paper)

Access to the services of NGOs became a reality for most rural residents in Colombia during the early 1970s. The rural poor and disenfranchised hoped that local NGOs would heed their voices and carry out their demands. However, rural NGOs depend on a network of urban-based national and international organizations staffed by professionals, academics, or former government officials. While these support organizations provide valuable technical training, access to key resources and credit, they frame demands within prevailing theories about development and poverty eradication, which are based in turn on their own vision of a 'fair and good society'. Like many social scientists who have questioned the advisability of imposing Western priorities in development planning, Gow's main argument is that NGOs should pursue development policies that honour differing cultural vision and values.

In Latin America, the 1970s was also a period of grass-roots social movements and of emerging indigenous mobilizations with clear political ethnic agendas. One of the initial and most successful Colombian indigenous movements brought together disparate Nasa and some Guambiano communities. The Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca (CRIC) emerged in 1971 and also attracted the support of non-indigenous liberals, NGOs, and land-reform agencies. Gow documents the various transformations of CRIC and its eventual participation, with other indigenous representatives, in the Colombian Constitutional Assembly of 1991. These groups managed to force the Assembly to legalize 'ethnic citizenship' and to recognize the colonial rights of communities to manage their own affairs. Gow tells us how in Cauca CRIC not only became an important political force but also offered the indigenous population an alternative discourse about development and modernity. CRIC's discourse emphasizes cultural and linguistic differences, yet it also recognizes that indigenous populations live in a changing world and that indigenous communities must search for new organizational and development alternatives that reflect both their ethos as well as new realities.

The new constitution empowered Colombian indigenous communities to participate in their own development planning. However, the case that Gow examined was too dramatic an event to allow him to evaluate how the process might have affected the outcome. In 1994, an earthquake destroyed three Nasa communities and their land resources. The only viable solution was to relocate the affected population. Authorities urged each community to produce a document that could be used as a blueprint for relocation and 'development'. Each community council was expected to engage its own residents and relevant outside experts in their workshops and discussions. Gow describes how the discussion and planning process evolved in each community, noting textual similarities and differences in the final documents produced. These documents recorded the voices not only of the authors but also of significant participants. Gow relates textual differences to the affiliation of advisers selected by each community and the varied backgrounds of the most prominent local leaders.

Gow also points out that communities did not share the same histories or tensions with non-indigenous neighbours. But they suffered similar losses and the prospect of unfamiliar settings. Not surprisingly, each community focused on how best to transmit to their children the values and 'knowledge' which they considered as central to their identity as Nasa and to their ability to comprehend and critique the world they lived in. Thus, all workshop documents and development plans stressed schooling and language training, though the recommendations varied from case to case. In a chapter titled 'Local knowledge, different dreams', Gow incorporates a Nasa definition of culture as a way of living, thinking, and behaving which allows the reinterpretation of old values and encourages creative ways of coping. This is one of the most interesting chapters of the book. I only regret that Gow did not identify the categories of knowledge more likely to be reinterpreted.

Gow's passionate concluding chapter urges us to struggle for social justice and to consider 'development' to be a work in progress. He also warns us that involving communities in the design of plans does not imply that the poor and marginalized will be pulled out of poverty in the short run. In fact, two of the communities studied lost members who either returned to the original settlement or moved elsewhere. Gow acknowledges that only one community made a successful

adjustment and improved its livelihood. He suggests that its achievement rested on more realistic aspirations.

Gow's book also touches on another topic that should routinely be revisited by academics and fieldworkers: what morally engaged researchers, like him, must do to retain a critical perspective about their work. He suggests balancing moral engagement with collaborative research in related topics. In this particular case he accepted an invitation to co-participate in studies on bilingual education, gender, and authority roles in Nasa communities.

Although this is not a reader-friendly book, it has much to offer and deserves to be read by academics and planners.

SUTTI ORTIZ *Boston University*

ULYSSE, GINA A. *Downtown ladies: informal commercial importers, a Haitian anthropologist, and self-making in Jamaica*. xvi, 333 pp., map, bibliogr. London, Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, 2008. £11.50 (paper)

From work on free trade and export-processing zones to analyses of neoliberal capitalism and flexible citizenship, the movement of people, goods, and capital across borders continues to challenge our understandings of the gendered dimensions of globalization. Gina A. Ulysse's *Downtown ladies* is an engaging and thoughtful ethnography of the symbolic and material meaning of globalization for female entrepreneurs known as Jamaican informal commercial importers (ICIs), or small-scale vendors who travel abroad to purchase and import clothing and other goods for resale in Jamaica. Through an examination of the everyday experience of being an ICI, Ulysse illustrates how ICIs create and take advantage of the spaces in the global economy to pursue their own dreams and aspirations. While acknowledging ICIs' agency in the global economy and the importance of the trade in individual women's life projects, Ulysse concludes that ICIs represent the 'by-products and reproducers of globalization' and, thus, may only minimally impact the financial institutions and structures that continue to shape their life chances.

Ulysse begins her ethnography with a review of the dual images of women in Jamaica and the Caribbean – the 'strong' Caribbean woman and the 'respectable' Caribbean lady. In contrast to the popular image of the higgler who sells

produce in local Jamaican markets, ICIs move in public and transnational spaces, and access a world through travel that historically only 'respectable' middle- and upper-class women traversed. Through their work, ICIs cross boundaries that often render ICI women literally and figuratively 'out of place' with respect to the particular configurations of race, class, and gender in Jamaican society. Given the contradictions their visibility embodies, ICIs employ a variety of strategies to navigate their daily interactions. For example, in the streets and arcades of Kingston where they sell their goods, ICIs often perform an embodied 'tuffness'. In other contexts, such as Ulysse's fascinating account of a short trip visiting distribution warehouses in Miami and travelling through customs, ICIs perform other orientations through dress, demeanour, and style. Building upon Bourdieu's notion of the *habitus*, Ulysse argues that ICIs' consumption patterns reflect a distinctive value system that emerges from their desires to improve the conditions of their family (and other forms of self-making) rather than the emulation of the elite and the normative values associated with respectability. These practices thus reveal the importance of attending to the material (i.e. political economy) and symbolic meanings of globalization for ICIs.

Alongside her important analysis of globalization through the eyes of contemporary vendors in the Caribbean, one of the unique features of Ulysse's analysis involves her practice of weaving the analysis of ICIs in Jamaica with narratives of her own experience navigating the complexities of fieldwork, a practice she describes as the 'political economy of reflexivity'. For example, in chapter 4 Ulysse attends to the 'socioeconomic politics of visibility', which relies, in part, upon understanding the nexus of class, race, and gender through her account of her status as a Haitian anthropologist completing her degree at a large, land-grant institution in the United States. She compares her own gendered passings, what she terms 'crossing across class', to think through ICIs' everyday negotiations of race, gender, and class. Although there are moments when the placement of the personal narratives disrupts the flow of the argument and readers may long for more of the perspective and voices of ICIs, these appear in the text as an intentional attempt to integrate feminist theory and practice. With a few exceptions, the inclusion of fieldwork reflections remains largely useful and illustrative of broader social phenomena.

An engaging and innovative ethnography, *Downtown ladies* will be of interest to anthropologists, sociologists, women and gender studies scholars and others studying women, work, and globalization. Ulysse's experimental ethnographic narrative style will be essential reading to any course on feminist theory, field methods, and ethnography that troubles the notion of the 'native anthropologist'. Particularly notable in this respect are her efforts to denote the location of white anthropologists throughout the text, turning on its head the practice of marking 'native' anthropologists. Ulysse also impressively integrates the work of Caribbean academics, whose voices often do not cross national borders with the same frequency and impact as their American- and British-based counterparts. In so doing, she achieves her aim of presenting the contradictions, 'textured subjectivities', and 'complex agency' of ICIs without falling victim to discourses of saving or celebrating the individuals in her study.

HEATHER A. HORST *University of California, Irvine*

ZIEGLER, CATHERINE. *Favored flowers: culture and economy in a global system*. 306 pp., tables, illus., bibliogr. London, Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2007. £57.00 (cloth), £13.99 (paper)

A rose is a rose is a rose – but to whom, how, when, where and why? These are among the questions explored in this beautifully conceived and finely crafted analysis, which deserves to become a classic. To call it a 'commodity chain study' risks over-simplifying this marvellously rich work, in a field that has long suffered from a degree of over-simplification and parochialism.

In brief, this is an ethnographic study of the global flower trade, and the chains, people, and practices that link flowers developed and grown in South America, Europe, and parts of the United States with the American flower trade centres of Miami and the New York metropolitan area. The ethnography was carried out between 1998 and 2005, and it is presented within the larger context of the history of the flower trade from the nineteenth century onwards.

Methodologically, the cardinal points to which the study is orientated are multi-site ethnography (Marcus); the cultural biography of the commodity (Kopytoff); systems of provisioning (see B. Fine & E. Leopold, *The world of consumption*, 1993); and the consumer-led

approach exemplified by the work of Daniel Miller. To all, Ziegler makes important contributions.

The full potential of the multi-site method has, as Marcus observed, rarely been fully exploited, as it is here. 'Multi-site' does not mean simply carrying out fieldwork in more than one locale, but ideally entails a more profound pursuit of the object through time and space, resisting over-determination in search of unexpected juxtapositions that produce new insights. This can easily become the fieldwork equivalent of a split infinitive, galloping off in all directions at once, and one of Ziegler's triumphs is the skill and verve with which she literally goes with the flow, while retaining analytic focus. This in turn allows her fully to realize the possibilities in Kopytoff's cultural biography, with Ziegler showing how flowers acquire different meanings as they pass along the chain, not from a distanced third-person perspective, as is usually the case, but serially through the eyes, words, and financial accounts of different actors. This plunges the analysis into the synergies, rivalries, and moral relationships and systems of governance that drive or hinder chains, providing insights into the 'middle persons' and complex systems of provisioning through which the flowers pass.

The importance of these systems was highlighted by Fine and Leopold some time ago, but systems have tended to be overlooked in favour of production and consumption, with which they link and which are easier to study. Despite technological innovations, Ziegler shows that personal relationships and flexible networks not only persist, but are flourishing, expanding, and successfully competing with new technology, inviting a rethink of modernity and progress, supply and demand, co-operation and competition, the distinctions between 'personal' and 'business' relationships, and the difference between 'information' and 'knowledge'. In methodological terms alone, even before the first flower is picked, this is already an exciting, innovative, and immensely dynamic approach that is enhanced by the following elements.

By focusing on flowers, it confounds Marx's statement in *Capital* that a perishable commodity is not suited to be an object of capitalist production, and there is much in this study that demands a reconsideration of Marxist commodity fetishism and the nature of capitalism today. Second, the main part of the analysis is situated in the New York metropolitan area, the American commercial and cultural epicentre where flowers are sold and meanings

created, allowing Ziegler to include the magazines, society florists, and social trends which have been so influential in altering floral preferences over the last century. She also includes immigrant-run corner shops and the budget supermarket trade; a rare and welcome combination of studying up and studying down. Working 'at home' is arguably the most demanding form of fieldwork – how to make the familiar strange? Ziegler does this consummately – calling attention, for example, to the 'stoop line', the area in front of a store where goods can be displayed and sold; sidewalks will never look the same again. The study endows a previously take-for-granted word – 'favour' – with a host of new meanings that add nuanced understanding to the subject as a whole. The range of sources is refreshingly wide and, finally, this study is a masterpiece of ethnography, a welcome move away from over-theorization and over-determination, which none the less produces more fresh theoretical insights than the field has seen for a long time. To all of us who work with commodities, *Favored flowers* is a true benchmark. If any recent study deserves bouquets, this is it.

KAORI O'CONNOR *University College London*

History, politics, and law

ASHFORTH, ADAM. *Witchcraft, violence, and democracy in South Africa*. xx, 396 pp., map, figs, plates, bibliogr. London, Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, 2005. £17.50 (paper)

Adam Ashforth's book *Witchcraft, violence, and democracy in South Africa* examines a postmodern approach to understanding the rise in witchcraft violence (i.e. violence against witches) in post-apartheid South Africa by beginning with the local assumption that witchcraft is real. The question then arises, 'Why hasn't a democratically elected government taken steps to protect innocent people from witches?' It is within this framework that one can appreciate that spiritual afflictions and their cures are part of everyday life for many Africans, and members of witchcraft-ridden communities feel they must, of necessity, protect themselves, even if it means the use of violence against those who cause harm.

Ashforth sets the backdrop for his discussion as he explains the correlation between 'spiritual insecurity' (uncertainty arising from the action of

invisible evil forces); the insecurity of daily life fraught with poverty, inequalities, violence, and disease; and competing authorities on how to mitigate the impact of such forces (pp. 61-2). He contends that, typically, witches are inactive and manageable, but become aggressive with witchcraft attacks endemic during times of extraordinary social upheaval such as life in post-apartheid South Africa, which is marred by socio-economic inequalities, competition, and jealousy over scarce resources (p. 70).

In his analysis Ashforth examines dichotomous and apparently contradictory forces in the spiritual world. There are traditional healers, with the help of the ancestors (the good guys), who identify and mitigate the impact of witches who are in league with witch familiars and evil spirits (the bad guys); there is *muthi*, which is the term used for the medicine of the healers and conversely the poison of the witches; and finally there is the secretive nature of witchcraft, although its impact is all too publicly visible. Thus the dilemma: how to best legislate against evil when good and evil are so inextricably linked (p. 287)?

Ashforth sublimely argues his thesis through the text of his book, and in his epilogue he neatly summarizes the problem of 'living in a world of witches' without political protection. He explains that the Suppression of Witchcraft Act of 1957, which should have rid the world of witchcraft, instead outlawed the heart of African healing – divination – thereby robbing people of the legitimate means of contacting the ancestors to fight evil forces on their behalf. Ashforth states that such apartheid laws, which caused a rise in witchcraft violence, have not been revised to reflect the new political order (pp. 286-7). Indeed, South Africa's lack of political will for fighting witches has contributed to the escalation of witchcraft violence, while modernity's attack on the ancestors through political means has reduced their power (p. 312). Adding insult to injury, the modern nation-state has excluded spiritual insecurity from their secular domain by relegating it to the realm of religion and thereby at best ignoring evil forces and at worst being seen to be in collusion with them (p. 314). In the eyes of people who live in communities with witches, managing the dangers of evil forces is an issue of public safety, not religion. Thus, even the Black African state has forsaken her people to the evil devices of witches without even so much as access to the ancestors to protect them.

Through his often-times poetic prose, Ashforth presents the story of Madumo – a man

besieged by witches and accused of witchcraft attacks. It is through his affiliation with Madumo that he comes to realize he had been mistakenly naïve when he began his perilous journey into the spiritual war that witches wage on humanity (pp. 316-17). By his own admission Ashforth does not live in a world with witches but 'a bleak world devoid of deity' (p. 317). His submission to the dangers of witches is incomplete and thus his experience of spiritual insecurity also remains incomplete, causing him to conclude that 'it is better to live in a world without witches' and for him a world without deities. For to have the evil forces of witches in the world means that benevolent forces such as ancestors, shining down their eternal love and protection, also exist. It is a hard trade-off to give up the love and protection of one for the lack of threat by the other – while still having poverty, inequality, and disease to explain. Ashforth crafts a wonderfully humane academic text, but, alas, we must leave the ultimate political solution to people whose ancestors have done battle in the spiritual realm and lived to narrate the experience for those of us whose deities have sadly left this world.

DEBIE LEBEAU *University of Namibia*

DOOLITTLE, AMITY A. *Property and politics in Sabah, Malaysia: native struggles over land rights*. xi, 224 pp., maps, figs, tables, illus., bibliogr. London, Seattle: Univ. Washington Press, 2005. £32.95 (cloth)

This book provides an extensive view of the human ecological dynamics in one of the most biodiverse locations in the world. The text derives from fieldwork in the vicinity of Mt Kinabalu in Sabah, extensive literature analysis, the original application of current theories within the general field of political ecology, and unravelling some of the tangled threads of the history of local land tenure regulation. Simultaneously, whilst stressing the need to address the idiosyncrasies of place, history, and time, the author builds on these theories and concepts of power to provide a preliminary formula for a meta-approach to community conservation strategies which international institutions and NGOs would be wise to note.

In setting the conceptual scene, the author stresses two principles. First, she supports Michel Foucault's argument that power is appropriated rather than implicitly possessed, and this theme prevails throughout, through descriptions of the oscillations of power between

the state and indigenous individuals and communities. Second, she contends that state interventions in the present have 'deep roots' in the past. The book then proceeds to unravel the history of land tenure regulation by first examining colonial governance. Despite an apparent tolerance of customary law within the colonial regime, the pluri-legal system that ensued was necessarily shaped by various actors to suit the volition of supervening imperial and international objectives. In line with the oscillation of power, however, it is noted that the colonial legal regime also provided novel devices to enable local people to appropriate power and thereby, in some cases, resist the usurping of their traditional territories. The progression of the postcolonial regime is then examined, but this soon, and necessarily, merges with a current ethnographic examination of two Dusun village communities and the impact of the state's modernistic development-based endeavours.

The book also examines myths about indigenous attitudes to the landscape and sustainability and provides a refreshing perspective. In particular it collates and reviews the evidence for and against traditional methods of shifting cultivation and positively supports this *traditional* method, albeit noting the continuing rhetoric against this agricultural practice, despite its low overall impact on primary forest. From the perspective of my personal field experience in the location, more research in this area by ecologists to examine the long-term effects of traditional slow-cycle shifting cultivation might well demonstrate that biodiversity is enhanced by this process.

Although there is supportive reference to the Aarhus Convention, the text does not deal extensively with the wider international legal perspective. This may be a deliberate omission because Malaysia is not a signatory to the key legislative instrument dealing with native tenure (ILO 169), which establishes, *inter alia*, the right of indigenous peoples to determine their own manner of development. However, some examination of the state's disinterest in ratifying this crucial instrument might have revealed further threads of actual and potential power appropriation and thereby provided further interesting insights into the subject of the book. In some Latin American countries, where states have ratified and implemented ILO 169, indigenous groups actively appropriate the power of its provisions to secure and protect title and, more specifically, to empower them to determine their own path of development. Bearing in mind, however, the author's emphasis

on the importance of place and time, it may be unreasonable to expect the book to extend to comparison with other parallel locations and jurisdictions.

The discourse may also have been enhanced by a precise examination of the legal mechanisms when examining colonial history to ascertain whether the power that was appropriated by indigenous peoples was sourced within particular colonial legal concepts, which in Foucault's terms may have themselves comprised bodies of knowledge to create 'truths'. Unfortunately, the author is unspecific about the nature of regimes when for the most part she is examining symptoms of British colonialism. Indeed she tends to refer generally to 'European' systems whereas there is a world of difference between, for example, French, Dutch, and British legal approaches. The English system of equity and trusts, and the acknowledgement within English land law of subsidiary rights in land, such as *profits à prendre*, have particular relevance to the inquiry. Indeed, these legal mechanisms were deployed by the more benign of British colonial administrators to build and support indigenous, customary ownership regimes which survive to this day in other parts of the world.

STUART R. HARROP *University of Kent*

ENGLUND, HARRI. *Prisoners of freedom: human rights and the African poor*. xi, 247 pp., bibliogr. London, Berkeley: Univ. California Press, 2006. £13.95 (paper)

Englund's book contributes to an increasing body of literature that seeks to elaborate on the way in which human rights should be understood as a situated practice. Drawing on fieldwork in Malawi from 2001 to 2003, Englund explores the role of local actors in the dissemination of rights education and assistance. Civil society was once heralded as the future for social development, yet its limits to fulfil this role are made clear through an ethnographically rich account that illustrates the way in which social inequalities are obscured and consequently maintained through the language of 'freedom'.

The first few chapters set out the core critique of the book: that the simplistic translation of human rights as individual 'freedoms' serves to disempower the very people they seek to liberate. While human rights allow for some flexibility in translation, Englund argues that in Malawi little care has been paid to

these processes. As a consequence, a focus on the abstract notion of individuals as equal rights holders serves to undermine substantive democratization by obscuring the unequal context in which people operate. Englund's text clearly illustrates this by highlighting how the Malawian definition of human rights as 'freedoms' is not qualified with the accompanying notions of 'responsibility'. Moreover, following the end of three decades of dictatorship, rights definitions have come to be dominated by the civil and political at the expense of social and economic rights. This attention to language is important because it reveals the limits of the type of claims that can be made through the 'rights' discourse. As Englund argues, safeguarding liberal democracy is less about the availability of public debate, and more about what types of debates are possible. With a limited definition of human rights, the ability of the Malawian poor to get their grievances heard is circumscribed, making it ineffectual for the wider populace.

The real strength of this book, however, comes in its ability to explain why those within civil society who are frustrated with the limits of their newfound democracy continue to promote this restrictive definition of rights. Weaving together a comprehensive, contextualized picture of the actors involved, Englund illustrates how activists are themselves embedded in social inequalities. For those who volunteer to be civic educators, the lure of status becomes attractive in a context where there are few opportunities for young people to achieve adulthood. The central chapters are therefore the highlight of the book, with rich ethnographic accounts that demonstrate the extent to which NGO activists, legal advisers, and volunteers working as civic educators are complicit in reproducing inequality. They, too, become 'prisoners' of a discourse of 'rights as freedoms', repeating this Amartya Sen-like mantra in their own attempts to maintain a position as 'expert' that sets them apart from the poor masses.

Echoing much of the literature that has come out of a critique of development practices, Englund finds that civic education and the spread of human rights in Malawi are ultimately depoliticizing. Not only are civic educators and legal advisers encouraged to maintain an official neutrality on the political, but the focus on human rights as individual freedoms haunts the claims process: grievances are treated as individual cases rather than a shared experience of structural inequality. As a consequence the injustices experienced by the poor cannot be

heard in a way that challenges the roots of their exploitation.

The book falters a little in the penultimate chapter, where Englund turns to 'moral panics' in an attempt to show how, regardless of the limitations of human rights, the poor have alternative means of expressing their grievances. This chapter is ultimately less satisfying in that it remains disjointed from the tightly woven argument of the preceding chapters and lacks the richness of these previous ethnographic accounts.

None the less, a great strength of this book is in the way Englund is able to show how, despite its universalist discourse, rights in practice are particular. They are the product of the fusion between a discourse of the universal and the specific historical and unequal contexts in which they are encouraged to emerge. In the Malawian case, human rights as discourse and practice are shaped by the everyday aspirations of those engaged in civil society. In shifting our attention away from political elites to a focus on the actors involved in the everyday dissemination of democratization, *Prisoners of freedom* makes an important contribution to the anthropological fields of development and rights, offering us a rich, contextualized account of the way in which the practicalities of 'living' distort even the best of intentions.

NATALIE DJOHARI *University of Sussex*

JAMES, DEBORAH. *Gaining ground? 'Rights' and 'property' in South African land reform*. xv, 282 pp., maps, figs, illus., bibliogr. London, New York: Routledge-Cavendish, 2007. £28.99 (paper)

James provides a coherently argued, detailed, and nuanced account of land reform in democratic South Africa, both as policy and as it plays itself out on the ground in the province of Mpumalanga.

The central argument of the book is that from its inception, land reform has been dogged by a fundamental tension. Was it fundamentally about rights, with an emphasis on setting right the injustices of the past, on restoration and redistribution; or property, with an emphasis on land as a productive resource for the few(er)? Could one have both? James contrasts land as 'an idiom for citizenship once denied to South Africa's black majority' with land as 'restored or newly distributed – seem[ing] to promise a means to future livelihoods'. Thus, 'Much of the potency of "land talk" lies in the way these two

modes of discussion intersect: a legal discourse on rights and an economic one on livelihoods' (p. 11) – and property. The book examines this unresolved tension and – from James's ethnographic accounts and analysis – apparently irresolvable contradiction inherent in the nature of the land reform initiative in the South African situation.

James writes as an anthropologist, and what is interesting and valuable is that she examines the way this rights/property tension plays itself out in relation to various constituencies involved in the land reform process, as well as to other contrasts, such as 'traditional' and 'modern', and private and public.

Central to the way in which the land reform process has evolved has been the 'liberal legal culture' of South Africa (p. 17), with its emphasis on rights. James argues that the ideas around rights and community, and about communal rights to land, emerged from a dialogue between human rights lawyers and former 'blackspot' landowners influenced by missionary ideas relating to land and peasantry. (During the Blackspot Removal Campaign the National Party government in South Africa passed legislation that forced black communities living on freeholdings in white rural areas to leave and resettle on infertile land and in townships.) The central legal concepts were thus a complex amalgam, 'produced at the point where divergent groups intersect' (p. 17).

Government officials, charged with giving shape to and implementing policy, formed a complex category, with people moving between the Department of Land Affairs and civil society. The shift in policy from a rights-based approach to a more property-based approach under the Didiza ministry, while a possible ideological shift, also reflected problems faced by officials on the ground, having to 'deliver justice', who came to see the property-based approach as a possible means of sorting out claims, of simplifying procedures.

As the policy process subsequently moved further away from the rights approach, NGOs, which were initially influential, became caught between the state and the landless constituencies they served. Serving many of the state's functions for it, they sought to maintain a rights approach and maintain influence in both camps. The fallout around the Landless People's Movement showed the problematic nature of this balancing act.

Space does not allow a detailed discussion, but James gives a nuanced account of the varying positions of three different kinds of land

reform beneficiaries. These were returning Pedi 'blackspot' landowners on Doornkop Farm (themselves internally differentiated); their former Ndebele tenants, together with other Ndebele people turned off farms, who had moved onto Doornkop; and former labour tenants on white farms, who form the basis of the Landless People's Movement (and who, somewhat paradoxically, look to either farmer owners or the state for a quasi-paternalistic, protectionist means of access to the land, i.e. to rights, rather than property).

The state is not always able to deliver by itself. Case studies show how different kinds of brokers (including state officials) facilitate interaction between state policy and potential beneficiary or land-selling owner, and the way such brokers move between idioms (including rights and property) and facilitate new identities – as well as the risks to which they expose themselves.

Gaining ground? is groundbreaking in the way it moves between and synthesizes the wider macro-economic situation within which land reform is unfolding, the policy domain, and the local level, developing and sustaining a coherent and convincing analysis. My only reservation is that it systematically deconstructs and debunks every policy initiative: land reform, by implication, is doomed to fail. James, the academic, almost never tells us where she stands on issues she raises. What does such a clear-sighted, empirically grounded, and rights-sensitive analyst think should be done about land reform in South Africa?

CHRIS DE WET *Rhodes University*

JURIS, JEFFREY S. *Networking futures: the movements against corporate globalization*. xviii, 378 pp., map, figs, tables, illus., bibliogr. London, Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2008. £51.00 (cloth), £12.99 (paper)

This book will be useful for those who participated in the anti-corporate movement and now look back with a sort of 'what happened?' curiosity. An ethnographic account of those years is a historical responsibility of that generation, and here we have an important first-hand account that puts the objectives and aspirations of the anti-corporate globalization movement in relation to the wider social and political developments of the late 1990s and the early years of the new millennium.

The fieldwork is well placed within the local-global dichotomy, placing the field within a

local context (Barcelona) but casting the terrain over the entire globe, reaching from Seattle to Prague to Porto Alegre. In this sense the author, Jeffrey Juris, is successful in 'travelling' back and forth between a place-based ethnography and the transnational spaces and networks that interact with that place.

In doing this, the book accounts for the concrete practices through which anti-corporate globalization networks are based, looking at people's real lives within these networks. Especially interesting is how the book, too, becomes part of those very social practices it is analysing. As Juris rightly says, '[D]ebates about social movement networks largely constitute social movement networks themselves' (p. 298).

As a consequence of this position, Juris promotes the concept of 'militant ethnography' as a methodological model to analyse the movement. Militant ethnography suggests a mode of politically engaged fieldwork carried out together with the activists. The book explores the reciprocity between anthropology and the anti-corporate globalization movement, and how they each can benefit from each other. As Juris states, the 'opportunity to study activism in Barcelona allowed me to link my intellectual and political concerns' (p. 20).

Militant ethnography for Juris is

to build long-term relationships of commitment and trust, become entangled with complex relations of power, and live the emotions associated with direct action organizing and transnational networking ... By providing critically engaged and theoretically informed analyses generated through collective practice, militant ethnography can provide tools for activist (self-)reflection and decision making while remaining pertinent for broader academic audiences (pp. 20-2).

This is a valiant effort, yet, as with all experimental things, it is especially hard to pull off. In fact, there are some passages in which the political bias is a bit too tangible, and the 'militant ethnography' risks becoming politically axiomatic, as many analytical starting-points are taken for granted. In addition, militant ethnography is not the kind of thing you can just declare and do. I think a deeper reflection on the specific problems/issues involved in being both the observer and the object of study might

have been appropriate, especially if the object is of a highly charged political and emotional nature.

The book could also have benefited from a more theoretical analysis of resistance and politics. While it does a good job of reporting on the anti-corporate globalization movement, and shows the subtle transformations of that particular utopian impulse from Seattle to the latest Social Forum, the trouble might be that it seldom goes beyond the 'reporting' mode. The author could, for example, have addressed people's *subjective* experience of resistance as the emotional substratum of the networks he is analysing. Unfortunately, he seems to keep away from the actual psychological issues involved for many of these people.

Nevertheless, on the whole, *Networking futures* provides an engaging overview of the anti-corporate globalization movement, and expresses itself best when considering the micro-power struggles that animated the various protest networks. Juris exposes with convincing clarity the internal policy quarrels, the micro-power struggles, and the organizational impromptus that characterized the movement.

The author does a good job in demonstrating how the political values of the movement were 'inscribed directly into emerging network architectures' (p. 289). Direct democracy was both an objective and the *modus operandi* of the movement. Juris reveals, therefore, how debates over organization were, in reality, coded struggles over ideology.

Yet, the most important contribution of this book is its forward-looking perspective. While so much of anthropology is concerned with memory, history, and the past, studying groups of people brash enough to think they are 'making history' is a refreshing novelty. This book looks at the future, and tries to dissect that utopian impulse, that form of consciousness projected into the future, which animated a long season of anti-corporate protests.

As Juris puts it: 'Although the activists explored in this book seek to influence contemporary political debates, they are also experimenting with new organizational and technological practices ... intervening within dominant publics while generating decentralized network forms that "prefigure" the utopian worlds they are struggling to create' (p. 9).

EDUARDO ALBRECHT *School of Oriental and African Studies*

MALAURIE, JEAN (transl. Peter Feldstein).
Hummocks: journeys and inquiries among the Canadian Inuit. xxvii, 386 pp., maps, tables, illus., bibliogr. London, Ithaca, N.Y.: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007. £27.00 (cloth)

The lives of Inuit in Canada changed dramatically in the 1950s and 1960s. This is the period described by George Wenzel as the government era, when the Canadian government moved Inuit from their kin-based camps on the land to what were called settlements run by government Northern Service Officers. Many Inuit moved to these places to be with their children, who were taken to attend day schools or residential schools. A number of Inuit report they were warned that if they did not move to a settlement, they would not receive their monthly payments, while others say they moved to be with their children or for better housing. A wage economy was established and poverty was invented. This transition from the land began during a deadly tuberculosis epidemic in the 1950s, during which time many Inuit were taken to southern hospitals, often to die there, leaving Inuit in the north vulnerable. Gender roles changed, particularly for men, and a new, autonomous youth culture developed in these aggregated places where a large number of children grew up together. Arranged marriage almost stopped, and Inuit youth struggled through contradictory cultural models of sexuality and affinity. Intergenerational segregation began to take its toll on a people who had what Julian Steward called a family level of social integration, where learning, respect, and affection were strongly linked across the age span. The government era resulted in the most profound and rapid social change in Inuit history.

Hummocks is the first English translation of the author's memories of the Canadian Arctic during this government era, originally published in 1999. Jean Malaurie, the director of the Centre d'Études Arctiques at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris and an ethnohistorian, cartographer, anthropogeographer, and geomorphologist, takes us back to his days with the Canadian Inuit between 1960 and 1963, and then to the early 1950s. Working on contract as a researcher and consultant with the Canadian government, Malaurie spent these years in the 1960s in the northeastern part of the Canadian Central Arctic. He travelled extensively with Inuit and spent time in a number of camps/settlements, and he

describes his trekking across the land with Inuit, living in igloos, and sleeping under caribou skins. Malaurie is the first anthropologist to document Inuit life and culture change from the annual reports of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), which the reader is taken through to hear personal accounts from these officers. By the 1970s, Malaurie was working with Inuit and other researchers to assist in the move towards Inuit leadership and self-government that was just beginning, and influenced the Quebec government in this direction for Nunavik, the Inuit region of northern Quebec. Throughout the book he traces the interwoven struggles between Inuit and a paternalistic government, finding that policy for Inuit was developed by trial and error. The errors, Malaurie finds, were numerous.

The early 1960s was a time of crisis for Inuit, and Malaurie found them living on the margins. He holds the 'liberal economy' responsible for their plight, which he credits with 'reducing them to cheap labour for a capitalist corporation whose every feature was foreign to them'. Inuit lived in what he describes as 'harrowing' and 'abject' poverty as they became dependent on social assistance from the government. He refers to the hypocrisy of the churches, who he believes should have encouraged local Inuit autonomy rather than fostering dependency. Church and state conspired in the assimilation programme, which included residential schools and an attempt to replace the *atiq* or soul-name of deceased relatives given to newborns with 'Project Surname' in the 1970s. The generation of youth in the 1960s, writes Malaurie, was sacrificed. The text moves from fieldnote descriptions of travel on the land by dogsled, spirits of the land and water, shamanism and Christianity, traditional filial relations, and hunting, to meditations on disease epidemics, government policy and practice, the land, housing, and Inuit history and sovereignty.

Six appendices include an analysis of an Inuk man's diary from 1957 to 1962, which shows the negative effects of what Malaurie calls deculturation or cultural dislocation. This man reported that writing the diary kept him from killing himself. Another appendix contrasts the low value of fur and the high cost of hunting and trapping, one of the contexts of dispossession for these people.

What is not included in this monograph are the voices of the bureaucrats whom Malaurie holds responsible for much of Inuit social suffering. In the recent book by David Damas, *Arctic migrants/Arctic villagers* (2004),

government workers in the 1950s and 1960s are seen as benevolent and deeply concerned about Inuit, yet also confused and protective, while planning and instituting the Arctic settlement policy. Although not specifically about the rounding up of Inuit in settlements, Malaurie's book is a welcome counterbalance to the one by Damas, which provides the government perspective but leaves out the views of Inuit.

Given the massive change that began among Inuit in the 1950s and 1960s, a culture at the crossroads, it is important to have those who were there at that time, both insiders and outsiders, document what took place and how it was experienced. Jean Malaurie was there as an ethnographer and has given us a vital on-the-ground exploration of this process and product.

MICHAEL J. KRAL *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign/University of Toronto*

RYCROFT, DANIEL J. *Representing rebellion: visual aspects of counter-insurgency in colonial India*. xix, 321 pp., illus., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006. £19.99 (cloth)

Before the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny and Rebellion in 1857, the Santhal uprising of 1855-6 was one of the largest of its kind to confront colonial rule. In part because it mobilized thousands of tribal Santhals and kept the British at bay for months, the rising has produced a rich historiography. It was one of the paradigmatic examples of popular revolt employed by Ranajit Guha in his *Elementary aspects of peasant insurgency in colonial India* (1983), which helped launch subaltern studies. Guha's analysis there and subsequently of 'the prose of counter-insurgency' and of 'dominance without hegemony' form, with Foucauldian panopticism, the main theoretical and methodological ingredients for Daniel Rycroft's enterprising monograph.

The engagement with Guha is both critical and appreciative. In particular Rycroft laments the neglect of visual forms of discourse in Guha's work and that of other subaltern scholars and their heavy reliance upon written and printed texts; but he also shifts the locus of discussion away from sources generated in India for a limited and largely official clientele to their active reworking and re-presentation to a middle-class, metropolitan audience in Britain through such influential media as the *Illustrated*

London News. Central to this representational process is W.S. Sherwill, who was one of the first Europeans to write about the Santhals and participated in the armed suppression of the uprising. Sherwill is not an unknown figure, but Rycroft seeks to establish him as 'a historically important author and observer' (p. 294), whose authoritative pictorial and written accounts shaped the Western construction of Santhal identity and the representation of their uprising in India and more especially in Britain, and particularly through the sketches and narratives he provided for the *Illustrated London News*. Guha's 'prose of counter-insurgency' is thus pictorially reconfigured and its hegemonic effect upon a British public given priority over any Indian constituency. Moreover, Rycroft tracks back in time to trace the contribution Sherwill and others made to representations of the Santhals before the uprising, to India's place within 'the colonial exhibitionary complex' (the Great Exhibition of 1851) and the role of the 1848 insurrection in Ceylon in creating a 'counter-insurgency complex' shortly before the Santhal rebellion. Rycroft looks forward, too, though too briefly to be more than suggestive, to the uprising that engulfed northern India barely a year after the suppression of the Santhal revolt.

Representing rebellion is an important contribution to discussions of colonial hegemony and domination in general and to 'visual historiography' in particular. Its implications range well beyond the Santhal uprising and mid-century colonialism. It does not travel much beyond a colonially defined discursive domain (and so reveals little about Santhal identities or the uprising's local legacies), but it does elaborate effectively on Guha's analysis of 'the prose of counter-insurgency' and makes telling use of visual tropes and techniques of intertextuality to show how images of the other were formed and given circulation. But the difficulty of discerning intentionality from imagery remains, and while Rycroft's explanations are plausible, they are not always entirely convincing. To give two examples: on pp. 95-6 he claims that the act of Santhal women turning away from Sherwill in 1851 'to avoid [his] project of visual surveillance' was a political gesture that prefigured rebellion four years later. Perhaps, but might they not have simply been following established norms of female modesty? Similarly, on pp. 212-17, Rycroft makes extensive use of the image of a banyan tree drawn originally by Sherwill and published in the

Illustrated London News in 1856 as part of its coverage of the Santhal uprising. Rycroft sees this botanical trope as evidence of Sherwill's scientific credentials and even, through the work of his engraver, the articulation of an Owenite philosophy of progress and improvement. Rycroft seems unaware of the ancestry of the banyan in European iconography and texts as the antithesis of order, as a site for heathen shrines, a hang-out for dacoits, thugs, and rebels: its inclusion in pictorial narratives of the Santhal rebellion, even if fortuitous, is thus far from anomalous.

Rycroft tries hard to hammer his theoretical point home: we are repeatedly told what to expect in each chapter and section, only to be reminded again at the end. And too often the dividing line between what is self-conscious, self-legitimizing propaganda and what is general cultural effect, arising out of presumptions of civilizational superiority, is blurred or unproblematized. But this is an ambitious book and its unabashed commitment to theory and method makes it a major contribution to the scholarly investigation of hegemony and subalternity.

DAVID ARNOLD *University of Warwick*

WILLIAMS, GWYN. *Struggles for an alternative globalization: an ethnography of counterpower in Southern France*. vii, 185 pp., bibliogr. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008. £55.00 (cloth)

Since the 1970s a rocky, windswept plateau in France's southern *massif central* has gained 'almost mythical status' among activists on Europe's autonomous left as a land where people share a political conscience and a desire to resist the power of the state (p. 149). Gwyn Williams's new book opens up this mythical world on the Larzac Plateau to examine what politics actually means in the everyday life of its inhabitants. In doing so he shows the public and private work involved in being and becoming 'an activist' here. He explores the collective work involved in organizing meetings, associations, networks, and campaigns, as well as the underbelly of personal relations that facilitate or close these flows of information; and he examines the individual work of informing, shaping, and guiding the moral-political self as people strive to live coherent lives of reflection and action.

The anti/alter/contra/counter-globalization movement continues to be a source of intellectual engagement for contemporary

anthropologists who write *about it* as academics and *for it* as activists. By using ethnography to ask simply what Larzac activists think they are doing and what they do, however, Williams's modest book offers a deeper reflection on autonomous politics than much activist-academic literature. His book emerges as precisely the kind of anarchist anthropology envisaged by David Graeber (*Fragments of an anarchist anthropology*, 2004): one which is committed to the analysis of alternative social and economic structures, and one which is committed to presenting these alternatives to the world.

In October 1970 the French government decided, without any consultation from peasant farmers, to expand massively a small military camp on the Larzac Plateau into a strategically significant military base. Local opposition to the plan soon attracted the support of activists from across France, and over the next decade Maoists, anarchists, socialists, hippies, ecologists, revolutionaries, pacifists, intellectuals, and Catholic clergy were drawn to the Larzac. The non-violent and ultimately successful struggle against the camp's expansion transformed the plateau; the activists who settled there now outnumber its original inhabitants. This struggle provides activists on the Larzac with a 'metaphor of origin', marking the emergence of autonomy as a principal of social organization here. Williams's book places this ideal in its context, showing how theories of 'power as sovereignty' and 'counter-power as a refusal to cede autonomy' have a deeper historical genealogy in the French Republic. His contribution to social theory is to reframe the relationship between power and resistance as a struggle over autonomy. Rather than asking whether or not it is possible to 'live autonomously', he argues, the more pertinent question is: how do people make autonomy an important social category (p. 152)? On the Larzac, autonomy is something to struggle over, to increase, and to cultivate: a source of power and action.

In his introduction Williams describes the difficulties faced by an anthropologist writing about autonomous political activists and contemporary social movements. Trying to remain detached, sceptical, and distant is, he acknowledges, immensely difficult when you work with people whose commitments to social justice you share. It is testament to exactly these kind of pressures that Williams ends up being apologetic about his desire to understand 'a bunch of activists on the Larzac Plateau'. While Larzac activists see the circulation or acquisition

of information as central – ‘one of the foundations of the social movement’s struggle with power’ (p. 132) – and vital for activists who strive to keep themselves informed, engaged, and alert, Williams is reluctant to position his own text within this knowledge economy. He treats his research as fundamentally different from the tasks of organizing meetings, demonstrations, campaigns, that he undertakes as an activist. In his struggle for both disciplinary rigour and activist authenticity, he hesitates to imagine his book as a political project or declare that ethnography is a political act. This is a shame, because his text demonstrates precisely how ethnographic writing can provoke a personal reflection on political choices and an impetus to action.

My only other criticism is that this book has been published in an expensive hardcover academic edition likely to be bought only by university libraries rather than a cheaper trade edition that might have seen it distributed more widely and read. I urge the author to join the campaign for open-access anthropology (www.openaccessanthropology.net) and lobby his publisher to make the text freely available on-line.

JAMIE CROSS *National University of Ireland*

Medical and forensic anthropology

BUTT, LESLIE & RICHARD EVES (eds). *Making sense of AIDS: culture, sexuality, and power in Melanesia*. xvii, 321 pp., maps, illus., bibliogr. Honolulu: Univ. Hawai’i Press, 2008. £27.00 (paper)

In the anthology *Making sense of AIDS: culture, sexuality, and power in Melanesia*, editors Leslie Butt and Richard Eves bring together a compelling and important collection of anthropological research on human sexuality and the variable and often unique moral, psychological, social, and cultural factors that influence vulnerability to HIV/AIDS in Melanesia. Collectively, the work highlights the importance of understanding local customs, beliefs, values, and sexual culture and serves to illustrate the important contributions anthropologists can make towards improving HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment.

Individually, the works interpret a rich diversity of circumstances, experiences, and

challenges in voices that echo many of the commonly found barriers to prevention, such as fear, stigma and discrimination, poverty, gender inequity, political and religious ideology, and lacks in education, healthcare infrastructure, and political will. Each chapter also provides unique insights into the ways that sexual culture and beliefs about HIV/AIDS can disrupt social bonds and networks, increase the potential for violence and persecution, and how stigma, discrimination, and social ostracism are used as a means of defining the boundaries between social groups, classes, and cultures within different regions and distinct populations within Melanesia.

For example, Nicole Haley outlines how the ongoing breakdown of essential human services (such as education, healthcare, and transportation) at Lake Kapiago is the result of a unique set of geographical circumstances, political neglect, and cosmological beliefs. Haley notes a number of vulnerabilities common to rural populations while revealing how a belief structure which interprets atrophy as part of an inevitable destiny leaves the Duna of the Southern highlands of Papua New Guinea far more vulnerable to HIV than their urban cousins. Leslie Butt also describes how the adoption of neutral biomedical language by elites (which is seen as necessary to counter the process of ‘othering’ that has been used to shift the blame for HIV/AIDS to Indonesians) also contradicts traditional beliefs and thereby exacerbates the vulnerability of highlanders.

Many of the selections highlight factors that specifically increase the biological and social vulnerability of women and girls. For example, Maggie Cummings describes the dilemmas faced by Jenny, a well-educated young woman torn between *kastom* (tradition) and modernity, and how trousers – and the women who wear them – are seen as a threat to traditional gender relations and male authority in postcolonial Vanuatu. Lawrence Hammar describes the vulnerabilities inherent in marriage and illustrates how moral discourse and prevailing social norms serve to justify gender inequity, sexual violence, HIV stigma and discrimination, and act as obstacles to sexual health and education for women and girls in Papua. Christine Salomon and Christine Hamilton examine vulnerabilities unique to Kanak women in New Caledonia, while Bettina Beer focuses on sex workers in Markham Valley, Papua.

Many of the chapters also detail the impact of clashes of culture. For instance, Jack

Morin explores how the migration of Indonesian *waria* (men who dress and identify as women) in response to government initiatives to legalize sex work has impacted upon the sexual identity, behaviour, motivation, and risk of urban-living indigenous Papua men who have adopted or adapted the *waria* identity. Morin presents case studies that highlight risks common to sex workers and those living as a 'third gender' in a culture with binary constructs, as well as outlining factors unique to the sexual exploitation and marginalization of indigenous *waria* that increase vulnerability to HIV.

Sarah Hewat describes how the clash between Western ideals of romantic love and traditional values that censure premarital sex threaten moral order, and how secrecy surrounding 'illegitimate sex' and participation in the 'romantic underground' also increases vulnerability for women in Manokwari, Papua, as do local beliefs that good judgement in the selection of sexual partners offers better protection than condoms. Holly Buchanan-Aruwafu and Rose Maebiru also highlight how the secrecy surrounding sexuality impacts prevention efforts in the Solomon Islands. Meanwhile the chapters written by Holly Wardlaw, Richard Eves, Naomi McPherson, and Katherine Lepani further underscore the importance of accounting for clashes between indigenous and foreign ideology and belief.

This volume demonstrates why anthropologists are uniquely placed to inform clinical and epidemiological studies, social policy, and interventions related to HIV prevention, care, and treatment. It also emphasizes how ethnographic research is vital to understanding the unique intervention needs of unique populations. This is a collection of studies that should appeal not only to anthropologists, but also to HIV/AIDS and sexuality researchers, frontline public health and community-based service workers, people living with HIV and AIDS, as well as those with a more general interest in regional cultural variation.

JOSEPHINE MACINTOSH *University of British Columbia/University of Victoria*

MITCHEM, STEPHANIE Y. *African American folk healing*. ix, 189 pp., illus., bibliogr. New York: Univ. Press, 2007. \$65.00 (cloth), \$20.00 (paper)

This book is less of a treatise on folk healing than a polemic against racialist attitudes in a

historical perspective of the rules and lives of black Americans. By emphasizing the spiritual aspects of healing, such a viewpoint can easily be accommodated both to the concept of healing and to the concept of a need for justice, though ultimately it serves to strengthen the separateness of African Americans.

According to the author, African American folk healing sees sickness as arising from situations that break 'relational connections' of the unborn, the born, and the dead, which are intertwined. All healing links in with and emphasizes black identity and culture and attempts to heal the effects of past enslavement. Thus African American folk healing flows into social activism of Afro Americans.

American blacks continued to be separate even after the emancipation act of 1863. There was no attempt to understand black culture. The Works Progress Administration in 1936, which aimed to provide employment during the Great Depression, gathered 2,300 oral black histories, a survey carried out mostly by white middle-class researchers. The interviews related to folk healing and provide essential information on practices and beliefs during enslavement. Some racial bias inherent in white Protestant workers came to misrepresent African American folk healing as superstition, hoodoo, and faith healing, all of which are negative categories linked to magic, witchcraft, and sorcery, and hence are ungodly.

'Conjurors' was a term that equated to persons with powers to remove evil spells, but they had been seen as subversive by slave owners since they could control the blacks. To this day hoodoo doctors study their people and provide advice that an experienced psychoanalyst might envy.

Yet healers or root workers were needed in the absence of access to 'white medicine'. Healing the ill and nurturing infants were roles given to elderly enslaved women. Such practitioners worked until the middle of the twentieth century, when state licensing of practitioners became law. Faith healing – Christian and other – goes hand in hand with folk remedies. African American folk healing is not a closed system; it is not frozen in time and not limited to a single place. Instead it is adaptable to different conditions and cultural changes.

To African Americans the body signals the spiritual life and also connects to the ancestors;

thus health and healing are related to religion and spirituality, a holistic approach that includes interpersonal relations in the concept of health. Institutional medicine may therefore be alien and provide no communication between patient and healers. Black folk healing helps to make sense of the world.

Though legal race separation came to an end in 1960 through the Civil Rights Act, economic pressures meant that discrimination continued. Folk medicine was seen as racist technology and black nationalists see it as innate intelligence and another form of black vindication. The cost of biomedicine is another factor in the continued use of folk medicine, but the lack of respect shown to black patients also drives people to it. The book makes no mention that some of the sayings and practices quoted as 'black healing' are folk remedies encountered generally in European culture as well. They are attempts to help oneself.

It is alleged that in the 1970s and 1980s some black women were sterilized without their consent in biomedical institutions and that unnecessary hysterectomies were performed by students for practice. There is thus mutual mistrust, and blacks believe pharmacology has 'stolen' some of their medicines. There is recognition that biomedicine could not cure 'unnatural' illnesses (hexed or jinxed). It is said that the persistence of American folk healing is due to: (1) social marginalization of black Africans, which makes access to biomedicine difficult; (2) cultural hybridity, which incorporates Amerindian ways as well; (3) racism, which denies humanity to black bodies; (4) adaptation of practices with availability of materials and new environments; (5) the development of commerce; (6) pragmatism, which seeks a direct line of healing; (7) efficacy – there are proven track records of remedies; and (8) a holistic approach which makes it compatible with cultural ideas and customs. The emerging black middle class, however, adopts white values and rejects folk healing and associated practices, though some educated people reconstruct traditional knowledge to fit in with their new lifestyles.

In the end the reader tends to be overwhelmed by the constant interaction of bitterness and resentment that it is alleged still motivates black American communities. While there are brief sections on healing practices and beliefs, they are always seen in the light of a people in the diaspora and in the context of a political agenda.

C. RENATE BARBER *Oxford University*

OPPONG, CHRISTINE, M. YAA P. A. OPPONG, & IRENE ODOTEI (eds). *Sex and gender in an era of AIDS: Ghana at the turn of the millennium*. xiii, 339 pp., map, tables, bibliogr. Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2006. £29.95 (paper)

This volume contains a collection of articles on 'sexuality' and gender in contemporary Ghana in the era of HIV/AIDS. It follows several recently published volumes in anthropology and sociology that raise the question of how love and sexuality are perceived, and the roles these play locally in times of global change and of HIV/AIDS – both globally and in Africa in particular.

HIV/AIDS rates are comparatively modest in Ghana (with an estimated 4.2 per cent infection rate). The first manifestation of the epidemic can be dated back to the mid-1980s and was noticed among female returnees from Côte d'Ivoire. Hence the editor's introduction focuses on changing gender roles in marital and extra-marital sexual relationships in Ghana since the beginning of the twentieth century. Christine Oppong, known by Africanists for her edited volume *Male and female in West Africa* (1983), has persistently followed the issue of changing gender relations in postcolonial Ghana for almost three decades. Therefore, the introduction does not fail to offer a valuable and well-informed overview of changes in marital relationships in different regions in Ghana that are due to spatial and social mobility in the country. The collection closes with a policy-orientated 'Epilogue' (Yaa Oppong) which gives an overview of nationally initiated educational programmes on HIV/AIDS. It spells out the challenges these programmes are facing, such as the need to deal with a culture of silence around sexuality or the necessity to create better healthcare, and to support gender equality in the country.

Written by scholars from various disciplines, the articles are all of good empirical quality and inform the interested reader about a range of topics such as complex gender dynamics leading to commercialized sexual relationships and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases among gold miners at the beginning of the twentieth century in the former Gold Coast (Akyeampong & Agyei-Mensa); the public national hysteria about witches who take away people's sexual organs (Sackey); or the sexuality of elderly women in a small town in Kwahu (van der Geest). Lacking in this volume is the perspective

of Christian churches, which have a strong public influence on public and private moral reasoning with regard to sexuality. However, a close reading of the articles reveals the existence of a somewhat hidden, yet central issue which researchers, as well as educational programmes, on the transmission of HIV/AIDS have to deal with: the ethics of discretion in the communication about sexuality in Ghanaian society. Anarfi, for instance, shows the often indirect but sometimes surprisingly outspoken expressions of married women in the way they communicate their sexual desire to their husbands in urban Ashanti. Essah reports the complaints that schoolgirls voice in a secondary school in Akropong, Eastern Region, concerning the lack of information they receive from their parents on sexual matters. Van der Geest also points out the existing culture of discretion revolving around sexual matters in Kwahu-Tafo that he encountered during his research on elderly people and their relationships. An explication of the implicit nature of this communication – also in the introduction – would have allowed for more reflexivity both on the empirical findings and on what it means to research ‘sexuality’. It would have served our understanding of the internal dynamics of the manner in which sexual intercourse between partners in Ghana is being negotiated, as one of the authors, Anarfi, suggests (p. 169).

While all articles certainly deal with the status of women, most of them deal with sexual relationships and some with the danger of HIV infection in these relationships. Neither the introduction nor some of the articles, however, question the idea of ‘sexuality’ as a concept. Little attention is devoted to the question of what it means for Ghanaian society that the concern for HIV/AIDS transmission has introduced ‘sexuality’ as a publicly debated subject. The lack of conceptual development is already reflected by the title of the book, which promises insights into ‘Sex and gender’. The reader is left without much clarity of what the editors understand by ‘sex’, which is a colloquial term used mostly by young English-speaking people in the country and which has been introduced through the various media, including the internet.

Thanks to it being an empirically well-founded work on gender relations, specialists working on the region and the topic will be interested in reading this book. Yet, owing to its conceptual weaknesses it fails to make an important contribution to a deeper

social-scientific exploration of sexuality in the African context.

ASTRID BOCHOW *Free University Berlin/African Studies Centre Leiden*

SKULTANS, VIEDA. *Empathy and healing: essays in medical and narrative anthropology*. x, 282 pp., figs, tables, bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2007. £45.00 (cloth)

This is a clever book. It is a collection of fourteen of Skultans’s important essays on affliction, psychiatry, narrative, and healing. All, except for the introduction, have been republished intact from past collections, although few have been in mainstream anthropology. The essays (first published between 1970 and 2005) continue to raise some important questions about the relationship between theory and ethnography and the persistent ethical, emotional, political, and practical dilemmas that accompany ethnography.

However, the collection is also a narrative in itself: it documents a senior anthropologist’s personal and professional career, tracing her unfolding reflections on the conditions, nature, and purpose of social anthropology. In this respect the volume is an engaging and original meditation on the interconnections between the personal, the social, and the disciplinary.

Three ethnographic chapters introduce Skultans’s earlier ethnographic research. In the unusual position of an anthropologist from a recent refugee family who is conducting research not quite ‘at home’ (in Wales), Skultans investigates healing and communication in a Spiritualist church (the focus of her doctoral research) and women’s use of reproduction and menstrual symbolism. These studies, along with a study of gendered beliefs and practices about madness and its management in a Mahanubhav healing temple (western Maharashtra), establish the foundations of some of her later research interests. Although certain aspects of these early essays are stilted by the passage of time, they mark important innovations in anthropological views on the social origins of affliction and on the subjective dimensions of suffering. The essays are a valuable reminder of a social anthropology that combines methodological and analytical rigour with social critique.

The volume also includes several of Skultans’s discussions, written over a thirty-year period, on the complex connections and disconnections between the projects of

anthropology and psychiatry. 'The spread of the blush' (first published in 1977), a historical anthropology that traces changing notions of human nature, insanity, and embodiment through an analysis of early nineteenth-century medical texts, is a particularly welcome chapter. So, too, is Skultans's final essay, an important discussion on the ethics of ethnography in psychiatry.

Skultans's stance as a 'critical realist' is sharpened as her ethnographic interest moves to Latvia (her family's homeland) from the early 1990s. In eight sensitive and unsentimental essays on affliction and memory, she listens to the traumatic experiences of Soviet rule rehearsed in stories of personal suffering. Over the subsequent decade she documents shifts towards more individualistic and punitive views of affliction as people try to come to grips with the effects of radical post-Independence socio-economic reform. These essays never ignore the historical realities that nourish particular metaphors of pain and prosperity.

As Skultans herself observes, she flourishes as a humanist anthropologist in Latvia. Here her concerns focus more directly on issues of subjectivity (understood as the interplay between individual and collective events and experiences); the challenges of spoken and textual representation; and the development of narrative ethnography. Her ethnography identifies and exploits the overlaps between narrative as critical social practice (her informants draw on a historical tradition of testimony to exercise political consciousness), as ethnographic method, and as therapeutic vehicle. This perspective, along with her engagement not only as native speaker but also as someone whose family experiences come close to those of some informants, destabilizes fixed differences between the researcher and the researched.

Skultans's essays trace her growing conviction of the importance of relational understanding and of moral imagination in the practices of ethnography as well as of healing (some of her accounts of the testimonial narratives border on the psycho-therapeutic). While she recognizes the risks of entering others' 'moral landscape' (p. 239), the chances of this entry do not seem to be an issue. Although identification in the ethnographic encounter is certainly not 'simply about shared cultural origins' (p. 226), shared historical experience and first language must condition such involvement.

These essays are uncluttered, incisive, and a pleasure to read. The writer uses theory to illuminate rather than dominate ethnography and is always aware of a readership beyond anthropology. Apart from Anthony Cohen's work *Self-consciousness* (1994), later essays draw inspiration from eclectic readings of philosophy, sociology, literary criticism, history, and psychoanalysis rather than contemporary anthropology. Readers who want protracted meanderings through recent anthropological theory on, for example, emotion and empathy in ethnography or the experiential possibilities of storytelling will be disappointed.

If anthropologists want to attend to wider audiences and adjoining disciplinary perspectives, this book is an inspiring example of how anthropology can be both challenged and enriched by such dialogue. Few have managed this with Skultans's dexterity or determination.

MARY ADAMS *University of Kent, Canterbury*

WAGNER, SARAH E. *To know where he lies: DNA technology and the search for Srebrenica's missing*. xviii, 330 pp., maps, illus., bibliogr. London, Berkeley: Univ. California Press, 2008. £12.95 (paper)

Faced with the request to review this book, I had already made up my mind that I would hate it from the moment I read the title. I have personal territory in the Balkans, having been part of the first forensic team to enter Kosovo in 1999 and one of the last to leave in 2002. My Ph.D. student had worked on a successful new anthropological approach to help identify brothers who had lost their lives in the fall of Srebrenica and been recovered from the mass graves and I am an ardent supporter of the work and ethos of the International Committee on Missing Persons (ICMP) in Bosnia. Therefore I knew I was going to feel frustrated at the author's attempts to simplify this revolutionary science and the pioneer spirit of those workers who have changed the face of DNA analysis across the world. With dignity and consummate professionalism, they had picked up the pieces left behind after the global impasse over who would undertake the DNA analysis following the Asian tsunami of 2004, and when I have had any questions in my own forensic casework, the ICMP have always been willing to offer advice. So the author was treading on territories about which I felt strongly and for which it was going to be a gargantuan challenge to convince

me to want to read to the end without getting cross.

I offer nothing but respect to the author and abject apologies for my being a short-sighted and bigoted scientist. There was nothing sensationalist about this book, nothing gratuitous, nothing belittling, and nothing that would stop me reading to the bitter end. She has considered this fragile yet robust subject from a gentle but objective perspective, with compassion but no hint of sentimentality. She permits you to accompany her as she talks with those who have been left behind and supports and guides your understanding when there is a clash of our cultures. This is a very clever writer who has the rare ability to stand back from a situation, analyse it, and then come forward to portray it in words and sentiments that are understandable for all. Her book cajoles us all to think about our identities and those of our loved ones and compare them to a situation that is so far removed from some aspects of Western culture that it is almost impossible to imagine – but she instils gentle confidence and faith that ensures that we will follow her lead.

In the aftermath of the World Trade Center attacks, the tsunami, and the London bombings we became dependent on the three primary forensic identifiers – dental comparison, fingerprint comparison, and DNA analysis – that are the indispensable core of our industry. Yet in the Balkans two of these were stripped away and at the outset most believed that DNA would not solve the issues of identity because there was only familial DNA for the comparisons. Yet not only the determination of the few pioneering scientists but also the irrepressibility of the families ultimately proved us all to be wrong, and out of the horror that was the Balkan conflict has arisen the scientific beacon of the ICMP.

The Balkans and DNA are forever inextricably linked, and Sarah Wagner has brought their story together, not in a dry and historical factual account, but in a form that is coated in humanitarian awareness whilst paying due diligence to both the political agendas and the callous intrusion of much of the media. She has walked a very fine but carefully drawn line and achieved it with superb skill. I thoroughly recommend this book to all because, as one father said to me when I questioned why he wanted to video his dead son in the mortuary, 'Some day people will tell us that this never happened'. We need these unbiased accounts to remind us of our social and historical

responsibilities and we need them as our collective conscience against complacency.

SUE BLACK *University of Dundee*

Method and theory

FABIAN, JOHANNES. *Ethnography as commentary: writing from the virtual archive*. ix, 139 pp., bibliogr. London, Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2008. £44.00 (cloth), £11.99 (paper)

Professor Fabian's book outlines his vision for commentary as an ethnographic genre, the practice of which is facilitated by the existence of virtual/on-line open-access archives of anthropological material. After defining what he means by 'commentary' in this sense, Fabian then puts it into practice in relation to a text residing in the Archives of Popular Swahili, on the Languages and Popular Culture of Africa (LPCA) website. The stated purpose of the commentary within the book is '[t]o re-present the document of an event in the past so as to make it possible to confront it in the present' (p. 113). However, this simplistic summary belies the depths and subtleties of the book.

The archived text in question is the transcription of a conversation which took place in 1974 between Fabian and Kahenga, a 'herbal specialist' (*munganga ya miti*) whose professional skills include performing rituals for the protection of property as well as healing illnesses. Fabian had hired Kahenga to perform a protective ritual – 'Closing the House' – in order to protect his home in Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo (then Zaïre), from burglars. While Kahenga's services had been commissioned out of a sense of genuine practical necessity rather than curiosity (or anything more cynical), Fabian none the less asked to speak to Kahenga concerning the ritual. The event was tape-recorded and, some thirty years later, transcribed, translated, and the resulting text lodged in the aforementioned archives – at <http://www2.fmg.uva.nl/lpca/aps/vol7/kahengatext.html> to be precise.

As such, the book has Fabian looking back at an earlier moment in his career from the vantage-point of seniority. Playing on the idea of 'Closing the House', he states that *Ethnography as commentary* is in all likelihood his last academic book. It is a highly reflexive work, and, if not quite intimate, it often has a

conversational character of its own as the 'ethnographic commentary' unfolds, seasoned as it is with learned observations and reflections upon issues both practical and philosophical within social anthropology. These range from matters of recording/transcription/translation of field data to genre in ethnography; the text in ethnography; dialogue; and the contemporaneity of ethnographic objects of study. This list is by no means exhaustive. Although the commentary contains a wealth of fascinating ethnographic data on the profession of 'herbal specialist' in 1970s Lubumbashi (not my personal regional specialism), it was often these reflections which I found most interesting and enjoyable.

The sense of conversational flow which the book maintains is in part due to the near-absence of references to other scholarship in the commentary itself. Fabian is open concerning this – again, the purpose of the exercise was for him to breathe life back into the conversation with Kahenga in order to confront it anew, rather than to place the content within the existing body of knowledge on Central African magic and witchcraft.

So, what does Fabian mean by 'ethnography as commentary'? A tightly written introduction explores the concept in detail, but to put it briefly: on-line archiving makes it easy for social anthropologists to deposit documentary material for relatively widespread public access. Commentaries upon this material offer an alternative to other ethnographic genres. Open-ended, unrestricted (and even daringly inconclusive) in Fabian's vision, a commentary illuminates the text to which it relates – and with on-line text and commentary co-present to the reader this enables 'a form of ethnography that is not predicated on the absence of its object' (p. 10).

The subtitle – *Writing from the virtual archive* – and the cover – a black background with a repeated pattern of green 1s and 0s in which words and phrases can just be discerned – give the misleading impression of high-tech subject matter. Granted, it is technology that makes it possible for anyone with an internet connection and a copy of *Ethnography as commentary* to access the Archives of Popular Swahili and use the book as its author intended, but the over-'technified' image devalues the ethnographic substance to a certain extent.

Central African specialists and those interested in genre and/or innovation in ethnography will form a natural readership for this book. However, *Ethnography as commentary*

has much to offer to anthropologists beyond these groups. I particularly thought of students, and not just for the insights which Fabian gives into fieldwork experience (as indicated on the back cover), but for the glimpse which the book offers into the thoughts of a distinguished scholar and fieldworker towards the close of his career.

NICHOLAS SWANN *University of Wales, Newport*

GAY Y BLASCO, PALOMA & HUON WARDLE.
How to read ethnography. vii, 214 pp.,
bibliogr. London, New York: Routledge, 2007.
£18.99 (paper)

The task of most textbooks in anthropology has been to unfold a history of the subject. *How to read ethnography* is refreshingly unique in that its concern is not to deliver yet another classification of the impact over time upon the discipline of its grand narratives. Rather, the emphasis is upon the ethnographic process itself. The aim of the authors is to teach students the art of reading ethnography critically, that is, to think anthropologically about the processes involved in creating ethnography, in order to develop an anthropological imagination of their own. The authors are delivering an appealing route for the reading and understanding of ethnography, one that endows the creative powers of ethnography its proper due. A basic concern of the book is to explore the role of ethnographic writing in the production of anthropological knowledge. In throwing down the gauntlet with respect to the high honour we tend to accord the power of 'theoretical narratives' in the creation of 'knowledge', the authors argue that it is not so much 'progress' in theory, but the practice of the arts attached to the ethnographic process itself that is key to the creation of knowledge in anthropology. Artful ethnography, they are saying, is the major means through which anthropology creates that knowledge that is distinct to itself, in its ongoing quest better to understand the richness and variety that adheres to the human condition. It is grand theory that must, perhaps, take second place in such knowledge-making, as it tends to provide specific means of perceiving and questioning that may or may not contribute towards understanding the specific knowledges and practices of other peoples.

Why *artful* ethnography? This is not a trivial question, and it is one that is important to the authors' revised way of reading ethnography.

They argue that the genres specific to the writing of ethnography accommodate a powerful aesthetic that we tend to take for granted. We usually *do* recognize 'quality' when we read the work of our colleagues, but to what extent do we understand why? How do we talk about such 'quality'? How is it achieved? Is it a richness of detail that holds our attention? As narrative, is it a delight to read? And most important, is it also *believable*? *How to read ethnography* forces us to reflect upon the aesthetic as well as intellectual grounds through which we do judge ethnographies and the genres in which they are written. Gay y Blasco and Wardle argue that it is precisely such genres that make ethnography a distinctive way of knowing and presenting the world. Thus, the authors are emphasizing the crucial place of genres in the creation of anthropological knowledge itself. It becomes their aim to lay bare the central, often implicit, codes, conventions, stylistic devices, and shared concerns of our ethnographic modes of writing. In the process, the student is being taught that ethnographic concepts are tools for explanation and translation, not mere description.

One finds, in its progressive unfolding of chapters, that *How to read ethnography* is a carefully crafted and powerful pedagogical tool for classroom use, suitable for undergraduate teaching, and mandatory for postgraduate. Each chapter unfolds a rich brew of well-chosen excerpts from key ethnographies that are robustly varied in theoretical orientations, styles of writing and dates of publication. The new and the old are juxtaposed: Monica Hunter (1937) alongside Bruno Latour (1996), Margaret Mead adjacent to Nurit Bird-David, Marilyn Strathern, and Richard Fardon. The older excerpts are as captivating as the ones from recent time, with the combining of authors becoming increasingly fascinating as the chapters unfold. The rich brew of excerpts is framed by the lively commentary of the authors ever engaging in apt and spirited debate. Each chapter concludes with a challenging reader's exercise, motivating students (and also teachers) to become more sophisticated in their reflection upon the ways in which ethnography creates knowledge.

Gay y Blasco and Wardle are concerned with exploring the complex framings, stylistic and otherwise, used in ethnography that endow it with factuality. Big issues are being raised – politically, morally, intellectually – over just what anthropology is, or should be, at its best. The authors take their own stand, for instance on the

question of anthropology as art or science, on the importance of affective, imaginative levels of engagement to the creation of good ethnography, and on choices in the creation of authorial voice. Large, and often unsettling, questions are being raised – politically, morally, intellectually – through this exploration of ethnography's relation to knowledge creation. For instance, Keith Hart's excerpt on his 1973 experience of researching the Ghanian informal economy (along with the author's sensitive treatment of it) is the most riveting (and courageous) anthropological text I have read that overtly dwells on such questions. The readership for *How to read ethnography* goes far beyond the classroom setting, for, in reading it, the most experienced of us will find that we still have much to learn – and reflect upon. Often exciting, and certainly sophisticated, it is a work that introduces profitable means for rethinking major issues in the discipline. On the other hand, when used as textbook, the experience should certainly lead to lively engagement and classroom debate on the most satisfying of levels. Hart's remarkable contribution should set the cats among the pigeons in any classroom, or seminar, discussion.

JOANNA OVERING *St Andrew's University*

MCLEAN, ATHENA & ANNETTE LEIBING (eds).
The shadow side of fieldwork: exploring the blurred borders between ethnography and life. xviii, 302 pp., bibliogr. Oxford, Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2007. £55.00 (cloth), £21.99 (paper)

I undertook my Ph.D. fieldwork in the tourist resorts of Palmanova and Magaluf on the Mediterranean island of Mallorca. My subject of inquiry was concerned with social constructions of 'British' (a label I use with caution but do not have space within this review to explore) national identity by tourists in this context. I embarked on my fieldwork in an idealistic frame of mind, having convinced myself that I would easily collect the data I wanted. I had, after all, participated in a Master's-level research methods course and developed a number of 'foreshadowed problems' that would guide my inquiries. I was therefore well equipped for the task in hand. However, I had not bargained for the strong feelings of estrangement and discomfort, loneliness and self-questioning that the experience brought about. Hammersley and Atkinson have noted that in the situation of the field a researcher often experiences feelings of

estrangement as the result of 'culture' shock arising due to the 'confrontation of the ethnographer with an alien culture' (*Ethnography: principles in practice*, 1995: 102). Superficially I was not from an alien culture, I did not have language issues as English appeared as the dominant language, and outwardly I did not look any different from my informants. However, I recoiled from the environment and at times actively hid: this was not the kind of holiday destination I would choose and I therefore could not properly engage. I had to work hard in the ensuing months on both an emotional and intellectual level to deal with the problems I encountered in order to overcome the hostility I felt towards my environment and the people within it, and to collect the data that I required.

In reflecting on my own position as researcher, I am attempting to draw attention to the contours of my place in the field and ultimately the impact that may have had on my production of knowledge about that context: how I felt directed my course of inquiry. It is with such knowledge that Athena McLean and Annette Leibing's edited collection appears to me to be an important and valuable contribution to the debates concerning the role of the ethnographer. In their volume the editors have assembled a number of authors who comment on a diverse range of areas of anthropological inquiry and ethnographic encounters: for example, religious rituals (Thomas J. Csordas); an investigation into a parent's life history (Alisse Waterson and Barbara Rylko-Bauer); reflections on violence (Nancy Scheper-Hughes); and the fate of a migrant (Rose-Marie Chierici). All authors in the volume explore their own subjectivities and locations within their area of inquiry, often including an acknowledgement of and reflection upon the epistemological groundings that they have brought with them to the field. The reflections on their personal positions, the thoughts, emotions and experiences that arise as a result, and their contribution to the understanding of their specific area of study are termed by McLean and Leibing as 'the shadow side of fieldwork'. The book poses a fundamental question regarding how far we as researchers can realistically separate out who *we* are from how we create understandings of who *they* are. The collection of papers in the book does not set out to answer such a question, but to foreground such elements and remind us that they cannot be divorced from how we relate to and thus narrate the other. Importantly we are

asked not to ignore these aspects but to acknowledge and incorporate them as part of the processes of our productions of the discourses relating to our areas of investigation.

Bourdieu (*The logic of practice*, 1990) has argued that objectivity prohibits practice, which demands involvement on behalf of the researcher. For him this calls into question the nature of the relationship between the observed and the observer. He suggests that the observer decides what is meaningful, makes the meaning, and by seeing the social world as representation makes people actors within it. McLean and Leibing's book goes a long way to challenging the positivistic notion of objectivity that Bourdieu criticizes to suggest a more subjective and ultimately honest approach to our work. To draw from another earlier commentary, Judith Okely contends 'the anthropologist-writer draws also on the totality of the experience' ('Thinking through fieldwork', in *Analyzing qualitative data* (eds) A. Bryman & R.G. Burgess, 1994: 20). This book brings that totality out of the shadows and into the light. It is written in an accessible manner and should inform teaching of research methods at both an undergraduate and postgraduate level, being a core text in the latter. It should be a companion guide to us all.

HAZEL ANDREWS *Liverpool University*

ROBBEN, ANTONIUS C.G.M. & JEFFREY A. SLUKA. *Ethnographic fieldwork: an anthropological reader*. xvi, 616 pp., tables, illus., bibliogr. Oxford, Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2007. £65.00 (cloth), £24.99 (paper)

A comprehensive, and often compelling, collection, *Ethnographic fieldwork* approaches 'the field' in its broadest sense. Its thirty-eight chapters, divided into ten sections, are a mix of classic and contemporary fieldwork accounts which encourage the reader to reflect upon the analytical value and limitations of differing fieldwork methods and relations.

Robben and Sluka explain in their introduction that while it has been subject to many developments and reflexive discussions – as demonstrated by the vast literature on the subject – fieldwork remains a central tenet of the discipline and should be considered in terms of its wider significance. Thus, although this volume can be used as a source of practical advice, it is less of a guide to formal research

methods and more a collection of texts which highlight the complexity, scope, and diversity of 'the fieldwork experience'. The editors have tended to favour reflexive accounts in their selection, but the balance between classic and contemporary texts, and the wide range of ethnographic contexts in which these are situated, ensures that this book does not fall into the trap of providing a mere set of 'navel-gazing' fieldwork reflections, but rather enables debates and discussions to be placed within their historical and intellectual trajectories. This balance, coupled with the excellent section introductions and the logical manner in which the sections are structured, results in the identification of key theoretical and conceptual threads, which in turn helps mould a series of potentially disparate texts into a coherent reader.

The classic texts of Boas and Malinowski, which are featured alongside a contribution from Degérando, open the volume, in part 1, 'Origins', and provide the historical context for the following chapters. Part 2, 'Fieldwork identity', explores, through accounts by Powdermaker and Johnson, the influence of gender and ethnicity on fieldwork relations and introduces the themes of reflexivity and subjectivity, which continue to be explored throughout the book. Sexual orientation and relations are introduced into this discussion through the original contribution of Altork, while Cohen's article on 'Self-conscious anthropology' provides a springboard into part 3, 'Fieldwork relations and rapport', which examines the intersubjective nature of fieldwork relations and stresses, especially through Berreman's contribution, the importance of impression management.

The seminal critique of anthropology by Vine Deloria, Jr, provides the starting-point for the reflexive discussion of ethnographic representation and fieldwork conduct which forms the thematic backbone of part 4, 'The "Other" talks back'. These themes are examined from the perspectives of both ethnographers and research subjects, with Greenberg and Schepher-Hughes highlighting the role the media play in shaping the manner in which ethnography is disseminated and received by research participants. The inclusion of these contributions is central in taking the discussion of fieldwork outside the confines of the academy into the broader socio-political domain; a theme which continues in part 5, 'Fieldwork conflicts, hazards, and dangers', and also in part 6, 'Fieldwork ethics'.

Fieldwork in sites of conflict is first introduced in part 3 through Robben's account of working with the victims and perpetrators of violence in Argentina, and while part 5 examines this topic specifically through contributions by Nordstrom and Sluka, the section is not limited to this ethnographic subfield, but is made broader by the inclusion of the chapters by Nash and Howell. These contributions, as with many of those preceding them, highlight fieldwork difficulties and failures, and it is this topic which is developed further in the original and insightful accounts of Bourgois and Pollock in part 6.

New modes of fieldwork are ethnographically explored in part 7, 'Multi-sited fieldwork', and part 8, 'Sensorial fieldwork', in which the contemporary chapters by Edwards and Zabusky are coupled with the recent classics of Gupta and Ferguson, Hannerz, Stoller, and Olkes, and Feld to problematize 'place' and demonstrate new ethnographic 'spaces' and directions. Yet more attention could be given to new technologies and fieldwork in virtual and imagined environments. Likewise, although they refer to 'native anthropologists' and conducting fieldwork 'at home' in their introduction, Robben and Sluka do not include any contributions that explicitly address this topic, which is particularly salient among the graduate students at whom this collection is aimed.

Ethnographic fieldwork concludes with part 9, 'Reflexive ethnography', and part 10, 'Fictive fieldwork and fieldwork novels', which include classic contributions by Rabinow, Crapanzano, Clifford, and Smith Bowen, although the volume is, perhaps, also in want of its own conclusion. However, despite the omissions, this book is an excellent reader and will no doubt become a valuable teaching tool and reading list staple.

EMMA-JAYNE ABBOTS *Goldsmiths College*

Music, dance, and performance

BIRTH, KEVIN K. *Bacchanalian sentiments: musical experiences and political counterpoints in Trinidad*. xiv, 258 pp., bibliogr. London, Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2008. £45.00 (cloth), £11.99 (paper)

In his earlier title, '*Any time is Trinidad time: social meanings and temporal consciousness* (1999), Birth argued that the idea of time is

contextual and contentious in the struggle over morality and identity, and that differences in temporal concepts mutually reinforce racial, ethnic, gender, age, and class boundaries. *Bacchanalian sentiments* sets forward Birth's anthropological exploration into the cultural conceptualization of time in his familiar site of fieldwork – the rural village of 'Anamat' in Central Trinidad – with new research questions. In Trinidad and the wider Caribbean, music is an 'important means for making and contesting cultural claims about identities and the nation' and a 'means for *thinking* and generating *feelings* about such claims' (p. 12, emphasis in original). Considering its political implications, Birth questions 'what Trinidadian music does and how it is used' (p. 3), particularly how it co-ordinates human practices and behaviours, (re)defines personal and group identities, and affects memory based on which one comprehends, periodizes, and realigns history.

Two words represent how Birth theoretically and methodologically addresses the questions: 'counterpoint' and 'polyrhythm'. More notable than the difference in their respective application to the melodic and metrical themes, these concepts denote the relationships of multiple themes that are independent in contour but interdependent in harmony. Birth considers these musical terms more serviceable as metaphors of socio-political processes than the accepted creole/ization and hybrid/ization metaphors. As with music composed using contrapuntal techniques, in socio-political processes in Trinidad, multiple 'voices', 'melodies', and themes unfold, colliding and colluding. Using musical, as opposed to structural, metaphors, Birth argues, can highlight the fluidity of image, idea, consciousness, and identity regarding various dimensions of Trinidadian lives. In consequence, he expects, scholarly attention will be shifted to the formative contexts, that is, the 'complex interplay of a variety of cognitively dynamic and emotionally charged processes of relating' (p. 18) wherein such *thoughts* and *feelings* are evoked.

The first chapter captures the most resounding 'voice' – the state. For Eric Williams, the first leader of independent Trinidad and Tobago, the decolonization process involved engineering new cultural values and aesthetics that embraced all social segments, as opposed to the 'dividing-and-ruling' colonial culture. Williams and colonized intellectuals proposed to valorize certain musical forms from a mosaic of

Trinidadian musics as representatives of Trinidadian 'national' culture and identity by dramatizing them at government-sponsored showcases. The following chapter demonstrates, however, how performers and audience think and feel their musical experience has 'counterpointed' the state's effort to tame 'folk' music to serve political needs and produced 'unintended consequences'. Admitting the state to be the dominant theme, Birth 'choose[s] to privilege the audience [or, more broadly, "nonperforming participants"]' (p. 92)' (p. 28). Concentrating his ethnographic observations on the 'microlevel attitudes, relationships, and forms of [participation]' (p. 91), he illustrates that Carnival, 'Panorama' (the annual national steelband competition), and other government-sponsored musical contexts actually engage the sentiments that reinforce the existing kinship, group- and community-level relationships against the state's intention to subordinate such primordial ties to national unity.

According to Birth, however, Trinidadian music *simultaneously* fragments and connects the fragments. The development within a cyclical time-frame has built a 'temporally unfolding annual rhythm of musical repetition and change' in Trinidad. Owing to this 'rhythmicity' (p. 214), Trinidadian music can evoke an intensive exchange of conflicting images, ideas, and identities, which would have otherwise remained separate, in the same temporal and spatial limits. Birth exemplifies this potential of Trinidadian music to weave subjectivities into intersubjectivity with two episodes of 'enigmatic' political incidents: the attempted coup in 1990 (chap. 4) and the general elections in 1995 (chap. 5). The 'public processes of musical consumption coupled with group discussions in public settings' (p. 188) have turned 'unusual' events and the experienced history of terror into a thinkable and tolerable part of shared cultural ordinariness. Articulating in lyrics and rhythms, and rendering consumable using bodies and senses in public, music is competent to develop the metaphor of 'mix-up' into the shared cultural models of Trinidadian nation, as opposed to structured government policy towards creolization.

This book makes gains for a wider audience across disciplines and geographic focuses. The approach to the resonance between the 'musical' and 'temporal' complements historical studies of Trinidadian music, and the analysis of how the 'audience' interprets and uses musical

experiences supplements the studies of text and discourse from music-makers' and performers' standpoints. As one who is concerned with culture and nationalism, I believe that Birth's exploration of Trinidadian sense of nation drawing on ethnographic research in rural villages serves as a reminder that colonial Trinidad was divisive but relatively fluid, causing constant dialogues between different segments. This has been seriously disregarded in the urban- and state-focused studies of 'nation-building'.

TERUYUKI TSUJI *Nova Southeastern University*

BUCKLEY, ANTHONY D., CRÍOSTÓIR MAC CÁRTHAIGH, SÉAMAS Ó CATHÁIN, & SÉAMAS MAC MATHÚNA (eds).

Border-crossing: mummings in cross-border and cross-community contexts. xvii, 327 pp., maps, tables, plates, figs, illus., bibliogr. Dundalk: Dundalgan Press (W. Tempest), 2007. £48.00 (cloth)

The edited collection of essays that makes up this volume looks at the genre of 'mumming' – a series of related European folk traditions in which disguised amateur performers visit neighbours' houses to perform a play and to play music. The performances typically follow a circumscribed 'script', and they are often bawdy and exciting affairs that contravene basic social norms.

Several overlapping themes emerge in the volume, and it must be said that, despite my neat delineation below, many of the essays address several of the themes simultaneously.

Some of the essays deal with the ways in which nationalism and ethnicity are recapitulated in performances or, conversely, how the performances are used to disrupt and challenge these definitions of community. Ray Cashman describes how the tradition has historically been used by a community along the border with Northern Ireland either to bridge ethnic and national divides or to exacerbate them. In the Scandinavian context, Christine Eike writes about how various non-Norwegian performance genres have been absorbed into Norwegian traditions, while Mari Kulmanen similarly describes the introduction of Hallowe'en into Finland. Paul Smith looks at the relationship between printed material dealing with mumming in England and Ireland. Likewise, Terry Gunnell analyses the relationship between performances in the Shetlands and the Faroe Islands to those in Scandinavia and the British Isles.

Most of the chapters address issues of social change and the adaptation of tradition. For example, Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh uses archival material and a recent project documenting modern mumming performances to describe how formal theatrical venues and methods have changed the tradition in recent years in Ireland. Carsten Bregenhøj writes about the factors leading to the survival and loss of mumming traditions in Denmark, while Eddie Cass looks at the development of English folk plays since their revival after the Second World War. In an interesting essay, Caoimhe Ní Shúilleabháin describes how Irish immigrant families in Newfoundland have carefully preserved the 'Wren Boys' tradition of mumming.

Another prominent approach might be characterized as a formal ritual analysis in which a particular mumming performance or set of performances is broken down into its constituent parts and related back to its performative context. The most explicit examples of this analytical formalism are the chapters by Anthony Buckley, Séamas Ó Catháin, and Peter Millington. Buckley compares the structure and motifs of a mumming performance to a Catholic Mass and the Masonic ritual induction into the status of 'Third Degree', while Ó Catháin makes use of linguistic differences between mummers' rhymes in Irish and English to track how the tradition has changed. In a chapter describing individually authored or adapted mummers' texts, Millington also uses a structural analysis to show which motifs and themes must be maintained in order for a performance to remain 'authentic'.

Given the performance genre under discussion, it is not surprising that many of the contributors use the notion of liminality to discuss metaphoric border-crossing (e.g. cross-dressing and disguising) and also the crossing of more literal borders. This is perhaps most explicitly seen in Henry Glassie's description of mumming in County Fermanagh, Ray Cashman's discussion of mumming along the border of Northern Ireland, Jack Santino's emphasis on the creative aspects of performance, or Terry Gunnell's piece on 'guising' traditions in the Shetlands. Finally, most of the essays also deal with notions of community in one way or another, and how these traditions either foster social cohesion or challenge it. Neill Martin's chapter on guising in Scotland might be the best example.

While the case studies are fascinating reading on their own, unfortunately, given the nature of the topic, the volume as a whole is very narrowly focused. The book is presumably geared towards those who attended the conference out of which the volume sprung and also, as the editors suggest, performing mummings themselves. For that reason, it is unlikely to appeal to wider audiences outside of the study of folklore or the study of Europe (and especially Ireland). This is exacerbated by the fact that the editors only briefly broaden the discussion in the very short introductory essay. This is a missed opportunity. Much more could be made from some interesting issues brought up in the case studies. As a result, no significantly new theoretical ideas about the study of ritual, performance, or community emerge. That said, the rich ethnographic descriptions in the volume will be welcomed by those interested in European folklore (especially primarily the British Isles and Western Europe) or, more generally, the study of performance and ritual.

ADAM KAUL *Augustana College*

Religion and myth

FITZGERALD, TIMOTHY. *Discourse on civility and barbarity: a critical history of religion and related categories*. x, 354 pp., bibliogr. Oxford: Univ. Press, 2007. £28.99 (cloth)

Timothy Fitzgerald of the University of Stirling is one of a group of scholars of 'religion', many of them American, who have engaged in a radical review of its definition, following the lead of Jonathan Z. Smith in *Imagining religion: from Babylon to Jonestown* – 'Religion has no independent existence apart from the academy' (1988: xi) – and interacting with cultural anthropologists of various intellectual persuasions such as Benson Saler and Talal Asad. Anthropologists will respond sympathetically to Fitzgerald's master thesis: that religion is not a distinct phenomenon to be analysed separately from economics and politics, and that comparative religion and world religions are artefacts of theologians. In many non-Western cultures even today, and in Britain before the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries, he argues, religion should be seen as 'encompassing' what are now generally identified as secular domains.

The core of his book is a close analysis of the lexical field associated with the changing meanings in English of the 'religious'. Before the split between church and state, this used to be contrasted with irrational barbarism or heresy, until an originally ecclesiastical distinction between the religious or regular clergy and the secular or extra-monastic clergy mutated into a distinction overlapping with that between sacred and profane, but not identical to it. The deism of the Enlightenment, inherent in the language of the American Declaration of Independence, was a transitional stage that gave way to the crystallization, in the US Constitution, of the idea of religion as a voluntary organization licensed by a state which stands back from religion.

The semantic issue is complicated by an older, Latinate sense of religion, meaning the punctilious observance of ritual. Further demonstrating the intricacy of Fitzgerald's theme, one chapter covers a compendium, published in 1613 by an English vicar, Samuel Purchas, of narratives, both past and contemporary, about peoples of the world. What Purchas meant by 'religion' was Protestant Christian truth, but his ironic extension of the term to other 'religions' meant its opposite – superstitions and pagan misunderstandings, in which he included Romanism.

These chapters leave a strong impression and should sensitize any reader of anglophone historical texts on religion to the risks of anachronistic and ideologically loaded assumptions. Fitzgerald leaves to other scholars the task of correlating his findings with French and other sources.

The topical inferences Fitzgerald draws from his study are sometimes weak (e.g. when he touches on present-day Islam). But he persuasively argues against the embedding in UK school education of a tacit understanding that 'the same one sacred unseen Holy' manifests itself in different forms in different cultures (p. 27). His claim that the modern religious-secular binary is an achievement of insidious postcolonial rhetoric is a challenge to those involved in officially sponsored initiatives such as 'religion and development', 'religion and conservation', and inter-faith peace-making. Yet if this demystification is to be the main aim of 'religious studies', Fitzgerald is like a tree surgeon who saws off the branch he is sitting on.

The rhetoric that underlies Fitzgerald's own position on the discipline of religious studies seems to be a wish to downgrade, on

the one hand, efforts to understand private beliefs and individual experience, and, on the other hand, efforts to compare different traditions. But first, historical research and ethnography when imaginatively undertaken can provide at least a window into individual beliefs. These clearly mattered greatly (to take an example from the English sixteenth century) to people who were burned at the stake for refusing to recant. Second, a word such as 'religion' is arguably no more tricky to handle than various other key words used in comparative social studies.

Fitzgerald is also concerned to discredit the ideal of scientific knowledge of the material world, and *a fortiori* of the social world: 'The system of binaries between spirit and matter, soul and body, supernatural and natural, turns the world into an object, or a system of objects, and us into master observers' (p. 278). He gives no attention to the possibility of cumulative or replicable knowledge.

Though stimulating, his book is annoyingly repetitive – for which Fitzgerald pleads mitigation on the grounds that he had to meet a UK Research Assessment Exercise deadline for publication. But a hotelier who rushes to prepare rooms in time for the season may not get the testimonials from guests that would otherwise be deserved.

JONATHAN BENTHALL *University College London*

FJELSTAD, KAREN & NGUYEN THI HIEN (eds). *Possessed by the spirits: mediumship in contemporary Vietnamese communities*. 186 pp., figs, illus. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 2006. £19.95 (paper)

This collection of essays on the rapidly increasing phenomenon of Vietnamese spirit mediumship comes with a comprehensive introduction by the editors and a masterly summarizing conclusion by Laurel Kendall. Both editors contribute their own essays while Fjelstad also collaborates with another contributor, Lisa Maiffret, on a separate paper. Another main contributor, Kirsten Endres, also contributes to a further joint essay with Viveca Larsson. The collection is extensively cross-referenced.

The essays, based largely on recent field research, veer between the more ethnographic and the more theoretically orientated, but all show a thorough knowledge of their subject and raise interesting questions about mediumship in general, its relations to personal transformation, the state, and gender. From a practice until very

recently condemned as 'superstitious', the cult seems to be moving towards a more 'theatrical performance representing Vietnamese national culture' (p. 13). Fjelstad and Maiffret also deal with its transnational aspects as (mostly US) mediums begin to travel between California and Vietnam.

In the concluding essay, Kendall notes that the contributors have gone well beyond an earlier paradigm, derived from the work of Iona Lewis, which would have portrayed these largely female cults of the 'mother goddess' as a peripheral form empowering women by comparison with the more male exorcistic possession cult associated with the heroic historical figure of Tran Hung Dao. These two main forms of mediumship now appear to be merging, as the introduction (p. 10) notes and Pham Quynh Phuong's paper argues. And after some serious disavowals and understandable reluctance to indulge lightly in cross-cultural comparisons, Kendall does nevertheless draw out some most suggestive 'resonant' threads (p. 164) across other East Asian (and Southeast Asian) societies, particularly those influenced by Mahayana Buddhism, where dancing musical female mediums communicate with the spirits of the deceased or cultural heroes and deities, from Burma and Thailand to China, drawing on her own work on Korean mediumship.

It is clear that the rituals examined here largely form part of a modern, or made-over, tradition, and there has been considerable recent work on them around and since the time this book was prepared, such as the special issue of *Asian Ethnology* (formerly *Asian Folklore Studies*) in 2008 (67: 2), entitled 'Popular religion and the sacred life of material goods in contemporary Vietnam' (ed. L. Kendall), and the work of Philip Taylor which many of the contributors refer to. Several of the contributors, like Barley Norton and Pham Quynh Phuong, have their own books out and form some of the dominant voices in this field.

Ngo Duc Thinh provides a compelling overview of the history of this 'mother goddess worship', while Pham Quynh Phuong provides ethnographic details of the relationship between the 'Saint Tran' cult and that of the mother goddess possession cults. Norton's piece on music and gender is also of great interest, arguing that mediumship provides flexible opportunities for transgressing gender boundaries while still remaining contained within stereotypical gender frameworks. Several essays discuss the recent concern with 'materialism' and the sense of nostalgia

displayed by some modern mediums for the recent past, when most popular religious practices were severely suppressed (e.g. Fjelstad; Larsson and Endres). The penultimate contribution (Larsson and Endres) emphasizes the importance of the 'ritual community' in which mediums are embedded (as do Fjelstad and Maiffret), and this is perhaps a topic one would have liked to learn more about from this collection, in which fieldwork seems often to be based on interviews with individual mediums. Other contributions deal with the vital importance of the therapeutic value of mediumship (Endres; Nguyen Thi Hien; Fjelstad and Maiffret), and again one would like to hear more of the medical system involved in the initiations of mediums and their diagnoses of illness. Kendall, in conclusion, notes the long association of 'economics and a popular religion' (p. 179) in these areas – which is pointed to by Nguyen Thi Hien's examination of paper offerings and competitiveness between mediums under the impact of the market economy – and the continuing significance of the imagined pre-modern state (the 'historical imaginary of the pre-modern state', p. 181) in these novel, or revived, ritual formulations. Beyond the rational gates of bureaucracy, a popular ritual economy flourishes, yet now its performance elements appear to lend themselves to its inscription within a national story. This collection well approaches what Kendall (p. 168) notes as the 'messiness, openness, and geographical and ontological fluidity' of popular religion. The collection includes nice black-and-white illustrations.

NICHOLAS TAPP *Australian National University*

MAKRIS, G.P. *Islam in the Middle East: a living tradition*. viii, 348 pp., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Blackwell Publishing, 2007. £55.00 (cloth), £17.99 (paper)

This useful textbook, with a judicious selection of ethnographic examples, emphasizes 'transcultural similarities and universal aspirations as well as local interpretations' of Islam in the Middle East. With its focus on Islam as a living tradition, it is a welcome successor to the author's earlier Ph.D. account of his Sudanese fieldwork in Khartoum: *Changing masters: spirit possession and identity constructs among descendants of slaves and other subordinates in the Sudan* (2000). That work is a model of anthropological empathy at its best and provides an excellent base for a view of

everyday Islam in the life of ordinary, and often oppressed, Muslims. The Middle East here is understood as 'the vast region stretching from Mauritania and Morocco to Afghanistan and Pakistan in Asia, via North Africa (including the Sudan) and Turkey'. With this large canvas, Makris opens up a large vista of Islamic societies to comparative sociological analysis in a deeper and more satisfactory way than Ernest Gellner achieved with his 'pendulum theory' of mystical and non-mystical modes of Islam. In Gellner's over-simplistic analysis, this dichotomy was held to correspond to that between illiterate rural and literate urban communities. In a wider framework, Makris argues, Islamic 'orthodoxy' – that which is considered correct and traditionally acceptable – is always in the making: 'the unsteady, ever-changing result of an eminently political process'. If his ethnographic examples of this process make little reference to French sources, this seems justified in a work designed primarily for anglophone students.

Islam, Makris emphasizes, is not an object (as the classic 'Orientalists' often appeared to think), 'but rather a discursive tradition within the flow of history as concretised in particular societies at particular times'. Thus, for instance, he notes that 'if anything, states create nations rather than vice versa'. Of course, careful examination of the historical evidence in Islam, as elsewhere, illustrates movements in both directions, perhaps to a greater extent than the author recognizes.

Makris begins his vivid presentation of living Islam, within these vast historical and geographical coordinates, with an admirably concise review of Islam's four doctrinal foundations: the Qur'an; the Prophetic tradition (*Sunna* and *hadith*); the juridical consensus (*Ijima*); and reasoning by analogy (*Qiyas* and *ijtihad*). With these and other sources of legitimacy, Islamic Law (*Sharia*) retained from its origins ambiguity and dynamism, allowing it to reflect and define Islamic 'truth' in different societies and times according to the ambient socio-political conditions. Of course, as Makris rightly stresses, study of the Qur'an as the pre-eminent sacred text does not invite believers to approach it critically and to engage in dialogue as to what it might stand for. It must be accepted unquestioningly as the true Word of God, there being no interpretation or question of this. It has to be admitted, however, that while this is true in principle, modernist thinkers do indeed interpret the sacred tradition when it suits them. So, for instance, the reformist Tunisian politician and intellectual Bourghiba

famously argued that the Prophet's approval of polygyny should not be taken literally, since it was manifestly obvious that no man could, as was enjoined, treat four wives equally. Hence what was really recommended was monogamy, allowing a husband to treat his wife properly and to encourage her moral and educational advancement. Without citing this particular example, Makris gives a sensitive account of women's status in Muslim societies, their traditional and modern situations and rights, and criticizes the limited ethnocentric judgements of simplistic Western commentators, especially in the context of 'development'.

Gender issues take us directly in Middle Eastern thought to the world of spirits, where Makris draws primarily on his own and other research from northeast Africa. Makris also treats at appropriate length the cult of *zar* and related spirits. These, as he argues, are at the heart of 'popular' Islam. This topic, as I recall being forcefully reminded of at an international conference on the subject, is distinctly unpopular with orthodox Muslim scholars and academics, especially fundamentalists. The tension here is especially heightened today with the prominence of fundamentalist politics throughout contemporary Islam. Finally, it should be recorded that this very readable account is accompanied by ample notes and references and a workmanlike index. The text might usefully have included a survey of earlier writers on the region, and its agreeable format would have been further enhanced if space had been found for a selection of topical illustrations.

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ROSEN, LAWRENCE. *Varieties of Muslim experience: encounters with Arab political and cultural life*. x, 268 pp., bibliogr. London, Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press, 2008. £18.00 (cloth)

In these twelve essays Rosen discusses a variety of issues from Arab societies which have often attracted the interest of many in the West, specialists and the general public alike. Among others, these include suicide bombings, the strength of personalism, the Danish cartoon controversy, the poverty of representational arts, the allure of fundamentalism for Arab scientists, and a disregard of human rights.

Approaching the Arabic-speaking world as a distinct entity, the author argues that there is something rather singular which can be called

'Arab culture'. Rosen does not provide us with any clear sociological definition of it, but speaks in terms of partaking in 'shared orientations towards the world of everyday experience' and in a 'shared cultural base' which lies beneath the variety of everyday life that strikes the eye of the casual but sympathetic Western traveller to the Arab countries. Moreover, Rosen maintains, this 'Arab culture' cannot be properly understood 'without recourse to the religious involvement of any concept', though he acknowledges that religion alone does not suffice for a full explanation of reality.

Two characteristics of 'Arab culture' are singled out as explanatory tools for the issues discussed in the book. The first concerns the idea of an 'Arab self'. This, Rosen describes as fundamentally 'indivisible' – that is, not suffering from segregation into potentially discordant roles, as the case is allegedly in the West; and as 'relational' – that is, consisting of the sum of its relationships with others, be they kinsmen, neighbours, or members of the tribe, market acquaintances and competitors, state functionaries and bureaucrats, political friends and foes.

What is significant in this image of the self, Rosen maintains, is *his* (sic) continuous engagement in a never-ending negotiation process, which reveals the social world to be 'composed of running imbalances of obligations, constantly fashioned and serviced, constantly in need of reciprocation'.

The second idea Rosen presents as central to the concept of 'Arab culture' concerns the relationship between 'tyranny' and 'chaos'. In a cultural environment where doubt equals unbelief and, consequently, threatens the order and cohesion 'of the community of believers that makes possible the world created for mankind', freedom and Western democracy are not necessarily perceived as alternatives to tyranny, that is, to the rule of a strong personality who, through his connections to others and his skill in negotiating, ruthlessly, even violently, has managed to elevate himself into a position of power.

These two ideas, the indivisible 'Arab self' and the fear of chaos and its destructive consequences for the community of believers, which Rosen implicitly equals to society or social order, are employed by the author in the analysis of the issues discussed in each chapter of the book.

Thus, a violent Arab dictator may be seen as legitimate if, through his networks of reciprocal obligations, he has successfully negotiated his

position with his dependants. In a similar vein, an Iraqi suicide bomber should not be seen as a religious fanatic, but as an actor who tries to recapture social order through martyrdom in a society where the American occupation has destroyed the game of negotiation between the leader and his dependants, cancelled all avenues of reciprocity, and not supplied an alternative. Then again, the rather opaque nature of Qur'anic text to many in the West is clarified if we approach the Holy Book as a collection of immutable revelations in the form of timeless context-independent propositions which cannot be doubted. This absence of doubt or its opposite, the cult of certainty, is also at play in the case of the scientist who embraces fundamentalism.

I agree with Rosen that the premises upon which the construction of personhood is based differ between cultures. However, I wonder if such an understanding of the self as the one he proposes for the Arab world is the most appropriate. Ideal types are analytically important, but are not accurate descriptions of ethnographic realities. Identities, indeed the very concepts of 'self' and 'other', have been shown by contemporary theory to be always in the making within ever-changing historical conditions. By this I do not mean solely the struggles against foreign occupation and economic hegemony. I also refer to all internal differentiations of gender, class, as well as political and religious/sectarian affiliations which characterize the local histories of Arab societies. I think that Rosen's valuable insight on personhood in the Arab world could deepen and develop further if situated more deeply in its harsh colonial and postcolonial history in an era in which 'selves' and 'others' are recognized as shattered hybrids.

GERASIMOS MAKRIS *Panteion University*

Social anthropology

ARNOLD, DENISE Y. WITH JUAN DE DIOS YAPITA. *The metamorphosis of heads: textual struggles, education and land in the Andes*. xiii, 330 pp., maps, figs, tables, illus., bibliogr. Pittsburgh: Univ. Press, 2006. \$35.00 (cloth)

This co-authored book proposes an Andean 'textual theory' founded in cloth and conceptualized in opposition to a 'European textual theory'. Andean historical practices of

weaving, knotting, and braiding (e.g. the production of knotted textile *kipu* by the Inkas) are understood to shape contemporary practices. There is thus understood to be a homology between ancient techniques of producing textile artefacts and a host of contemporary practices included in a broadly defined category of 'textual practices'.

An Andean 'textual theory' is associated with learning through dictation, recitation, and memorization rooted in older 'textual practices', something which is taken to account for the low level of literacy in Bolivia. Similarly, pupils' limited access to books in schools is interpreted as an expression of much older attitudes to *kipu*, perceived as living beings and attended by particular principles of storage and ritual practice. The school is understood as a mediating institution between the nation-state and community members. In this interplay, pupils are a form of 'communal tribute, part of a pact in which parents, as original landowners ... contribute to the state an annual "sacrifice" of their children in exchange for their communal rights to land' (p. 87).

The authors are inspired by Derrida's notion of the relation between voice and writing. In their interpretation of Derrida's work they propose that 'voice underlies writing, whether this writing takes the form of weaving, *kipu*, or any other woven or braided vocal support' (p. 272). This results in a unique perspective both on Derrida and on Andean 'textual practices'. 'The voice' is ultimately understood as the 'primordial voice of the Inka', given life more than four centuries after his death in the 'textual practices' of rural communities. The authors further draw on Viveiros de Castro's notion of 'ontological depredation [*sic*]', understood as a mode of reconstructing the Self from an enemy Other. Ultimately, this approach stresses Andean incorporation and appropriation of 'foreign' textuality rather than struggle.

While the book provides novel perspectives on important questions, it is regrettable that many key terms are left undefined. Reference is made to 'constant land wars', 'agrarian reform', and 'educational reform', while informants are defined as 'wise ones'. No contextual information is provided, such as the aims and contents of the said reforms; what groups struggle over land and why; or how a 'wise one' is defined and by whom. The authors assume the reader is well versed in Bolivian history, politics, social relations, and culture. For those who are not area specialists (e.g. this reader),

the book paints an abstract picture based on etymological and semiotic interpretations of practices.

While the authors aim to describe 'the world of children', this is done at the level of a 'meta-language', where children are but symbols in an economy of meanings. The result is a perception of children as passive pawns in a textual struggle between community members who hold to an ancient 'textuality' and the modernizing Bolivian nation-state, leaving them little agency in how these struggles are played out.

The book is based on ethnographic research in the community of Livichuco (Oruro Department) and comparative studies carried out by the authors' students. It thus concerns the wider Southern Andean highlands. It is striking that only a brief note on methodology is included stating that these are 'described extensively elsewhere' (a footnote refers to two pieces in Spanish and one article in English from 1997). This lack of methodological transparency, combined with the use of Spanish terms that are not translated, and the lack of contextual information, leaves the reader with a sense of having navigated a highly symbolic landscape in which the practical reality of land rights and struggles over education remains elusive.

In her article from 1997 ('Using ethnography to unravel different kinds of knowledge in the Andes', *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 6, 33-50), Arnold called for a new focus in Andean ethnography that would study native Andean discourse, texts, and textual practices. *The metamorphosis of heads* contributes to this objective, and to creating new ethnographic approaches to the region. In this light, it is perhaps a matter of regret that the book is centred on its own closed circle of meanings and does not attempt to communicate with those unfamiliar with the region and its history.

ANNA PORTISCH *Brunel University*

BUCKLER, SARAH. *Fire in the dark: telling Gypsiness in North East England*. xiii, 234 pp., illus., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2007. £45.00 (cloth)

It is singularly appropriate that this volume is part of the publisher's 'Studies in Applied Anthropology Series', since the author, Sarah (Sal) Buckler, has worked at the interface of local government and academia for many

years. With the current lack of growth in anthropology as an academic discipline in the UK, accounts produced by anthropologists who are employed by institutions outside the universities is of particular interest, since it is in these places that anthropologists will come, increasingly, to locate themselves. And if this absorbing book is anything to go by, then we should look forward to the future with confidence. This is a book written by someone who has worked *with* Gypsies in the northeast of England, rather than by one who has worked *on* them. Throughout the text, Buckler demonstrates a close empathy with the Gypsies' points of view, beginning with a book title that derives from a core metaphor used by members of the group. The story starts, and stories are central here, with a meeting between local council officials, Gypsies, and the author, who together attempt to solve a problem. The problem seems intractable and this intractability is the stimulus for the engaging account that follows.

The book is divided into three parts. In part I ('The wasteland') Buckler reviews and critiques accounts of community which tend towards a structuralist approach, focusing on boundary and oppositional characteristics of groups and cultures. For Buckler, 'culture' is both creative and contingent, facilitating rather than determining social action. She is especially alert to the ways in which groups such as the Gypsies are often homogenized (by academics and local government officials) and stripped of their agency as individuals. Gypsies (at least in the northeast of England) live in the spaces and places between 'mainstream' society and what the mainstream define as 'Gypsy culture'. These 'wastelands', which are presented as both real and metaphorical, provide a meeting-point for Gypsies and *gorgios* (the Romany term for non-Gypsies). Buckler talks again of the transcending of boundaries in describing her fieldwork methods. She is disarming in her account of the ambivalence of her status in relation both to the Gypsies for whom she is an advocate and the council officers with whom she has to work. At one point she finds herself in the Anthropology Department at Durham along with three Gypsy research participants (and friends) – an inversion of 'the field' increasingly likely to be experienced by anthropologists in the UK. Buckler goes on to present a potted history of Teesside, the area in which the ethnography is set, making clear that the Gypsies with whom she worked belonged in Teesside, tending to return there

after travelling and sometimes moving into houses there.

The chapters in part II ('The Fire') provide an articulate account of the ways in which stories are constructive of the Gypsy moral universe and ultimately of Gypsiness as a lived identity. Story-telling among Gypsies, argues Buckler, is distinctive for a number of reasons, one being their tendency not to read books. She goes on to establish the centrality of family in the stories that Gypsies tell. However, the stories that Buckler presents, although certainly focusing on family, are similar to stories figuring in ethnographic accounts from other British contexts insofar as they tend to refer to particular people living in particular times and places. The willingness of Gypsies to move to and fro between Gypsy and *gorgio* worlds is exemplified in an account of the baptism of a Gypsy baby. The context is Yarm High Street during the annual fair. Buckler records the various exchanges between Presbyterian priest and Gypsy group and offers a precise analysis of this social situation (as Gluckman would have called it). It is a wonderfully nuanced account in which Buckler draws brilliantly on the idea of 'the inchoate': a concept developed by James Fernandez (*Persuasions and performances*, 1986) to describe those vague and partially defined experiences and ideas relating to some 'other' which individuals and groups give shape to and manipulate through, for instance, their use of pronouns. It is a mode of analysis which is developed in part III ('The dark'). Buckler returns to the meeting with which she began her narrative and indicates, once more, the subtle ways and means by which individuals (Gypsy or *gorgio*) more or less self-consciously define themselves as 'we' against some imagined 'they'. Despite her criticism of ethnographic accounts which allocate each individual to a culture, she herself talks of Gypsies who themselves straddle two cultures – while other individuals and groups do not? And concluding that both Gypsies and *gorgios* occupy one culture but then adding that they are 'members of different traditions of practice' (p. 204) is confusing. At last then, and despite her best efforts, Buckler struggles to escape the infernal logic of the binary opposition. This is less of a weakness, though, and more an interesting conundrum which will continue to provoke debate among and between scholars, practitioners, and those in-between for some time to come.

PETER COLLINS *Durham University*

ENDICOTT, KIRK M. & KAREN L. ENDICOTT.

The headman was a woman: the gender egalitarian Batek of Malaysia. xii, 163 pp., maps, tables, illus., DVD, bibliogr. Long Grove, Ill.: Waveland Press, 2008. \$17.95 (paper)

Since I work mainly on urban anthropology in Malaysia and the Southeast Asian region, I hesitated in accepting the invitation to review a publication that appeared at first glance to have little in common with my usual reading fare. In hindsight, it proved to be a beneficial read in familiarizing me with the lives of 'few Malaysians' seldom noticed except among the specialists.

The Batek (or Bateq) speak a Mon-Khmer language and are Semang nomadic hunter-gatherers residing in the tropical rainforests of the northeastern ecological niche of Peninsular Malaysia. Their cursory physical resemblance to African Pygmies, leading to the appellation 'Malayan Negritos', inclined nineteenth-century ethnologists to speculate that they were the remnant of a 'primitive race' displaced by more technologically 'advanced' races in the distant past.

Presently numbering not more than 800-900, they aptly call themselves 'the people/guardians of the forest', underscoring the pivotal importance of the forest to their daily material existence, belief systems, and emotional well-being. Joined recently by German anthropologist Christian Vogt and by Malaysian anthropologist Lye Tuck-Po in the 1990s, the American anthropologist couple Kirk and Karen Endicott have been studying extensively the Batek since the early 1970s, and have published on various aspects of their lives.

This particular publication brings together their cumulative knowledge on the Batek people specifically to address the theme of 'gender egalitarianism', as suggested by the paradoxical title of the book. Through accessible and lucid prose, the Endicotts provide a distilled ethnographic account of the Batek way of life with an emphasis on their gender beliefs and practices. While the original fieldwork data on which the book is founded are rather dated (gathered mainly in the 1970s), chapter 6 does address shifts in gender relations arising from changed environmental conditions in the intervening years up to 1990. A 37-minute video documentary (filmed in 1990) also accompanies the book.

The Bateks live in small groups of between four to twenty-five households, and re-locate

after a week or so when they feel that the resources in the locality are depleted. A division of labour exists in the procurement of food which is rationalized in physiological and mythological terms. However, the Endicotts argue that 'the Batek value system does not give high prestige to some jobs while devaluing others' (p. 108). Indeed, it is the complementary roles that both sexes play in ensuring a constant food supply, whether in the shape of hunted forest game (like monkeys, hornbills, bamboo rats, and pangolins) or gathered tubers, from which the notion of gender egalitarianism draws its ideological force. Significantly, in terms of weight, tubers collected mainly by women constitute the greatest single source of food – it is a low-risk and high-return subsistence activity (pp. 82f.). In short, 'the economic security of Batek women was based on their being able to depend upon the group as a whole in addition to their own efforts' (pp. 148-9).

Similarly, child-rearing is considered the responsibility of both men and women. Parents teach their children by example and by invoking the authority of a third party to avert undesirable actions, sidestep coercion, and avoid physical violence as it would lead to a depressive condition for the person disciplined. Platonic male-female relationships, expressed in numerous ways – not least in the mundane activity of de-lousing head lice of both sexes in full public view – allow for more flexible working relationships across gender even when one is already married. In the event of 'good divorce', children also acquire more parents who will care for them.

Decision-making and leadership patterns are non-competitive, and emanate from the ability, personality, and knowledge base of the person, whether male or female. It is on this point that the Endicotts draw the inspiration for the title of their book. In their fieldwork site, Tanyogn's formidable abilities and personality had projected her as the natural leader of her camp peers. However, based on skewed information and the conventional practice of a male-based leadership polity, the state authorities had unknowingly appointed her as the headman.

In 1990, the Endicotts conducted follow-up fieldwork on a re-settled Batek community sited close to Taman Negara (National Park). They discerned changes to the social organization of gender relations as the consequence of the combined effects of logging, plantation agriculture, and of state-promoted Islamic proselytization of the Batek in order for them 'to become Malays'. Whilst many have succumbed

to becoming nominal Muslims and to horticulture, the Endicotts also note that they have also endeavoured to live their old ways as much as possible in the largest remaining contiguous patch of rainforests left in Taman Negara.

This book provides an engaging introductory text to the economic activities, social organization, and belief system of the Batek, and to the formidable challenges that they face in contemporary Malaysia.

SENG-GUAN YEOH *Monash University*

LAMPHERE, LOUISE, WITH EVA PRICE, CAROLE CADMAN & VALERIE DARWIN. *Weaving women's lives: three generations in a Navajo family*. xiii, 314 pp., illus., bibliogr. Albuquerque: Univ. New Mexico Press, 2007. \$24.95 (paper)

In this well-written ethnography Louise Lamphere traces the lives of three generations of women from a Navajo family in northwestern New Mexico. Lamphere documents the race and class issues in Navajo interactions with others, but also the strength and vitality of Navajo culture. She focuses on women because 'there is no book that I feel adequately follows the transformation of Navajo experience during the twentieth century and details women's lives as well as those of their male kinfolk' (pp. 2-3). One reason for emphasizing women's voices and organizing the narrative from their perspective is to make the volume accessible to college students. This also increases its appeal to a general audience.

The author avoids the shopworn trope of the Navajo as isolated from American society (which they have not been for centuries) partly by comparing their lives with hers, while avoiding the solipsism of many reflexive ethnographies. The result is a moving story of the Navajos' incorporation of new ideas and practices into a distinctly Navajo framework. The book also speaks to the importance of long-term fieldwork (Lamphere's began in 1965), as she documents important changes both in Navajo and in the larger American culture, including the increasing influence of the national economy. Lamphere contests, however, the model that the Navajo assimilate along a continuum from traditional to modern while 'losing' their culture along the way.

Eva Price, the eldest Navajo woman, envisions her family as a cornstalk with its branches. Her life in many respects fits a

common conception of traditional Navajo life with its emphasis on place, kin relationships, weaving, and agriculture, including corn cultivation and the use of corn pollen and cuisine in rituals. Eva notes that her story will be incomplete because, 'In our tradition, you can't tell the whole thing. You won't last long if you tell everything ... it's the old traditional way' (p. 5). Lamphere explains that among the Navajo knowledge is power and must be imparted in a reciprocal manner. In addition, telling all of one's stories can shorten a person's life. What Eva does tell illustrates the significance of weaving and of such rituals as the Kinaaldá, the girl's puberty ceremony. And while kin are important, marital bonds among the matrilineal Navajo are weak and the theme of divorce or separation runs through Eva's and the others' narratives.

Eva's daughter Carole was born in 1948, a time of disruption and change following the return of Navajo who fought in the Second World War, oil exploration, off-reservation labour, the expansion of formal education, and Mormon missionary activity, including the placement of Navajo children with Mormon families. Carole went to Utah under the placement programme for three years as a child, but later celebrated her Kinaaldá. In the mid-1960s Carole attended the Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school and was in many ways a typical American teenager, but she was also a patient in a Navajo healing ceremony. Then came a baby out of wedlock who died, another pregnancy (resulting in Valerie), marriage and two more children, alcohol problems in the family, and separation from her husband. Some

experiences, including Carole's alternation between wage labour and welfare, were typical of other American women.

Carole's daughter Valerie was born in 1973, and spent considerable time with her grandmothers, who grounded her in Navajo culture. She, too, had a Kinaaldá, in which Lamphere played the role of Salt Woman who 'moulds' the celebrant. Valerie visited Lamphere's anthropology classes to discuss this experience, enrolled in college, and had a baby with her boyfriend. After overcoming many obstacles, in 2000 Valerie became the first in her family to receive a university degree (in health education). She wore traditional Navajo dress under her academic gown at graduation. Valerie then obtained work as a patient services representative in a local hospital, an appropriate use of her education. These brief summaries do not do justice to the complexities and richness of the women's lives, or to the author's careful explanations of what was particularly Navajo about their experiences.

Forty-one black-and-white photographs add greatly to the text, but two missing features would have been extremely helpful to readers. The first is a kinship chart, with a separate page for each woman. There are so many people involved in the story, with partners in and out of each other's lives, siblings and half-siblings, and children living with different relatives or friends, that the narrative becomes confusing. The second missing feature is a map. None the less, this is a valuable ethnography that honours the women's stories while making them accessible to readers.

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