

## Reviews

### Cognitive anthropology

BARNARD, ALAN. *Genesis of symbolic thought*.  
xiii, 194 pp., maps, tables, figs, bibliogr.  
Cambridge: Univ. Press, 2012. £16.99 (paper)

In this book Alan Barnard uses the techniques of social anthropology to examine not only the idea that 'to use symbolism is to be human', but also how the process of searching for the beginnings of that symbolism is possible. His previous book, *Social anthropology and human origins* (2011), covers our human ancestors living between approximately 7,400,000 years ago and about 200,000 years ago. His current book, *Genesis of symbolic thought*, starts where it left off – the beginning of symbolic culture.

His depth and breadth of anthropological understanding stretch beyond current-day thinking to include ethnography and anthropological theory past and present. His breadth crosses disciplines, beyond his field of social anthropology, to include research and findings from archaeology, genetics, neuroscience, linguistics, art history, comparative anatomy, folklore, and religious studies. He brings to light debates within social anthropology softened with an assessment that recent discoveries in other scientific fields provide information for new ideas and theories. He presents debates using opposing thinkers along with debates between his ideas and generally accepted theorists. In fact, one might feel the book is a reaction to Claude Lévi-Strauss's acquiescence that the origin of symbolic thought is indeterminable.

As a matter of fact, he takes on Lévi-Strauss, Sir James Frazer, and Émile Durkheim and in one

sentence discounts all three, before arguing his point by enlisting philosophical, linguistic, and anthropological questions, using as background recent archaeological discoveries, the evolution of sociology, and examining ritual and religion with a social anthropological and archaeological lens. He goes on to use theories of the evolution of language and mythology, prehistory, and human evolution.

When he takes on Lévi-Strauss, the father of modern anthropology, Barnard refutes his theory that dating of the genesis of symbolic thought is impossible. He provides evidence from his fellow social anthropologists and multiple disciplines, including genetics, linguistics, archaeology, art history, neuroscience, and comparative anatomy. Then he adds folklore and religious studies along with ethnographic and anthropological theories from past and present. This is a lot for any one writer to take on, and whereas at times Barnard can be informative and enlightening, at other times he overwhelms the reader. That is mainly because there is a lack of order and flow.

This book raises itself beyond a mere transdisciplinary scientific inquiry by delving into the origin of symbolic thought while also championing the resurrection of social anthropology. From another point of view, his research can be thought of as a current-day self-help book, addressing how we can thrive in a world filled with ambiguity, complexity, and volatility using innate creativity and playfulness to become more fully human.

Yes, Barnard concedes that hunters and gathers are fully human. His claim is based on a definition I found dispersed throughout his book, including the use of symbolism, kinship systems, and the expression of complex thinking though myth.

Barnard is a twenty-first-century scientist enlisting both past and present findings from across multiple disciplines to study human origins. If you let him, he will challenge you to see through our modern eyes what it means to be fully human.

WENDY DAEGES *California Institute of  
Integral Studies*

KRONENFELD, DAVID B., GIOVANNI BENNARDO, VICTOR C. DE MUNCK & MICHAEL D. FISCHER (eds). *A companion to cognitive anthropology*. xv, 607 pp., tables, figs, diags, bibliogr. Oxford, Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. £120.00 (cloth)

Research companions seem in vogue at present, with Routledge, Ashgate, and Sage also having expanding series. At over 600 pages, and with thirty-one chapters, this Wiley-Blackwell offering is a big book. Among the topics covered are: collective representations, habit, emotion, narrative, number, distribution, hegemony, consensus, cultural models, simulation, and evolution.

The book is divided into five main sections. Part I, 'History of cognitive anthropology and the nature and types of cultural knowledge structures', has contributions from B.G. Blount, Naomi Quinn, Jürg Wassmann, Christian Kluge and Dominik Albrecht, Janet Dixon Keller, Giovanni Bennardo and David Kronenfeld, and John Gatewood. Part II, 'Methodologies', has contributions from Penn Handwerker, James Boster, Kateryna Maltseva and Roy D'Andrade, Stephen Borgatti and Daniel Halgin, Benjamin N. Colby, and Michael Fischer. In part III, 'Cognitive structures of cultural domains', the contributors are Dwight Read, F. Chit Hlaing, Andrea Bender and Sieghard Beller, Roy Ellen, E.N. Anderson, and Douglas White. Part IV, 'Cognitive anthropology and other disciplines', comprises contributions from Norbert Ross and Douglas Medin, Halvard Vike, Carol Mukhopadhyay, Lynn Thomas, Hidetada Shimizu, and Miriam Noëll Haidle. Finally, in part V, 'Some examples of contemporary research', the contributors are Brian Hazlehurst, Giovanni Bennardo, Victor de Munck, Linda Garro, and Robert Schrauf and Madelyn Iris.

An introduction and an afterword to the volume are provided by one of the book's editors, David Kronenfeld, who seems a guiding influence. The volume's aim, he explains, is to provide an overview of where cognitive anthropology came from, where it is today, and where it is going. It is a diverse field but some concerns are shared widely. These include: a focus on 'culturally

shared and variable distributed complex cognitive systems'; how such systems work; how they are structured; how they differ from one culture to another, how they are learned and passed on; and how people adapt them contextually (p. 1). A focus on 'collective' and 'cultural' knowledge, as opposed to 'individual' knowledge, distinguishes this field from cognitive psychology (and, one might add, a focus on 'cultures' as distinct from things-in-themselves distinguishes this from a social-anthropological approach – most of the contributions come from scholars based in the United States).

Humans, we are told, have a propensity to create and learn systems of collective knowledge, and culture is the name we give to this capacity in action. By 'knowledge', here one adverts to the intellectual, including how to act in situations, what the implications of action are, how to achieve goals, what goals are reasonable, how we interpret those around us – their behaviour, goals, and values – and when we might anticipate norms being flouted. Culture amounts to a congeries of complex, semi-autonomous component systems, with language being one such sub-system, singular and coherent. Furthermore, participation in these shared knowledge systems is what defines social entities, and so cultural cognition can be said to be constitutive of society. At the same time, patterned interaction in social entities produces shared cultural knowledge, and so social exchange is also constitutive of culture. Culture and society form a neat dialectic.

For myself, George Steiner's succinct summations concerning language in *After Babel* (1975) retain their persuasiveness, and coincide with my ethnographic experience. Language, according to Steiner, is in perpetual change and subject, at every moment, to mutation, so that to think of the life of a language (or culture) in organic and systemic terms is an animist fiction; while the concept of a normal or standard idiom is a statistical fiction. 'All communication is translation' between the personal lexicons of different individual speakers, Steiner writes (p. 238), and while language (or culture as a whole) might have a common surface, it has a private base: 'The language of a community, however uniform its social contour, is an inexhaustibly multiple aggregate of speech-atoms, of finally irreducible personal meanings' (p. 46). Reading the apparently systemic programme of this volume makes me wish at least to ask: But is there cultural sharing, ever? Of what precisely? At what level of complexity? And how is it achieved continually?

But then Roy Ellen's chapter on the centrality of 'environmental knowledge systems' to this anthropological subfield does illuminate cognitive anthropology as a project in action. 'Cognition' should be understood as an interplay between linguistic, environmental, social, cultural, and evolved factors in human being, Ellen begins. Cognition involves the whole person moving around in space and time: it is experiential and embodied. From the modelling of micro-processes of individual cognition, moreover, macro-structural regularities can be seen to emerge concerning human nature. These regularities concern, for instance, the universal recognition of natural species-kinds, a kind of intuitive physics (variously encoded), and the experimental method. 'Indigenous' or 'folk' – as against 'scientific' – knowledges may be remarkably fluid, since they derive from everyday environmental engagements (both practical and experimental), but at base they are no different from other kinds of human knowledge systems. What is ever apparent are basic human processes of categorization and reasoning, within evolutionary limits, taking place in individual bodies.

In elucidating tensions between individual and collective, between idiosyncratic and commonplace, between the social, cultural, and environmental, and between the evolutionary and situational, cognitive anthropology emerges as a significant component of studying human being, and this volume provides a useful anthology and snapshot.

NIGEL RAPPORT *University of St Andrews*

SCODITTI, GIANCARLO M.G. *Notes on the cognitive texture of an oral mind: Kitawa, a Melanesian culture*. xvi, 307 pp., illus., bibliogr. Canon Pyon, Herefordshire: Sean Kingston, 2012. £65.00 (cloth)

This beautifully presented book is the third of Scoditti's monographs on Nowau culture, and is meant to be seen as the final panel of a triptych alongside *Kitawa: a linguistic and aesthetic analysis of visual art in Melanesia* (1990) and *Kitawa oral poetry: an example from Melanesia* (1996). The island of Kitawa, Papua New Guinea, where Scoditti worked from 1973 to 2007, is well known to anthropologists as part of the Trobriand *kula* exchange system, although Scoditti's starting-point, the polychrome prowboards for ceremonial canoes, is far from Malinowski's generalist descriptions. In his early work, Scoditti argued for aesthetics as a category of analysis, against the privileging of social categories. Prowboards have provided the

aesthetic centre from which to examine the initiation and apprenticeship of the carvers with an artist's eye and then expand 'spiraliform' to encompass many of the cultural domains of the exchange system.

Scoditti takes the spiraliform loops of the shell *nautilus pompilius* to be a generative model of the artistic productions of Nowau carvers, drawing comparisons with Western manifestations such as the golden section common to Greek temples, and Neoclassical art. A graphic sign on the polychrome board 'is a structure planned on the basis of the *nautilus pompilius*, so the mode of growth of the nautilus becomes the mode of growth of Nowau thought' (p. 128). Temple and prowboard are 'visual stratagems which have the aim of satisfying the human eye at the level of aesthetic enjoyment' (p. 33). The reader is shown the 'texture' of the Nowau mind/reason (*nona/daba*) as Scoditti reveals the characteristic philosophy of the culture. His influences are Kant, Gombrich, and Lévi-Strauss, and he sees the polychrome prowboards as 'visual texts' that reveal an aesthetic schema: 'a frame of reference within which to place any mental operation' (p. xv).

The Nowau engraver provides Scoditti's model and point of departure. The initiated engraver of polychrome boards does not draw; he receives the image – pure and certain – at the moment of his initiation when his mind is in a heightened state of perception and is penetrated by the mythical hero Monikiniki (p. 55). An initiated engraver, as a 'creator of images' (p. 57), makes present the mythical hero. An engraver who has not been initiated must resort to drawing to test his mental image (p. 166). Any text must be interpreted. The beholder/interpreter of images complements the engraver's perception: 'The deeds of Monikiniki unfold on the polychrome board ... It is the beholder who unravels them, unwinds them, by interpreting them, in the same way as the spirals of the nautilus unwind' (p. 87). As an aesthetic form, the visual text must not, though, call to mind on the visual level the form of the nautilus, which is concealed by the engraver. Rather it must suggest to the beholder the aesthetic value proper to a harmonious form (pp. 136-7).

The aesthetic schema coupled with Scoditti's exegesis of the Nowau mind/reason, 'vital breath', and general philosophy provide the means to grasp other cultural forms. For example, the forms of memorization and conservation elaborated in chapter 6 show how the concept of spirality also structures Nowau

'spiral-shaped' time (p. 130). For Nowau, as for other Melanesian groups, time is subordinated to space. Here it is grasped and concretized as the form of the nautilus, by following the trail from the outermost loop to the innermost. Time is thus seen/visualized in the form of the shell, where future and past meet in a glance that takes place in the present. And in chapter 9 the analysis is extended to the configurations of dances and the body decorations of male and female participants. The scent of flowers and the poetics of crowns and corollas transpose the visual aesthetic in the final chapter. Scoditti has brought the reader full circle to demonstrate the cognitive movement of sense perception and memorization.

The exposition is dense with extensive endnotes to most of the eleven chapters. And although it is intended as 'a set of notes', the book is at times repetitive, and the central metaphor seems always on the brink of spiralling out of control. But it feels right that the texture of an oral mind is presented according to its own form. It is evident in the production quality of the book and the inclusion of Scoditti's own drawings that the author sees this publication as a creative undertaking that includes a kind of self-analysis (p. 8, n. 2). His project can thus be seen as an exchange between interpreters of aesthetics. This transcultural aesthetic engagement is what I like most about the book.

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## Concepts and theory

ÁRNASON, JÓHANN PÁLL & BJÖRN WITTRÖCK (eds). *Nordic paths to modernity*. vi, 288 pp., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2012. £53.00 (cloth)

*Nordic paths to modernity* is a collected volume investigating the different trajectories leading towards modernity in the Nordic context. The volume begins by emphasizing the shared socio-economic, cultural, and political history of the Nordic countries, including Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, while the proceeding chapters elaborate on the diversity of the paths that have led them to modernity.

The editors do not clearly distinguish between 'modernity' and 'modernization', but to the extent that they do define it, they propose that modernity can be observed through three primary defining relationships: modernity and

rationality; modernization and industrialization; and/or as a product of 'multiple modernities' as proposed by S.N. Eisenstadt, combining economic, political, and cultural components to produce 'divergent patterns of modernity' (p. 14).

'Nordic modernity' is based on the balancing of all of these relationships, and while other countries have perhaps done the same, the editors of this volume claim that nowhere has the search for the 'middle-way' been done more successfully than in the Nordic countries. This is investigated further in the course of the main chapters, through factors such as late industrialization (chap. 2), the role of history writing in shaping citizen morality (chap. 5), and the external forces influencing the paths taken (a general theme, but particularly articulated in chaps 8-11 concerning Finland and Iceland). Subsequently, the volume engages primarily with long-term historical processes, as these have presented 'paths to' rather than 'patterns of' modernity (p. 6).

In the first chapter, Bo Stråth provides an excellent overview of some of the factors that have united the paths of the Nordic countries towards a modernity that is often equated with 'enlightened and progressive welfare politics and social equality' (p. 25). One such factor is the particular combination of nationalist sentiments and socialism as expressed through a shared non-authoritarian understanding of 'folk' (people) as opposed to the authoritarian German definition of 'Volk'. Stråth suggests that the Nordic notion of 'folk' represented an inclusive concept where, for example, the nation-state was expressed as an integrative idea known as *folkhemmet* (the people's home), in which 'the home as a metaphor subordinated class struggle to national welfare' (p. 28). Social protests thus originated in broader coalitions, and were, according to Stråth, not purely based on class sympathies, allowing for a much less polarized society.

Following Stråth's contribution, the volume is divided into ten chapters, two on each of the Nordic countries. To illustrate, I will briefly discuss chapters 2 and 3 concerning the development of Danish modernity.

Uffe Østergård's contribution focuses on Danish modernity as shaped by two distinctive Danish pasts. Drawing on Rogers Brubaker's *Citizenship and nationhood in France and Germany* (1992), Østergård describes a Denmark first in a general Western European mould – that is, as an old, middle-sized, multinational composite – and later as an Eastern European-style 'integrative

nationalism', as a result of more recent events which have led to a small, socially homogeneous nation-state. As such, Østergård focuses on the dynamics of these two distinct historical strands.

Niels Kayser Nielsen, similarly, but from a different perspective, focuses his narrative of Danish modernity around the centralization of culture. His anecdotal reference to Danish national weather forecasts at the beginning of his chapter is, while certainly entertaining, a rather forced illustration of the existing tolerance amongst Danes concerning internal differences. Considering recent streams in Danish political culture, I am not convinced that 'tolerance' is an appropriate term to use; instead it may be better to call it a perception of internal cultural homogeneity. Regardless of terminology, however, Nielsen investigates the root of this 'tolerance' in chapter 3, identifying Protestant Lutheranism, the fall of patriarchalism, and the transition from an absolutist state towards local government, amongst others.

The chapters reflect the general focus of this volume, which is to provide historical investigations into the various paths taken towards modernity in the different Nordic countries. Upon further reflection, however, the chapters, while individually providing interesting accounts, do not as a whole engage extensively with the wider literature on modernity, nor are comparisons made to develop the overall argument of the collected chapters. This is partly due to the structure of the volume, in which the introduction does not clearly spell out the narrative of the chapters that follow. Perhaps this is done intentionally to reflect the multi-faceted concept of modernity that this volume at large advocates. Nevertheless, it ultimately leaves the reader confused and without a sense of the larger picture.

In conclusion, *Nordic paths to modernity* is a good collection of individual chapters which readers interested in modernity and the Nordic area would benefit from reading, but presents a challenging read as an edited whole.

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MEYER, CHRISTIAN & FELIX GIRKE (eds). *The rhetorical emergence of culture*. vii, 326 pp., tables, figs, bibliogrs. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2011. £55.00 (cloth)

This is the fourth volume in the Studies in Rhetoric and Culture series, the fruit of the International Rhetoric Culture Project, a long-running sequence of workshop-conferences bringing together an increasing collegium of researchers, among whom

Ivo Strecker has taken a leading role. In a revealing turn of phrase, Strecker once spoke of an 'edifice' which would be 'built up' as this collegium gradually embraced more scholars. There is a coherence of architecture, both within and between the volumes in the series, focused on the expressive face of human experience and on the question, 'How can we understand at once both the regularities and the mutability of human social life?'

The title of the volume refers not to emergence in evolutionary time, but rather to a lively and delicate sense, shared by all the fifteen authors here, that the relative predictabilities of culture are constantly modified and augmented in ongoing social interactions. Though one theme of the contributions is the well-understood idea that genres are the foundation of particular performances, the overall argument of the book stresses the other side of that coin, that novelties in performance (rhetoric) also influence the genre itself (culture). This fundamental theoretical idea is expressed most felicitously in Hauser's chapter: he describes the origin of Kenneth Burke's widely influential social/rhetoric theory as deriving from Burke's work as a music critic. It was because Burke was so well acquainted with the genres of musical performance that he could appreciate what was both pre-programmed and original in any given ensemble performance. Extending the analogy, the ensemble performance of experienced creator/rhetors with knowledgeable addressees can not only make fresh figures, but also change the form itself. Though much of the inspiration for this line of social theory originates in work on artistic or dramatic facets of social life, authors here are very clear, as they have been throughout the series, that such expressive performances are fundamental to livelihoods, politics, and power, as well as to the give and take of everyday life.

There are two main themes picked up in the well-argued introduction. One is that of 'resonance', the 'unsaid', sensuous, associative, and corporeal dimension of human social experience which may enable both adversarial and co-operative responsiveness among mutually entangled persons. Or, to put it another way, resonance is about that dimension of human intersubjectivity which does not lie on the surface of words alone. (Music is both a useful analogy and an especially interesting example of such reverberations in a social scene.) Contributors explore such phenomena both theoretically and ethnographically, and present subtle arguments both about what

might be thus 'unsaid', and what it means to try to write about the unsayable, a struggle that comes to a head in the chapter by Donal Carbaugh and David Boromisza-Habashi concerning expressions of Amerindian spirituality. The outcome is satisfyingly inconclusive while testing the limitations of anthropology's descriptive aspiration.

The other theme is the relation of a rhetorical perspective to a dialogical one. The editors pay appropriate homage – not least through the present volume's title – to the 1995 collection *The dialogic emergence of culture*, edited by Dennis Tedlock and Bruce Mannheim. By concentrating on interactive situations in which participants respond flexibly to one another in real time, the *Dialogic* authors had shown how those phenomena reified as 'culture' in fact emerge and transform constantly through provisional and ever-contingent processes. The present volume is firmly anchored in this dialogical perspective, but the editors insist that a rhetorical analysis is in principle more effective than a dialogical one: for whereas dialogical analysis tends to stress co-operation and amicability, rhetorical analysis includes both the co-operative and the antagonistic features of the social soap opera. In particular, the seeking or exercise of power or effectiveness can be readily understood from a rhetorical point of view, as the five largely ethnographic papers under the section 'Emergence' demonstrate clearly.

On balance, this volume, like the first in the series (*Culture and rhetoric*, edited by Ivo Strecker and Stephen Tyler, 2012), leans toward the theoretical. In this setting, even the ethnographic contributions may provide occasions for refreshing our styles of anthropological inquiry and expression. The volume is also – again like the other volumes – very effectively interdisciplinary: with only a pair of exceptions, the chapters can be read with profit by any anthropologist, or any scholar in contiguous social science disciplines. The overall virtue of this volume, though, is that it adds appropriately to the Rhetoric Culture Project, and so places in the hands of scholars a rich reservoir of ideas for describing human societies from their expressive face.

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TAUSSIG, MICHAEL. *I swear I saw this: drawings in fieldwork notebooks, namely my own*. xii, 173 pp., illus., bibliogr. Chicago: Univ. Press, 2011. £10.50 (paper)

This book adds drawing to the anthropologist's crazy 'montage' (p. 141) of writing and thoughts.

In this essay, Taussig meditates upon a glimpse of poverty that he subsequently sketched. Why did he do this? What is the purpose of the fieldwork sketch, and what is its relationship to reality, the rest of the fieldwork notebook, and the viewer-reader? *I swear I saw this* takes to new depths the sad, short sight of a poor man in an underpass being sown into a nylon bag for shelter. This image acts as a haunting refrain throughout the book as Taussig mines it to examine the relationship between seeing and believing, and the medium of the text and/or image as record of proof.

The sketch in the notebook accompanies the written word as a suggestive adjunct, adding a metaphysical dimension to the clinical absolutism of the text. If writing is 'an erasing machine' (p. 18) because of its ability to obliterate reality, drawing is a making of reality, expansive to the reductive writing. 'Drawing' from John Berger, Taussig 'notes' that the photograph takes from reality, freezing time, whereas the drawing makes a reality, encompassing time. The drawing is more of an autobiographical record, steeped in a more romantic graphite. It links the image-maker to moments of observation as though weaving a sympathetic magic. This explains the fetish of the fieldnotes held by the anthropologist: the notebook is 'the guardian of experience ... highly specialized organ of consciousness ... an outrigger of the soul' (p. 25). And so the drawings therein add to 'the thing-become-spirit' (p. 31) character of the book, though we treat drawing as secondary to writing in our skewed – sketchy? – hierarchy of representations; it is unstable, flexible, more imaginative and dangerous. It also 'draws attention' to the philosophical gap between words and things – scar tissue for Gellner's burns, collage paper for William Burroughs and Brion Gysin's experimental publications, as Taussig develops it.

The fieldwork diary is like these scrapbooks in the sense that it can be opened for reading and re-reading, for interpretation, for making 'unexpected meanings and pairings' (p. 47), for 'the recursive movements of afterthought' (p. 51) and 'back-looping' (p. 50), particularly if it has been constructed in an open fashion as an 'intertext' (p. 52). Taussig suggests, then, that an impersonal account is a strait-jacketing of subjectivity, a charade against the sensuousness of life. The ritual use of the note – or the drawing, as in a courtroom sketch – is an example of witnessing, the implication of the subject as well as his or her existential



affirmation. Hence the use of the oath of allegiance to the past in the book title: *I swear I saw this*. The notebook is a self-publication, a monograph in the making; for Taussig, it is also psychological, and a spiritual lodestone and medium to the invisible audience over the shoulder. There is an affinity here between Taussig taking yagé and Walter Benjamin following his own hallucinatory experiences, both posting their distorted realities in their image-word books. Built out of the inadequacies of representation, these ‘text-image interchanges’ (p. 101) have the poignancy of failure about them. Their advantage for the maker is that they are good to think through and that, often reserved for use when travelling, they act as anchors when on the move. And yet, ironically, once we return home, they often just gather dust. The armature’s use is clearly in its construction, and its comfort is in its thereness.

The fieldbook as product can literally be a work of art. It is also integral to the anthropologist’s production of knowledge. Fieldbooks are a previously neglected area of study in the construction of a discipline. They – our ‘afterthoughts chasing first thoughts’ (p. 151) – typically feature back-stage in our industry of derealization. Here Taussig has composed a book, short in length, rich in depth, provocative in detail, and disturbing not just at first glance.

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## Education and youth

HEINONEN, PAULA. *Youth gangs and street children: culture, nurture and masculinity in Ethiopia*. ix, 169 pp., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2011. £42.00 (cloth)

Paula Heinonen spent six years amongst street children in Addis Ababa, looking to understand the intricacies of their social relations and means of livelihood. Her initial engagement with poor families led her also to explore male and mixed-sex gangs. A central tool in her descriptive analysis is the Ethiopian concept of *yilunta*, or sense of moral obligation to wider society, and its powerful normative influence. So strong is the connection between the children and the broader socio-cultural environment that Heinonen concludes that ‘street children are a distorted microcosm of Ethiopian society’ (p. 150) and in no way do they seek to conceptualize, develop or maintain a subculture

or counter-culture. This sets the children firmly within the social milieu around them: extended families, the public, and state actors.

The driving force for the condition of destitution is the narrative of escape from harm. Physical and sexual abuse characterize the children’s life-histories, and Heinonen spares no detail or attention in unravelling the causal chains that, notwithstanding the uniqueness of each case, sound increasingly familiar as the accounts are compiled. Intra-family abuses, combined with the failing marriages and health of adult caregivers, overlay the incessant manifestations of poverty and processes of impoverishment that push children out of the families. ‘Pull factors’ are almost entirely absent. As one central adult subject laments: ‘God has made us rich in children but he forgot to give me the means to feed them’ (p. 75).

The accounts of the poverty experienced are compelling, and Heinonen does not flinch from describing its worst manifestations. The close proximity to illness and death is a recurrent theme – escape from which is limited to *tchat* (khat) and alcohol use for those with means to buy, usually as a result of exploitation of more unfortunate street companions. Sexual freedom is hinted at, but overwhelmed by the harshness of its economic determinants or the desperate needs for protection of street girls. Indeed the granular descriptions of the lives of these children is emotive and saddening, compounded by the repeated failures of the children to escape the street on transitioning, painfully, to adulthood.

Heinonen explores these themes by detailed analysis of two families and three street gangs. The attention to detail in analysis of the personalities and characters is deliberate as Heinonen admits that she wants to ‘avoid talking about children as an abstraction’ (p. 90). The cost to the reader, if there is one, is a lack of contextual placement within the larger socio-political environment. To my mind, having myself worked in Addis Ababa around the issues of public-sector social welfare, the well-being of the poorest and most vulnerable is intricately connected to political whims and objectives, most notably the periodic clean-up operations by the police and para-military and the constant assumption that street youth represent an incendiary political force.

Indeed the relationships between the street children, their families, and state actors is an area touched upon but which could have been assessed further. The adverse interactions between the children and teachers and the

police in particular, as well as adult caregivers with local government officials, evidently angers Heinonen, but we are left with the sense that a fuller analysis of these interactions would be welcome. The reader looking for public policy suggestions or directions for civil society engagement is thus left slightly disappointed, as Heinonen declines to enter this arena, stating that 'anthropologists are more concerned with meaning than with remedies or measurements' (p. 149). While this may be true, work that can transcend the perceived barriers between traditional anthropology and public policy is sorely needed. Pervasive poverty is a major determinant of the street child's well-being, but so are the behaviours of public and civil servants. Institutional and attitudinal change in the public sector is needed, along with the development of a para-professional social welfare workforce. None of the street children, for example, could ever remember encountering a female police officer. These institutional changes, within a wider softening of the worst aspects of patriarchy, would not necessarily impact on economic poverty, but would be significant changes for the better.

Overall, Heinonen must be commended for tackling the complexities of the subject matter with tenacity and evident concern for the situation and condition of the lives of the people she observes. She does well to untangle the contradictions she encounters throughout, such as the children's simultaneous desire for autonomy and group membership, or her noting that 'violence was necessary for the maintenance of order but also for creating group cohesion' (p. 148). As long as these realities exist, it is incumbent on us to describe, understand, and seek prevention and remedial responses.

DOUG WEBB UNICEF

LEVINSON, BRADLEY A.U. & MICA POLLOCK (eds). *A companion to the anthropology of education*. xix, 572 pp., bibliogr. Oxford, Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. £120.00 (cloth)

This book is the twelfth volume in the Blackwell Companions to Anthropology series and, like the others, it provides an overview and synthesis of previous work done in a particular subfield. In this it succeeds admirably, providing a clear and comprehensive account of the anthropology of education and many of its more specialist interests. Its thirty-three chapters are divided between five sections and cover the history and development of the anthropology of education,

the links with language studies and language socialization, the role of education in building states and national identities, the roles and experiences of those in institutions, and, finally, anthropology's contribution to educational interventions. For those wanting a general overview of the many debates that education has generated, the first section provides a comprehensive history, while for those wanting a particular focus on specific strands within the anthropology of education, the latter four parts give a good grounding in theory and suggest the many various areas of interest within the broader field. Overall it is helpful to have these overviews collected in one place, and the book serves as a good starting-point for both anthropologists and educationalists looking to understand the synergies between their subjects.

Education here is interpreted in the widest possible way and there is an impressive range and scope to the chapters. Each chapter is a review article of the relevant theories and debates and, taken together, they are consistently well written, concisely and coherently argued, and every chapter is backed up by an excellent bibliography. There are, however, some surprising omissions. Although the editors claim that 'anthropologists of education inquire more than many other anthropologists into the fate of young people, about their enculturation and socialization, and about habits of human behaviour and relationships of power that are taught and challenged in schools as cultural sites' (pp. 1-2), children and childhood are mostly absent (except in the chapter by Sally Anderson). The editors go on, quite rightly, to point out that there is much more to education than schooling; nevertheless, children are one of the most important and visible groups within formal education systems. Their views and experiences of education are an increasingly rich source of data for anthropologists and yet such studies are not featured here, leaving this anthropology of education curiously unconnected at times from studies of those who are being educated.

One possible reason for this is that the volume is very much focused on the anthropology of education as it has developed in the United States, where studies using child informants have not proved as popular as they are in Europe. Every aspect of education in the United States, from parental involvement in schools to educational law-making in the Texas State Legislature, is covered from every angle, and the insights gained might be widely



applicable elsewhere. Less prominence, however, is given to the work of academics outside the United States, or indeed outside mainstream anthropology, and those more influential in European anthropologies of education, such as Pierre Bourdieu or the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham, are mentioned only infrequently. While the editors acknowledge that their focus is North America, there are nevertheless tantalizing hints throughout the book of the different, complementary traditions that could usefully be drawn on. These are made most explicit in Kathryn Anderson-Levitt's overview of world anthropologies of education, in which she discusses the different theoretical traditions that have influenced the different social and political ideas about education and what constitutes a good childhood, or a good citizen, across the world. The editors have, however, set out and explained their parameters convincingly and produced a coherent and comprehensive collection of articles. Although there are other important and relevant areas yet to be explicitly addressed by American anthropologists of education, these could be usefully followed up in a second edition of this book.

There is much to admire in this volume and it is impossible to read it without learning a great deal. It is well edited with good cross-referencing, making clear the connections between the chapters. This is an important and welcome book that is likely to define the field for many years to come.

HEATHER MONTGOMERY *The Open University*

MORNING, ANN. *The nature of race: how scientists think and teach about human difference*. xiii, 310 pp., maps, tables, figs, illus., bibliogr. London, Berkeley: Univ. California Press, 2011. £44.95 (cloth)

The concept of 'race' has a long history: a history that cannot easily be disentangled from the horrors of the African slave trade or from the brutality of colonial violence. In the United States in particular, certain elements of this history make for an extremely sensitive cultural pressure point. Consequently, discourses of the ontological dimensions of race often eclipse the historical production of racial consciousness: enter the problem topic of modernity. Biology often gets pigeonholed as a racist objectifying science, fortifying social-constructivist descriptions of race as an appealing way out – a more 'politically correct' and inclusive framework to make sense out of human

difference. Thus the nature-culture divide becomes the dualist framework within which the book roughly situates popular conceptions of race.

Beginning with a critique of race as a form of exclusion, a measurement of difference, and more generally as an unwarranted mode of sociological profiling, the author moves through a rigorous investigation of the ways in which race is understood, talked about, and likewise silenced by dominant cultural norms and social etiquette. The sociological study comprises interviews and questionnaires conducted with university professors and their students at four universities (all situated in the northeast United States), as well as analysis of racial narratives in secondary-level textbooks. The aim of the study was to reveal how students and their teachers respectively think and teach about race.

The book reports some interesting findings: in secondary education, for instance, the views of race that are published in the textbooks used for teaching are not those views transmitted directly from 'ivory tower' scientists to the public; rather, it is the publisher's editors who generally control what makes it to print. Broadly speaking, though, social-constructivist makings of race are rarely taught at secondary level, with biological definitions prevailing.

The author reports a sharp distinction at university level, where 'social' scientists tend preferentially to employ constructivist definitions of race, with 'hard' scientists relying more on essentialist constructions. Despite this variation, a consensus against racial essentialism was voiced amongst most university students, with students generally favouring an understanding of race as 'culture', and constructivist viewpoints often being defined negatively against biological determinations, inculcating the mind-set that constructivism makes race 'not real'.

Accordingly, the author reports the important finding that students felt the need to adhere towards 'political correctness' in their conversations about race, claiming 'that because racial essentialism might be dangerous', it 'therefore cannot be true' (p. 157).

What the book does not do, however, is talk about how Africans, Caribbeans, so-called 'mixed races', or other immigrant groups in the United States think about race. This is to say that the book does not talk about how the 'concept' of race varies across cultures, or even outside of the United States. The author therefore gives little consideration to the possibility of a multiplicity of meanings of 'race', subject to

local variation with meanings being taken up variously (or not) across differing social and historical settings. In so doing, an essentialist semiotic of 'race' is inadvertently reinscribed, reifying 'race' as a transhistorical thing to be apprehended unitarily. In this regard, the study is not very anthropological, and interested readers here may find the analysis dull and under-theorized. Indeed, the discussion makes heavy use of a nature-culture binary to describe the ways in which the category of race is lent meaning. The author makes no attempt to interrogate this strained dualism, crucially not recognizing that 'scientific facts' – the rudiments of biological essentialism – can also be considered to be 'socially constructed' knowledge, poorly reconciling her findings with the wealth of related social studies of science.

Contrary to the suggestions of the book title, then, the study doesn't so much address the way 'scientists', as circumscribed authorities, think and teach about race. Rather, it situates the often-silenced polemical definitions of race (divided between social constructivists and biological essentialists) within the contemporary *doxa* of the US academy, perhaps pointing towards deeper roots amongst the broader middle classes of the United States. Though this is a major limitation, narrowing the scope of the book significantly, it still does well to satisfy its stated goals, and the reader is left with a solid sense of the range of ideas that are commonly deployed on university campuses to explain 'race issues' as societal facts.

In conclusion, then, researchers working on race in the United States should certainly read this book. Readers seeking a more anthropological and wide-ranging introduction into the topic of racial politics, however, might look elsewhere.

IAN VINCENT MCGONIGLE *University of Chicago*

OKADA, AKITO. *Education and equal opportunity in Japan*. xvi, 197 pp., tables, figs, bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2011. £45.00 (cloth)

All industrialized nation-states are confronted with the challenge of balancing the individual's freedom to choose with official attempts to rectify unfairness and even out the playing field. The book under review examines this contest between liberty and liberality within the context of how Japan's educational policies have been formed since 1868. It offers a historical trajectory of how linkages between schooling and growing

class inequality have emerged and recognizes the import of disentangling 'equal opportunity', 'equal access', and 'equal rights'. This is done by carefully dissecting 'equality of opportunity', noting its two paradigms: egalitarianism and meritocracy.

Meritocracy is associated with 'conservatives', whose interests have been institutionalized in the Ministry of Education, business community, industrial associations, and the Liberal Democratic Party. Concerned with cultivating an elite class via competition and creating economic efficiency, conservatives saw the advantages of early specialization, a varied curriculum, the inculcation of 'traditional' Japanese values, and individuality (but one subsumed by the national community; thus their attention to moral education). Unhappy with 'excessive egalitarianism', conservatives believe in the benefits of 'diversification based on children's different abilities' or *nōryoku-shugi* ('ability-first principle'; literally, 'ability-ism'). Conservatives wanted a more centralized schooling system (however, neoliberals, who shared with conservatives a desire to expose the educational experience to market forces, advocated decentralization).

Egalitarianism is associated with 'progressives', who during much of the post-imperial period voiced their views through the Japan Teachers' Union. Arguing for more fairness, they were comfortable with a more permissive educational atmosphere stressing co-operation, delayed specialization, and a common curriculum, and they saw the reduction in social inequality as a key goal of schooling. While conservatives saw some value in pre-1945 traditions, progressives were explicitly opposed to the imperialist educational ethos.

Okada attempts to answer several questions: What kinds of equality of educational opportunity did Japan aim to achieve during the last century (especially since the Second World War)? How have elites and interest groups applied equality of opportunity to educational policies? What criteria were utilized to measure equality of opportunity (p. 2)?

Employing these conservative versus progressive distinctions, Okada delineates the major ideological contradictions and compromises configuring secondary education in different periods. In the 'liberal-conservative' pre-war era, the debate was whether school was for all or a select few (a note of clarification: the 'liberal concept' of equality of opportunity concerns the removal of barriers to access to

schooling; once these are removed, it is up to the individual student to achieve academic success). From the mid-1940s to 1950, egalitarianism versus 'education corresponding to ability' characterized the discourse. During the 1950s, egalitarianism (and an American-inspired schooling structure) competed with a liberal view (more streaming and diversification). From the 1960s to the 1970s, a liberal-egalitarian compromise was reached (selective ability-first-ism and 'the discrimination is selection principle'). From the 1980s to the present, neoconservatism has joined neoliberalism (liberalization, diversification, nationalism plus the market principle).

This book is highly focused; this may be a positive or a negative depending on individual preferences. Okada's purview, as he acknowledges, is restricted (p. 175): he focuses on 'public statements' (p. 15); he primarily investigates the secondary level; and he does not examine the role of ethnicity, minorities, gender, or disability. Other issues, such as bullying, school violence, and the refusal to attend school, are similarly passed over. But to what degree can these sociological variables be disentangled from socio-economic inequality? Another, more minor issue: the concluding chapter is repetitive and too much of a summary.

This book is a historical treatment, not an anthropological investigation. Of course, a work should not be criticized for what it did not set out to do. Nevertheless, the book would have benefited from some attention to how policies and legislation impact on practices and behaviour at the local level: that is, what happens in schools among teachers, students, and parents. But Okada's book is a useful case study from a macro-level perspective. Though he himself admits that he only compared Japan to Great Britain (indeed, why not compare Japan to China, South Korea, or Germany?), he notes in the conclusion that his work potentially has cross-national import. I concur. His exploration of the tension between egalitarianism and meritocracy as institutionalized in Japanese schooling resonates in general with how post-industrialized states attempt to balance equality with liberty. Clearly written, this is a concise guide to Japan's post-imperial history of education that highlights all the key points of post-war educational history. A glossary of Japanese terms and list of abbreviations, as well as three appendices, provide the reader with handy references.

BRIAN J. McVEIGH *University of Arizona*

## Evolutionary anthropology

DIAMOND, JARED. *The world until yesterday: what can we learn from traditional societies?* 512 pp., maps, figs, bibliogr. London: Allen Lane, 2012. £20.00 (cloth)

Waiting for his flight to LA, Jared Diamond surveys the teeming modern chaos of Port Moresby airport and muses that 'in the last 75 years, the New Guinea Highland population has raced through changes that took thousands of years to unfold in much of the rest of the world'. Well, yes and no, Dr Diamond. There have certainly been great changes, but change is not unidirectional. History is not a shared escalator. Modern New Guinea is still not very like its neighbours, Australia and Indonesia.

Diamond also thinks that 'New Guinea is in some respects a window onto the human world as it was until a mere yesterday'. He assumes that past societies moved through certain set stages of development. All societies at a particular stage of progress were very much alike. Yet throughout its – largely unknown – history, New Guinea (itself very diverse) would surely have seemed distinctly unusual to any intrepid visitor from other shores.

Diamond assumes, however, that the differences between traditional societies, at first glance so great, are as nothing compared to the real divide in history, the great ditch that separates the inhabitants of modern Western states from everyone else. The argument of this book hinges on this contrast between the West and 'traditional societies'. The West is shorthand for modern industrial states, but Diamond does not specify whether this category includes China, India, or the former Soviet Union, and if not, why not. Nor is there any discussion of when the modern West begins.

The residual category, the 'traditional societies', is defined in an early footnote as societies with populations of under a few thousand that make a living by foraging, herding, or farming, and are barely influenced by the West. This category would cover societies as diverse as the Eskimo and the Bedouin, but, as we read on, it expands to embrace African peoples (Nuer, Zulu) with populations running into the hundreds of thousands. It is not altogether clear whether ancient Greece and Rome would be classed as traditional societies, but the category turns out to include pockets within modern Western states. 'European friends of mine who grew up in small European villages

in the 1950s described childhoods like those in a traditional New Guinea village', Diamond notes, surely implausibly. He concludes that 'the world of yesterday wasn't erased and replaced by a new world of today: much of yesterday is still with us'. In short, 'traditional societies', or 'yesterday's world', turns out to be everything that we – or, perhaps, Californians – would regard as old hat.

The main thing about those 'traditional societies' is that they do things very differently. Diamond made this discovery on his visits to New Guinea over the years (studying birds, not people). He was surprised to discover that 'many of my New Guinea friends count differently'. Not only that. They 'select their wives or husbands differently, treat their parents and their children differently, view danger differently, and have a different concept of friendship'.

Diamond offers occasional eclectic explanations of some of those very various ways of going about life (evolutionist, ecological, historical, psychological, as the mood takes him), but the real purpose of this book is to offer ideas drawn from 'traditional societies' that will improve our lives. 'Traditional peoples have been unconsciously executing thousands of experiments on how to operate a human society. We can't repeat all those experiments ... but we can still learn from what actually did happen'.

By and large, Diamond approves of the experiments of traditional society, although in his summary they turn out to be boringly repetitive rather than stimulatingly various. He tells us, for example, that traditional peoples went in for mediation and reconciliation, and so should we. Mothers breastfeed for longer than our mothers ever did, children are carried around close to their mothers' bodies, and even small children routinely pick up more than one language. This, he feels, is probably all to the good, although he has to concede that the evidence for the consequences is patchy. And they ate better, consuming less salt and sugar than we do. Yet he does admit that not everything was rosy in that old Eden. We must pick and choose from amongst past ways of going about life. 'The thirst for revenge isn't nice', Dr Diamond editorializes, just in case we are tempted to adopt everything from that traditional world, 'but it can't be ignored. It has to be understood, acknowledged, and addressed – in ways other than actually taking revenge'. In many societies the old are honoured and respected. Other traditional peoples abandon, even kill, the old and feeble when they became

a drag on the camp. Which example should we follow?

Some of Diamond's recommendations are less banal but more puzzling. He praises the inhabitants of traditional societies for what he calls 'constructive paranoia'. They are afraid of snakes and of ferocious wild beasts, so people take care when they go out in the bush. They listen to what they hear from their parents and neighbours about the dangers out there. We, however, take our ideas of danger from TV programmes, which is less sensible. (In point of fact, most New Guineans are far more frightened of ghosts and witches than they are of wild animals.)

In short, Diamond found out on his trips to New Guinea that not everyone behaves like modern Americans. He generalizes this finding – that non-Westerners are not like us – but his examples are drawn from superficial and uncritical readings of ethnography, and the comparative framework on which he depends, the lazy dichotomy between them and us, traditional and modern, would not pass muster with a sophomore class in anthropology. As for the lessons that might make us better human beings ... well, ethnography is not a goodwill store of apps for life, in which child-rearing techniques are on offer alongside ethnic bead-work and African drums.

ADAM KUPER *London School of Economics and Political Science*

TATTERSALL, IAN. *Masters of the planet: the search for our human origins*. xxii, 255 pp., fig., illus., bibliogr. Basingstoke, New York; Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. £16.99 (cloth)

Palaeoanthropologist Ian Tattersall, emeritus curator at the American Museum of Natural History, provides another lucid overview of human evolution. In just fourteen chapters, 7 million years of possible hominin ancestors are covered at a good pace, clearly and in non-technical language. With guideline referencing included for each chapter at the back, this is an up-to-date, authoritative source covering what we currently know (and don't really know) about our ancestry. It's ideal for anyone needing to mug up quickly on the state of the science of palaeoanthropology. Less satisfactorily, it attempts to account for how we became the symbolic species.

The past two decades have yielded rich new discoveries of possible bipedal ancestors, including *Sahelanthropus*, *Orrorin*, and *Ardipithecus*. The 4.4 million-year-old *Ardipithecus*

*ramidus* is a 'strange beast', first found in Awash in 1994 but only published about in 2009 after painstaking extraction and reconstruction. Tattersall casts doubt on acceptance of *A. ramidus* as a definite early biped, a claim based on the reconstructed pelvis. Arms, hands, and feet show distinctly arboreal adaptations, with an extraordinary grasping divergent big toe, implying 'Ardi' may be on a side-branch of hominin evolution. Only 200,000 years younger is *Australopithecus anamensis* from Lake Turkana, still a climber but also showing definite bipedal specialization, making it a plausible antecedent of later australopithecines. Some of the best of this book is found in the chapters on australopithecine life-style, where Tattersall discusses the earliest evidence of cutting tools, and social strategies in relation to environment.

Tattersall belongs to the generation of palaeoanthropologists who started to place their fossils into the context of the neo-Darwinian synthesis, but he has long resisted a single lineage narrative of genus *Homo*. He favours Gouldian notions of rapid change via exaptation – emergent novel uses of traits, without alteration in the genome – or even 'hopeful monster' effects, where slight genetic change may result in large phenotypic differences. Admitting our lack of knowledge of where genus *Homo* came from, he reaches for some such mechanism to account for the sudden appearance of a species looking like us, revealed in the subadult *H. ergaster* 'Turkana boy' from 1.6 million years ago. Yet despite body proportions highly similar to ours, and a somewhat expanded brain, this is still a species growing up more like an ape than like us.

The fascinating problem of the neither-an-ape, nor-yet-human life history of Turkana boy is left bald, because by this stage of *Homo* evolution Tattersall is shy of discussing *H. ergaster's* social (and sexual) life. Neither co-operative breeding models, nor the grandmother hypothesis get so much as a mention, nor even a reference at the back.

Tattersall is right to insist that we understand our evolution in terms of standard Darwinian processes with no special pleading, yet he also confronts the paradox that '[t]he changeover of *Homo sapiens* from a nonsymbolic, nonlinguistic species to a symbolic, linguistic one is the most mind-boggling cognitive transformation that has ever happened to any organism' (p. 220). We are given few clues as to how this miracle occurred; it turns out to be 'a byproduct of the hugely ramifying genetic accident that resulted in the appearance of *Homo sapiens* ... Happily for

us, the resulting creature turned out to function pretty well' (p. 210). The 'neural ingredient' predisposing our species to symbolic thought, Tattersall continues, 'was simply one passive consequence of the developmental reorganization that gave rise to anatomically recognizable *Homo sapiens* some 200,000 years ago'.

It is striking that Tattersall is fine with socio-ecology for australopithecines, but the closer we get to *Homo sapiens*, the more he invokes accidental mutations by way of explanation. No question of social interaction – no intersubjectivity, joint attention, shared intentions, social brain hypothesis, or sexual selection model – is discussed as critical to symbolic cognition. Yet in conceptualizing the transition to symbolic communication, Tattersall uses the example of the invention of Nicaraguan Sign Language. This occurred in the aftermath of the Sandinista revolution when deaf children, previously isolated in family homes, were brought together as a community. Ironically, there can be no better illustration of how a shift of social conditions enabled people to speak to each other.

Tattersall is among those who argue that modern anatomy appears before modern cognition, yet his own account of early symbolic behaviour in the African Middle Stone Age contradicts this. Sites like Blombos, Pinnacle Point, and Border Cave are taking us back to the dates of modern speciation. Isn't it more parsimonious to suggest symbolic strategies and our speciation were part and parcel of the same processes?

CAMILLA POWER *University of East London*

## Historical anthropology

ALLIEGRO, ENZO VINICIO. *Antropologia italiana: storia e storiografia 1869-1875*. xiii, 639 pp., tables, illus., bibliogr. Florence: SEID Editori, 2011. €55.00 (paper)

Between the 1970s and early 1990s, the international community became interested in Italian anthropology, finding alternative paradigms to the one developed in English- and French-speaking academia. In this period, the works of authors such as Antonio Gramsci and ethnographers such as Ernesto Demartino were discovered by an English-speaking public and became influential in the anthropological theoretical canon.

Despite this success, by the beginning of the 1990s, scholars had begun to identify the early signs of peripheralization of the Italian experience from the international debate: a marginalization that twenty years later appears evident and proven by the exclusion of Italy among the countries whose anthropological tradition is surveyed in the new edition of Routledge's *Encyclopedia of social and cultural anthropology* (eds Alan Barnard and Jonathan Spencer, 2010) and the reflections of international scholars.

In the face of such marginalization, to reconsider the specific history and the theoretical elements of this national tradition appears a fundamental first step in beginning to make sense of Italian anthropology's present oblivion and its past fame. In this respect, the work of Alliegro appears to be a timely contribution that sheds light on the first century of Italian anthropology, from early anthropological teaching in 1869 to the establishment of anthropology as one of the key university disciplines in the 1970s.

The volume is part of a broad strand of historical research that, in the last half-century, has explored the past of anthropology in Italy (pp. 2-5). While the majority of these works investigated only particular moments of this intellectual and institutional history, Alliegro offers an extensive overview of more than one hundred years of anthropological studies in order to overcome 'the fragmentation reached by the [previous] precious studies' (p. 6).

Alliegro's analysis develops along three main trajectories of investigation: the biographical study of the lives of main protagonists of the discipline; the institutional history of the major professional associations and the emergence of anthropology as an academic discipline; and the history of the ideas that marked the consolidation of the anthropological tradition in Italy. The historical enterprise is methodologically conducted with a bibliographical approach that surveys the principal scientific works and conference proceedings in light of the current debate about the history of anthropological studies.

The historical narrative is structured chronologically into three parts: a first part, 'The "long Risorgimento" and liberal Italy' (chaps 1 and 2, pp. 23-144), which covers the years from the 1860s to the 1910s; a second part, 'From the first post-war to Fascism' (chaps 3-5, pp. 145-314), which discusses the decades from the 1920s to 1940s; and, finally, 'Between Fascism and Republic' (chaps 6-10, pp. 315-540), which

discusses the period between the 1950s and the 1970s. Following this structure, the chapters investigate the transformation of the discipline by analysing the development of theory and methodology. Alliegro sheds light on the rise of physical anthropology as the early institutionalized form of Italian anthropology (chap. 1) and the parallel onset of folklore studies (chap. 2) in the late nineteenth century; he shows the formalization of the latter into a 'science of folklore' (chap. 3) and the development of ethnological studies linked with Italian colonialism (chap. 4); he emphasizes the link between racism and anthropology during Fascist rule (chap. 5) and the theoretical and methodological revolution represented by the works of Ernesto de Martino (chap. 6); he investigates the formalization of folklore (chap. 7) and ethnological studies (chap. 8) into the broader discipline of cultural anthropology (chap. 9); and he concludes by showing its institutionalization into a new university discipline (chap. 10).

For the coherence and depth of his historical reconstruction, the work of Alliegro offers a starting-point from which to define the essential aspects of Italian anthropological thought and its development over more than a century. From the volume, the divorce of cultural anthropology from physical anthropology in the post-war era emerges clearly, as does the independence of the discipline from archaeology, the long tradition of anthropology 'at home', the weight of the idealist and Marxist philosophy of its theoretical approach, and the strong link with linguistics, in particular dialectology and socio-linguistics. Moreover, the volume highlights the interconnection between academic knowledge and institutional political debate.

If these are undoubted strengths, however, Alliegro fails to investigate other interconnections between anthropological debate and other aspects of the Italian social world, primarily the link with political movements, NGOs, the Catholic Church, mass media, and, more broadly, the non-university culture. This is a field of inquiry yet to be explored analytically in order to draw a broader social history of anthropology during the twentieth century. Furthermore, interrupting his analysis at the end of the 1970s, Alliegro does not explore in any depth the last forty years of developments in anthropology: those decades in which, on the one hand, the discipline has strengthened its role in higher education but, on the other, the theoretical paradigms that



underpinned Italian anthropology entered into crisis and Italian scholars started a difficult relationship with the international community.

In a time when the current international marginalization of Italian anthropology would seem to question its value and results, the publication of Alliegro's volume is timely in providing a portrait of an anthropological tradition capable of developing strong and interpretative paradigms, which has been an alternative to British functionalism or French structuralism. What remains unexplained, however, is the reason for the marginalization that lies in those decades the author does not discuss (pp. 536-40): an open field for future research.

MICHELE FILIPPO FONTEFRANCESCO *Durham University*

JOHNSON, CHRISTOPHER H. & DAVID WARREN SABEAN (eds). *Sibling relations and the transformation of European kinship 1300-1900*. xii, 356 pp., figs, tables, illus., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2011. £55.00 (cloth)

Through the detailed study of sibling relations over several centuries, the authors of the chapters that form this book simultaneously challenge one of the basic assumptions of social history and the history of kinship: namely, that kinship becomes less important as societies move into modernity and foreground sibling relations (which have often, at least in European research, been considered of secondary importance). As the editors explain in the introduction, the book aims 'to capture the realities of siblings' roles in the making of kinship systems and the societies in which they were embedded'. This treatment signifies a fundamental change in how siblings are considered, moving them from subjects produced by kinship systems, and upon whom these systems act, to a new status as agents who participate actively in kinship processes.

The chapters are distributed in two parts that cover far-reaching transformations in European kinship. Part 1, 'Property, politics, and sibling strategies', covers the late medieval to the early modern periods; and part 2, 'Sibling relations, close marriage, and horizontal kinship', covers the period from 1750 to 1900, thus highlighting the transition from the use of marriage to extend a lineage's power to a preference for close marriage to consolidate this power. This transition involved a change from marriages between people of unequal situations to

marriages between people in quite similar situations, as well as a tendency away from the separation of siblings' destinies depending on their birth order and sex towards a greater intimacy throughout life.

The authors included in part 1 discuss the significance of the transmission of dowry, offering an alternative interpretation to Goody's diverging devolution (Derouet); the tensions among siblings in German dynasties resulting from the need for many offspring to ensure succession and the need to provide for them all without compromising the integrity of the territory and wealth (Spieß); the problems of defining sibling terminology over time in Germany and the figure of the 'Schwesterfrau' as a way of understanding the transmission of power and property in the aristocracy (Hohkamp); and the co-operation and conflict resulting from the highly structured nature of ordered sibling relationships in German aristocracy (Ruppel). The Hohenzollerns, in Brandenburg-Prussia, are discussed as an example of the solutions given to the problems of succession and of the division or non-division of land as a strategy (Marschke). This part ends with a comparison of two Italian cases that challenges some general concepts about kinship systems and sibling groups in the transition from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century (Delille).

Part 2 opens with an analysis of the changes in brother-sister relations as reflected in Scottish ballads on incest and murder from the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries (Perry). The chapters that follow delve into issues of emotions, affection, and self, through case studies. One author follows the fates of the members of three French families, through letters and journals, to document the interplay of emotion and power at the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century (Johnson). Another uses literary texts to explore the move from exogamous to endogamous alliances and the emotional connotations around 1800 (Sabean), while the following chapter uses the Droysen-Mendelssohn correspondence to describe friendship, sibling, and romantic relationships between Protestant and Jewish families during the first half of the nineteenth century (Schulte). The Victorian debate on 'marriage with the dead wife's sister' is presented through a case study put in context with pamphlets on the controversy and references to literary works (Corbett), and, in the final chapter, the relationship of Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone with his sisters is used

to show how the most intimate family relationships were cross-cut by gender and age rank, producing disparate physical and emotional outcomes (Davidoff).

The different chapters show the individuality of the research and styles of the different authors, but they all address, in one way or another, the main issue, which is not just sibling relations, but how they fit into broader issues of kinship, such as power and influence and inheritance and succession. In all cases, the research is solid, not drawing from a single source, such as a series of letters, but including a broad range of historical evidence. The analyses themselves are nicely nuanced and all connect with the main theoretical issues of the field, providing a lively discussion and indicating new directions for research. Scholars from many fields focusing on family and kinship, as well as general readers with an interest in family relations, will enjoy and find stimulation in this volume.

NANCY KONVALINKA *Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia*

TILLEY, HELEN. *Africa as a living laboratory: empire, development, and the problem of scientific knowledge, 1870-1950*. xiv, 496 pp., maps, plates, tables, illus., bibliogr. Chicago: Univ. Press, 2011. £18.50 (paper)

Scholars in the social study of science have professed that laboratories should be studied as macro-problems situated in their social and historical milieu, not just considered as delimited, fact-making Cartesian spaces. That is, laboratories should be conceived not as essentially physical locales with a clearly demarcated inside and an outside, but as comprised instead of semiotic relations that extend their influence by recruiting others' interests into participation in their epistemic projects. The parallel with the machinery of colonial management becomes clear, as Tilley paints a vivid picture of colonial scientific endeavours in British Africa situated in the analytic frame of a living laboratory, a space where power was exerted to yield new and emergent forms of knowledge.

The specific aims of the book are to reveal how scientific research impinged on imperial ambitions in British Africa, particularly the effects that knowledge produced in the colonies had on British colonial management, though also how such studies influenced conceptual and political developments 'at home'. The book thus deals with the way scientific knowledge was deployed

as a tool of power in Britain's African colonies, showing how the knowledge that was produced ultimately fed back to undermine the power that it sought to wield.

The book offers particular focus on the African research survey: a decade-long endeavour (1929-39), the aim of which was to determine the extent that 'modern knowledge' was being applied to 'African problems' in the management of Britain's colonies. The African survey thus circumscribed the territories of Africa as an object of scientific investigation; and with the rise of interest in medical, racial and anthropological sciences at that time, Africa became constructed as a veritable 'living laboratory' in which such disciplines would flourish.

Tilley reports the crucial finding that colonial science was often supplanted by native knowledge, as in certain instances 'native science' could better master the land than 'colonial knowledge'. For example, in Nigeria the edible leaves of the baobab tree were noted to be typically shade-dried by indigenous people before their consumption, though it was only after 'Western' scientific laboratory tests revealed that shade-drying avoids the vitamin degradation that sun drying causes that scientists realized the extent of the previously overlooked 'local' knowledge (p. 213). Similarly, through the study of the effects of *nganga* (a parasitic disease that affects cattle) on local agriculture practices, colonial scientists synthetically widened their existing knowledge base on the pathogenicity of vector-borne parasites.

Though the African survey has been – canonically – interpreted as furthering imperial hegemony, Tilley elucidates how the epistemic basis of the survey's aims precipitated a critical turn in Britain's strategic administration over its African territories, and in fact marks the 'eve of decolonization' (p. 3). Tilley historicizes the survey as the movement that ontologized indigenous knowledge, arguing that the codification of indigenous knowledge critically depended on colonial relations bringing them to light. As such, she argues, provocatively, that theories of 'ethnoscience' somewhat 'owe their existence to imperial structures and socio-political asymmetries' (p. 11).

Through such epistemic encounters, she argues, 'modern' technoscience and ethnoscience began to be bridged, and the *a posteriori* recognition of what she calls 'vernacular science' gained momentum (p. 122). Crucially, she argues that the production of

scientific knowledge in Africa transformed colonial understandings of Africans and their environments, with the recognition of local knowledge essentially undermining the power of the empire, dethroning its exclusive role in the production of scientific knowledge.

Continuing against the grain of the axiom that 'knowledge of the colonies confers power over the colonies', then, Tilley reveals how anthropologists specifically played an important role in the dismantling of the British Empire in Africa. Following the Malinowskian move in ethnography in the 1930s, Britain's 'anthropologists catalysed an important exchange between the Colonial Office and its African dependencies' (p. 274), particularly emphasizing the uncertainties around the credibility and validity of racial sciences: a move, she argues, that ultimately helped to erode the justification of imperial rule on racial grounds.

Perhaps the most salient lesson from the book is that conceptions of 'local' knowledge can emerge precisely from the constitutive encounter with the 'outsider', that knowledge functions *qua* power by recruiting subjects of its power, and that colonial pursuits in 'living laboratories' can yield unexpected results, with local knowledge throwing up undermining surprises and impasses in the face of epistemic colonization.

Though the conclusions of the book may read as polemical, the scholarship is excellent, meticulously crafted into a work that will be well regarded by historians and epistemologists.

IAN VINCENT MCGONIGLE *University of Chicago*

TUCKER, ERICA L. *Remembering occupied Warsaw: Polish narratives of World War II*. ix, 290 pp., bibliogr. DeKalb: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 2011. £18.00 (paper)

In *Remembering occupied Warsaw*, Erica L. Tucker presents a remarkably rich set of accounts of a time and place underrepresented in English-language anthropology. These narratives belong to twenty-five elderly residents of the Żoliborz neighbourhood with whom Tucker carried out in-depth 'life-history, focused interviews' (p. 11) in the late 1990s. Focusing on the inhabitants of one district was perhaps a wise methodological decision, a response to the 'problem' of how to conduct a markedly intimate kind of research in a city. And yet the specific identity afforded to Żoliborzians, namely that they are considered distinctive within Warsaw, and that they are largely members of

the intelligentsia, also marks Tucker's book out as a very valuable contribution to anthropological literature on social stratification, or 'class', in Poland.

That Żoliborz borders with Muranów, the site of the Warsaw Ghetto, makes it an interesting location in which to research one of the monograph's central concerns: to provide a nuanced account of how ethnic Poles remember the Holocaust (p. 5). In the introductory chapter, Tucker delicately sets out her intentions for the book, stating, for example, that she does not 'seek to make a case that the experiences and memories of ethnic Poles are more important than those of Jewish Poles or that the former group had suffered more than, or even as much as, the latter' (p. 6). She touches upon the relatively well-worn tenet that remembering can be a 'moral imperative' (p. 15), particularly in narrating the past to those too young to remember it first-hand. Tempering this, however, is the reality that this kind of remembrance can be both 'traumatic' (p. 16) and 'potentially debilitating' (p. 15).

Chapter 1 confronts 'identity politics in interwar Poland'. Tucker's historical range is ambitious: 'As early as 1386, when Poland and Lithuania formed the Polish Lithuanian commonwealth' (p. 29) begins one subsection. This scope is eye-watering, but necessary in order to understand the complexity of the memories at hand. Tucker's appraisal of Polish history is framed by her observation that many of her Warsovian informants displayed carefully curated galleries of photographs in their homes. These collections commonly coalesced familial and national memory. Images of Piłsudski are hung next to photographs or paintings of elder kin. Depictions of country manors remind us of Tucker's informants' class positions as descendants of the landed gentry, or *szlachta*. This type of material culture shows us non-verbal narratives, which go further back in time than many of the informants' interview accounts, of citizens' kinship with the idea of Polish independence.

The second and third chapters, which are comprised of remembrances of the Invasion and the Occupation, respectively, detail, among other topics, how the 'ethnic Poles' Tucker interviewed remember the Nazis' abominations towards Polish Jews. This sets the ground for chapter 5, which is entitled 'Reflections on helping Polish Jews'. The chapter begins with Tucker's recollection of a post-fieldwork conversation in which she recounted, to a friend, one of her informant's anti-Semitism (p. 139).

How could it be, the friend responded, 'that someone who hated Jews could be in the resistance'? The book would be an invaluable source for scholars working within Holocaust and survivor studies (among other disciplines). Although not narrated by Polish Jews, *Remembering occupied Warsaw* is, as one would expect, in no small part their story.

Another particularly rich facet of this monograph is its dissection of the relationship between memory, age, and generation. Tucker's recollection of being a twenty-something fieldworker who initially viewed 'all of [her] informants as "older people" ' (p. 46) when in fact their ages in 1939 ranged from 9 to 34 years of age is a nicely self-deprecating ethnographic touch. Tucker addresses these age gaps by dividing memories of the Invasion (chap. 2) into 'Children's perspectives' (p. 49), 'Adolescents' perspectives' (p. 50), and 'Adults' reflections' (p. 57). In doing so, Tucker puts forward extraordinary instances of children's political engagement with their environment. Acts of *maly sabotaz* ('little sabotage'), such as the graffiti of 'PW' on walls, have particularly stuck with me (p. 126).

Tucker's extremely readable *Remembering occupied Warsaw* is a deeply valuable contribution to the anthropologies of memory, Poland, the Holocaust, war, and class. I expect that it would also be interesting to historians and to general readers interested in Poland. The final chapter's descriptions of Tucker's much briefer visits to Warsaw in 2004 and 2008 go some way to framing the book not only as a story of wartime Poland, but also as an account of a 'postsocialist' Poland, during which memories of the war once veiled by Soviet governance began to appear in official discourses.

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## Medical anthropology

DEW, KEVIN. *The cult and science of public health: a sociological investigation*. vii, 179 pp., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2012. £42.00 (cloth)

By exploring the evolving role of public health, this book argues that it has come to function as Durkheim's 'cult of humanity'. The 'cult of humanity' refers to a belief in 'the unity of society' (p. 7) and a shared humanity despite increasingly differentiated individuals and roles

in society. In this perspective, public health not only is a science, underpinned by 'rationality' and strict methodologies, but functions as a religion as it relies on the belief that all individuals deserve access to health by virtue of their unity and shared humanity. It acts as a moral force aimed at alleviating uncertainty and suffering and constraining other selfish forces. Rather than a Foucauldian analysis, this book offers a perspective on the function of public health not just as a site of power and control, but as a moral force and a means of resistance in itself. In doing so, the book explores tensions both within public health and between public health, the state, and the population, and contrasts both its positive and negative functions.

The book begins by introducing the development of public health in the urbanizing, industrializing European context, moving on to its influence in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. It explores the shifting stances of public health from structural to life-style, and from individual to population-based concerns. Chapter 2 shows how public health can be a moral force, acting to restrain rising inequalities exaggerated by neoliberal economic policies. Through the theory of 'social justice', public health encompassed not just concern with specific disease but the social, economic, and political drivers of health inequality, providing a site of resistance to economic reforms fostering inequalities. However, the author does not abandon a Foucauldian perspective, showing that public health can also serve the state to exercise greater control and regulation.

The moral goals of public health also create tensions, explained in chapters 3, 4, and 5. Firstly, the concern over individual rights is at odds with the need to promote the paramount expertise of health professionals, which does not leave much room for individual choices. Secondly, despite the 'extension of the clinical gaze', large populations continue not to be prioritized by public health measures in research, funding, and interventions, which remains problematic: 'If public health is taking on the mantle of the cult of humanity then its objectives to alleviate suffering and resist health-hostile influences need to extend even further than they have to date' (p. 52).

Thirdly, the social justice principle of public health may conflict with health-economic concerns. When public health is operationalized into clinical practice, the desire to standardize medicine and control the efficient allocation of

resources might be in opposition with clinical care (chap. 4). Finally, public health research and policy can be used to support the vested interests of various groups such as state organizations or businesses (chap. 5). All these issues are illustrated in relation to vaccination campaigns, their promotion, and the handling of critique or resistance to such programmes (chap. 6).

In conclusion (chap. 7), the book argues that public health has become, in Durkheim's term, 'the new religion', with its rituals and social practices, regulations and discipline, and ideals. Whilst public health as a 'cult of humanity' can mediate between science and the lived reality on the ground, the book argues that this mediation needs a place where critique can be received and where the population 'targeted' by health measures has a voice in policy design. The often challenging reception of medical anthropology findings among public health policy-makers illustrates this point.

The main interests of this compelling book are threefold. Firstly, its interest lies in the impressive range of debate and theory that it draws upon to build its argument about the nature of public health. Secondly, the argument presented in the book encourages us to think about public health in relation to society and its beliefs. More specifically, Dev's Durkheimian approach may encourage reflection on how public health is conceptualized and operationalized in settings where religion has not been replaced by a 'cult of humanity'. This might constitute a powerful lens to analyse the role of public health in such settings. Thirdly, whilst providing a critique of the functions of public health, the analysis in this book departs from a Foucauldian perspective. It conceptualizes public health not only as an instrument of power, but also as an instrument of morality, thus allowing for a more positive assessment of the function of public health whilst still highlighting its ambivalent nature.

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INHORN, MARCIA C. & EMILY A. WENTZELL (eds). *Medical anthropology at the intersections: histories, activism, and futures*. viii, 342 pp., illus., bibliogr. London, Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2012. £16.99 (paper)

This book is a by-product of a Society for Medical Anthropology conference at Yale University in September 2009 on 'Medical Anthropology at the Intersections: Celebrating

Fifty Years of Interdisciplinarity'. This anthology joins at least three earlier anthologies in providing overviews of medical anthropology as a subfield of the discipline. The others are *Medical anthropology and contemporary theory and method* (second edition, 1996), edited by Carolyn Sargent and Thomas M. Johnson; *Medical anthropology: regional perspectives and shared concerns* (2007), edited by Francine Saillant and Serge Genest; and *A companion to medical anthropology* (2011), edited by Merrill Singer and Pamela I. Erickson. All the contributors to the volume under review, needless to say, are world-renowned medical anthropologists and again demonstrate that medical anthropology is a variegated endeavour.

The first three chapters in part I focus on 'histories'. In chapter 1, Emily Martin reviews the many 'grafts' between medical anthropology, feminism, and science and technology studies. In chapter 2, Lynn M. Morgan seeks to demonstrate the 'benefits and challenges of combining anthropology and history, using an empirical case study that began as investigation of the historical emergence of embryo and fetal subjectivity in the United States' (p. 41). Lawrence Cohen in chapter 3 critiques the territorialization of anthropology, including medical anthropology, into area studies and calls upon medical anthropologists to 'produce a more effective form of deterritorialized knowledge' (p. 89).

The next three chapters in part II focus on 'queries'. In chapter 4, Didier Fassin provides an overview of the contested notion of 'global health', which has come to supplant 'international health' and to some extent 'public health', and insists 'that in spite of globalization, most health issues and policies remain national, even local' (p. 96). Arthur Kleinman in chapter 5 poses five questions for the anthropology of mental health over the course of the next fifty years: (1) 'What is the difference between social suffering and mental health problems?' (p. 118); (2) '[W]hat is the implication for medical anthropology research of going beyond stigma to redefine in cultural terms what is at stake in the most severe psychiatric conditions?' (p. 120); (3) 'How is the paradox of global pharmaceuticals for psychiatric disorder ... to be operationalized in theory and empirical studies?' (p. 121); (4) 'How do ethics, forensics, and caregiving fit into the medical anthropology of professional psychiatric and family-based mental health care?' (p. 124); and (5) '[H]ow are we to reframe science and society in the golden era of brain research?' (p. 126). He argues that medical

anthropology is now in the process of moving from the periphery to the centre of anthropology. Finally, in chapter 6, Margaret Lock explores the multiplicity of social implications of the rapidly expanding knowledge in molecular genetics and genomics and suggests that recognition of the social inequities characteristic of daily life in the global system holds the potential for 'moving the anthropology of genetics and genomics into some exciting new directions that will build on work already accomplished' (p. 158).

The final three chapters in part III focus on 'activisms'. In chapter 7, Rayna Rapp and Faye Ginsburg examine the intimate connection between disability studies and the anthropology of disability and discuss how anthropologists such as themselves have become scholar-activists committed to the empowerment of people with disabilities. Merrill Singer explores the contributions that medical anthropologists can make to public policy by collaborating with community-based health organizations. At a more macro-level, he maintains that medical anthropology 'has something to offer the effort to create beneficial and research-informed health policy at local, regional, national and global levels (e.g., with reference to responding to the multiple and unequally distributed health challenges of global warming and other anthropogenic ecocrises)' (p. 204). In the final chapter of the book, Richard Parker examines how medical anthropology's 'engagement with social movements, political critiques, and activism – feminist activism, AIDS activism, reproductive health and rights activism, LGBT activism – has given work on these issues both intellectual power and political importance' (p. 236).

*Medical anthropology at the intersections* provides an excellent overview of many of the concerns of medical anthropologists both at the theoretical and applied levels fifty years into what has proven to be a dynamic subfield of the parent discipline. Conversely, numerous other topics of concern to medical anthropologists are left unexamined, such as the intricate connections between health and the environment (e.g. the impact of climate change on health), national health care systems, medical pluralism, and efforts to create a healthy world for humans and for the environment by supplementing global capitalism with an alternative world system committed to both social and health justice and environmental sustainability.

HANS A. BAER *University of Melbourne*

PATON, DIANA & MAARIT FORDE (eds). *Obeah and other powers: the politics of Caribbean religion and healing*. xii, 354 pp., illus., bibliogr. London, Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2012. £18.99 (paper)

The title points us immediately to the heart of the book. As elsewhere, misfortune and illness may, in the Caribbean, invoke ultra-human agency. But is obeah to be regarded as 'religion'? In the Anglophone West Indies, the term generally connotes sorcery, generally of a malevolent kind. The contributors to this volume, derived from a 2008 Newcastle conference, give us a detailed discussion of the use of such epithets by practitioners and outside authorities, but at times their 'obeah' seems to shade into Orisha (West African-derived) religion or the religious practice of the slave plantations. A chapter by Kenneth Bilby contests malevolence to argue that in the Maroon communities of Surinam and French Guiana, the word 'obeah' has positive connotations of spirituality.

The link with healing seems rather tenuous in the absence of earlier narrative evidence. Yet one proto-medical anthropologist of 1860s Cuba ventured an opinion on slave sickness which emphasized local conditions of work and recourse to plantation healers, in contradistinction to the usual nineteenth-century emphasis on race and rascality. Perhaps borrowing from the British Caribbean, 'obeah' was the term employed to describe an epidemic of mass poisoning in post-Napoleonic Martinique: a practice locally assumed to be an extension of the local *pharmacopée noire*; shops which sold arsenic to counter rat infestation were closed, and free non-whites were forbidden to practise pharmacy. The local whites were suspicious of the slaves' friendly societies based on tribal origin (particularly of the Igbo), whilst the less anxious metropolitan visitors wondered if the poisoning episodes could be attributed to the paranoia of the planter, anxious about approaching slave emancipation, with the deaths more sensibly attributed to cholera or yellow fever. Carnavalesque Afro-Cuban self-help and devotional societies were raided by the police in the early twentieth century for suspected subversion.

The chapters here are less discrete descriptions of different regional practices than accounts of how power and authority – the 'other powers' of the book's title – have intersected with, and at times have helped produce, different religious formations. The contributions encompass the plantation/colonial



period of disdain for slave practices, the growth of local nationalisms in the post-emancipation period with the legal banning of religious vernaculars such as the Trinidad Shouters and the prohibition of obeah as simply deception and fraud, followed by island intellectuals taking up and reframing local practice in the run-up to independence, and so into our current debates on African survivals and creolization. Alasdair Pettinger's chapter traces the fate of a Haitian chant supposedly recorded by Moreau de Saint-Mery in 1797 – 'Eh! Eh! Bomba, hen! hen!' – through its repetitions and supposed translations from Moreau to C.L.R. James. Katherine Smith's chapter, meanwhile, examines how a current Haitian art group's changing sculptures of the transgressive Gede spirit of the dead reflect local ambiguities and political identity.

Recent digitalization of the Jamaican *Gleaner* newspaper has allowed Diana Paton to scrutinize cases of obeah pursued by police and court prosecutors from the 1890s onwards. Local recourse to obeahmen appears fairly pragmatic, as opposed to the official version of a duped and terrified citizenry. In a similar survey of obeah and money in Trinidad, Maarit Forde argues the main motive for twentieth-century prosecutions was the use of a 'non-rational' (non-capitalist) economy. And currently payment for spiritual services is still disguised as 'gifts' in Trinidad. Inherited money always retains the deceased's spirit on it and needs to be 'washed' (laundered).

By the twentieth century, with repeated labour movements and migration across the Caribbean, a common set of beliefs had grown up from Panama to Trinidad which was called 'obeah' by government authorities, who attributed to it an African origin, even though it clearly interdigitated with European magical and spiritual practices (as 'high science') and incorporated industrialized products such as playing cards, dyes, and bottles, and such popular sorcery manuals as the De Laurence Company books (derived from nineteenth-century French occultism?). In Haiti, the old Catholic opposition to Vodou traditions has been replaced by anti-Protestant concerns, ironically given Evangelical Protestants' own strong opposition to Vodou, even whilst a fear of sorcery persists in Catholic churches. In Puerto Rico, use of Catholic prayers in local sorcery and healing is not just a mild syncretism but, argues Raquel Romberg, an active cultural plundering: ritual piracy. Taking her cue from Taussig and Geschiere, she argues here that modern idioms

of sorcery in the Caribbean and elsewhere represent a flawed model of capitalism as an occult economics. In Puerto Rico, *brujeria* is a participation in the modern colonial economy that is not so much alternative as pirated.

In a fine summing up, Steven Palmié shows how this volume renders the dialectics of modernity in their place of origin 'morally comprehensible through forms of symbolic recoding of that which is otherwise too meaningless to bear'. We are moving here beyond the vague syncretisms of creolization to some greater historical precision – which is to be welcomed.

ROLAND LITTLEWOOD *University College London*

## Music

BIGENHO, MICHELLE. *Intimate distance: Andean music in Japan*. xii, 230 pp., illus., bibliogr. London, Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2012. £14.99 (paper)

Michelle Bigenho's second monograph has seven well-linked and fluid chapters. The author masters a personal and self-reflexive narrative, yet maintains theoretical rigour, making this not only a helpful addition to anthropological and ethnomusicological literature, but also a book appealing to the non-specialized reader.

Bigenho, as an anthropologist and violinist, takes the reader on an ethnographic journey of music performance through her own participation in a three-month tour of Japan with Bolivian folkloric group *Música de Maestros*. This inter-area study allowed her to use participant observation and interviews with Japanese and Bolivian musicians to explore an 'intercultural nexus' (p. 8) drawing on imagined identities, indigeneity, and race thinking. She examines the Japanese musicians' desire to learn and perform Bolivian music, a desire rooted in imagined similarities of ritual, language, music (pentatonic scales), and, above all, the feeling of a shared common race and blood with indigenous Andeans. How do these Japanese musicians negotiate the pull towards difference and their embodiment of the Other while maintaining rigid nationalisms? This 'intimate distance', arising from nationalistic paradoxes and the limits of performing indigeneity (gender, body, ethnicity) through music performance, is the primary concern of the book.

Bigenho avoids getting caught up in the interpretative frameworks of cultural

appropriation, exoticism, and commoditization that continue to dominate anthropological and ethnomusicological literature. She focuses on the musicians' racialized identity connections with a foreign Other and the contradictions these connections produce, as they feel emotionally connected yet distant. Moreover, this intimate distance extends to the detachment between the Bolivian mestizo performers and the indigenous subjects – fellow Bolivians – whom they represent on stage. This leads to the striking contradiction that making the music of the Other your own does not necessarily mean engaging with this Other's political or social world.

Both the Japanese and Bolivians identify with what Alcida Ramos calls the 'hyperreal Indian', who does not exist, but, nevertheless, generates real work, inspires real journeys, and traps musicians in an essentialized repertoire ('The hyperreal Indian', *Critique of Anthropology* 14: 2, 1994). Bigenho discusses the work and value involved in performing musical otherness, exploring the negotiations between meeting audience expectations and resisting essentialized conceptions of 'Andean folklore music' (p. 84). The author deconstructs the inflexible premise of economic difference and dichotomized distance between the represented and the transcultural audience, placing more emphasis on the intimacy of cultural work. Bigenho, however, does not explicitly engage with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's concept of 'strategic essentialism' (*In other worlds: essays in cultural politics*, 1987), which would provide another potential perspective on neoliberal negotiations of indigenous representation in what Bigenho calls 'Andean music for global consumption' (p. 33).

As these Japanese musicians seem attracted to Bolivian music via notions of ancient common heritage, Bigenho explores both Bolivian and Japanese historical colonial experiences, in order to understand their transcultural connection. Furthermore, she touches on historical race thinking and how both Japanese and Bolivians appear disconnected from indigenous people, each in their own national context. In doing so, Bigenho boldly brings race to the forefront of music-centred research, a much-needed approach in today's social science and ethnomusicological research, which still seem to avoid addressing race directly.

The book closes with an intriguing discussion about inter-area studies as a methodological critique of area studies itself. The fact that Bigenho was an American Latin Americanist on a

tour bus together with Japanese and mestizo Bolivians playing indigenous Bolivian music broke the usual postcolonial dichotomy of colonized-colonizer, creating a methodological triangulation that allowed her to observe the Other's Otherness (p. 151).

A range of intimate distances are scrutinized in this book, but Bigenho's focus lies primarily on the transnational 'intercultural nexus'. This left me wanting to know more about the intimate distance between indigenous Bolivians and mestizo Bolivian musicians, who struggle to make a living from their music while competing in an international market that thrives on essentialisms. Bigenho also limits her discussion to the behaviour and thoughts of music performers and is relatively silent about the role that audiences undoubtedly play in mediating intimate distance, through their active listening participation.

Overall, Bigenho combines a rich, intimate, and theoretically rigorous ethnography with a brave methodological approach. In critiquing area studies and arguing for the inter-area ethnographer to recognize the 'unevenness in her own area of expertise' (p. 151), she shows us that what matters in ethnography is not the holistic understanding of the culture under scrutiny, but choosing and using methodological tools to match the objectives of the project. Finally, I would like to highlight the author's sharp critique of nationalism as an ideology and the fresh analytical focus on the affective economies involved in playing 'someone else's music'.

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CAPWELL, CHARLES. *Sailing on the sea of love: the music of the Bauls of Bengal*. xiv, 242 pp., maps, illus., musical notation, bibliogr. CDs. Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2011. £16.00 (paper)

Charles Capwell's book on the music of the Bauls was first published (as *The music of the Bauls of Bengal*) by Kent University Press in 1986, and was based on doctoral research carried out between 1969 and 1971. In those days, these itinerant religious singers, with their syncretic mix of Vaishnava, Sufi, and Tantric practices, were barely known outside rural Bengal, except perhaps as a footnote to the story of Bengal's great twentieth-century poet, novelist, and dramatist, Rabindranath Tagore. In the succeeding quarter-century, modernized versions of Baul music have become staples of both the world music scene and the

contemporary popular music of West Bengal and Bangladesh. Capwell alludes briefly to these developments in the short preface to this second edition (pp. ix-xi) but makes no attempt to cover them in the book. Thus while the emergence of urban 'Baul music' in the work of singers such as Purna Chandra Das in the 1960s and 1970s receives some discussion here, its wider adoption through the work of popular singers such as Paban Das in West Bengal and Mumtaz in Bangladesh falls outside the purview of this volume. In fact, Bangladesh and Islam scarcely figure in these pages, which are strongly based in the Vaishnava culture of rural West Bengal. This is something of a shame, since one of the most fascinating aspects of the Bauls is their border-crossing between Hinduism and Islam. This refusal to respect religious boundaries and identities is particularly notable in the work of the best known of all Baul poets, Lalan Fakir, whose songs are widely sung in both Bangladesh and West Bengal, but are largely absent from the repertoire discussed here.

In other respects, too, Capwell's book shows its age, reflecting an earlier stage in Western scholarship and knowledge of Baul life and culture. Capwell was clearly interested in Baul spiritual practice and their esoteric sexual *sadhana*, but his analyses of song-texts referring to these themes are cautious and tend to avoid detailed explanations of the symbolism. Indeed, the whole description of Bauls in chapter 1 is curiously distanced and external, focusing at length on Baul modes of dress (which are admittedly often striking and unconventional), and it is followed by a chapter exploring the 'evolution of the Bauls as a cultural emblem' in Bengali society, incorporating an extended treatment of Tagore's interest in the Bauls, and by a third which discusses how Bengali musicologists classify Baul music. Individual Bauls and the Baul social and cultural milieu only come into focus somewhat more in the following two chapters, which deal with a number of individual Baul singers and with the performance contexts of Baul music. Overall, Capwell, writing in the mid-1980s, provided only limited insight into the complex cultural background of the Bauls or the difficulties and ambivalences of Baul identity (as distinct from the role of Bauls as a 'cultural emblem' within respectable Bengali society). Much more, too, could be said, and has been said since by other writers, about the religious practice that underlies the often allusive and symbolically loaded language of Baul songs.

However, the reader can look elsewhere to remedy these omissions, to Jeanne Openshaw's *Seeking Bauls of Bengal* (2002) for an anthropological exploration of 'Baul' identity in rural West Bengal, to the writings of Rahul Peter Das or the late Carol Salomon for the inner meaning of Baul texts, and perhaps to Mimlu Sen's illuminating recent memoir of her involvement with Paban Das Baul and his fellow musicians, *The honey-gatherers* (2010; published in India as *Baulsphere*) for insights into Baul society and into how the Bauls became an international commodity. What Capwell does provide, and it is of great value, is a detailed analysis of Baul musical and textual practice in West Bengal in around 1970, based on a substantial sample of the Baul repertoire of the time. As such, this remains an important book for Baul studies and for studies in Indian music, and one well worth reissuing, especially since Capwell's work remains the only serious musicological study of this unique music. The book is copiously provided with musical transcriptions, texts, and translations, and accompanied by two CDs that include the musical examples from the cassettes provided with the first edition. Seagull Books are to be congratulated for making this important work available once more.

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## Politics and economics

NAVARO-YASHIN, YAEL. *The make-believe space: affective geography in a postwar polity*. xxiv, 270 pp., map, illus., bibliogr. London, Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2012. £16.99 (paper)

The context for Yael Navaro-Yashin's second ethnography of the state in Northern Cyprus is the past – a violent and relatively recent past that encompasses contemporary Turkish-Cypriots' lived experiences of inter-communal violence in the 1960s and 1970s, the mass movement of refugees and their resettlement according to religious and linguistic identities, the Turkish invasion of the island and its partition in 1974, and the resulting creation of a Turkish-Cypriot enclave in the North of the island under *de facto* Turkish suzerainty. The proclamation of independence from the state of Cyprus and the unilateral assertion of national status for Northern Cyprus – a claim that has

been rejected in international law ever since – has resulted in the decades of stalemate and the mimicry of state practices that Navaro-Yashin refers to as the ‘make-believe state’. And it is precisely this contested, disorienting, phantasmatic, and ghostly quality of the resulting political space of Northern Cyprus that impedes the past from becoming settled, distant, or resolved in any way, dooming it perpetually to return in uncanny – ‘unhomely’ – and unbidden resurgences for Navaro-Yashin’s informants, who attest to a deep-rooted sense of melancholy (*maraz*) in the militarized and fortified space they experience as an ‘open-air prison’.

The largely unspoken, but eerily present sense of unease that Turkish Cypriot settlers in the North feel on a daily basis leads Navaro-Yashin to look to their material world and physical surroundings as the source of a political sentiment that is incorporated more than it is verbalized. This unspoken sense of an ever-present, haunting past – the memory of things in the double sense of that expression – she analyses in terms of affect. The book brings together a number of previously published articles together with some new material; all of it systematically devoted to delineating the parameters of the theory of affect that she elaborates from the work of Teresa Brennan. Like Navaro-Yashin, Brennan sought to move beyond psychoanalytic theories that centre human emotion in the psychic interiority of the individual and to understand collectively shared emotions as inhering not only within people, or even intersubjectively, but in the relations between people and their environment.

In a series of case studies looking at state practices of mapping, the Turkification of Greek place names, the repopulation of the North with Turkish nationals and the resulting sense among Turkish Cypriots that they are the last remnants of a disappearing culture, and the penning-in of the population inside a border that was officially closed and closely patrolled from 1974 to 2003, Navaro-Yashin highlights the sensibilities shared between people and a physical environment of military occupation that belie and traduce the official ideology of suspicion and fear that would justify such practices. She further studies the complex and contradictory affects engendered by the bureaucracy of a ‘state’ that is only ever referred to in quotation marks in international documents, but she really comes into her own when describing the abjected spaces of the mournful and unhomely green line that cuts through the centre of the capital Nicosia with

barbed wire, walled-up streets, and divided homes, and when speaking to the refugees from the South who now live in the homes of Greek Cypriots expelled during the invasion of 1974.

What does it feel like to live in the homes of others? To sleep in their beds? To wear their clothes? For your children to play with their toys? What does it do to you to have other people’s photo albums in your dresser drawer while longing for the possessions you had to leave behind when you fled your own home? Navaro-Yashin brings out the full significance of these sensitive observations with reference to her reading of melancholia: a form of sorrow bereft of the closure that mourning would offer in a political climate that forbids qualms about the legality of appropriating ‘loot’ from displaced Greek Cypriots.

Navaro-Yashin’s sustained study of the effects of war, displacement, political authoritarianism, and the existential gap between officially sanctioned and actually lived sentiments is not only convincing in its theoretical acuity, breadth, and originality, but it also plays the role of an intervention in its own right through its meticulous witnessing of the suffering of her informants and of their human dignity in the aftermath of terror and in the midst of adversity. Navaro-Yashin makes bold claims for the significance of this work, over and above the Northern Cyprus question, for anthropological theory more broadly, but she has not been bold enough: this is a book that goes beyond the confines of anthropology to shed light upon the human condition in the era of the nation-state.

NICOLAS ARGENTI *Brunel University*

REICHMAN, DANIEL R. *The broken village: coffee, migration, and globalization in Honduras*. x, 209 pp., figs, illus., bibliogr. London, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 2011. £40.50 (cloth)

*The broken village: coffee, migration, and globalization in Honduras* explores the ways in which globalization and neoliberalism have affected the people of a village pseudonymously known as La Quebrada (the broken village of the title). Like many other communities in Mexico and Central America, La Quebrada has undergone rapid cultural change over the past few decades, with the rate of change increasing since 2000. The book explores three important types of social change and how villagers struggle to make sense of them: labour migration to the United States, failed attempts to

improve access to coffee markets, and the rise of a variety of Evangelical Protestant sects.

Reichman's scope is ambitious. One of these topics would be sufficient for most authors. However, he argues persuasively that these changes are related in ways that make analysing them together fruitful. Globalization and neoliberalism have weakened traditional collective actors, and these new strategies together reflect a focus on individual responses to social pressures rather than collective ones.

The book weaves together detailed accounts of the lives of community members and the broader neoliberal globalized structures in which they are situated. This combination of perspectives enriches our understanding of a difficult situation. Small poor nation-states like Honduras are constrained both by formal agreements with international lending agencies and by the political consensus which accepts neoliberal policies as necessary and desirable. The International Coffee Agreement and similar agreements intended to stabilize agricultural prices were replaced with free-market orthodoxy. The inability of local leaders to deliver goods and services from the national government, combined with new pressures like migration and religious change, has weakened communities like La Quebrada.

As traditional collective action has proved unsuccessful, individual strategies for success have replaced it. Case studies explore the ways that individual community members deal with the situation. These case studies are vivid and detailed, though most are only a few pages long. Migration to the United States became an important new strategy as coffee prices collapsed. Some have found real success, while others struggle as migrants. A variety of new Evangelical churches, introduced by the United States during the Central American conflicts of the 1980s, created deep divisions within the community at the same time that they created support networks for members. The book observes that this transition from collective to individual action is not limited to small towns in Honduras: even new criticisms of neoliberalism, like the Fair Trade market system, depend on individual consumer choice rather than real collective action.

These new individual responses are viewed ambivalently at best by community members, a problem which Reichman explores. 'Needy' migrants are judged positively, but most migrants are seen as 'greedy'. A coffee grower who has managed to create a business importing and selling coffee in the United States is criticized and even attacked by members of the community because of his perceived success.

Church members criticize members of other churches and even mock different beliefs. Still, communal responses seem to the people of La Quebrada nearly impossible. A coffee co-operative focused on the Fair Trade market failed, unable to attract enough small farmers to become certified. Community leaders have found it difficult to attract government projects. Attempts to change the country's situation are met with hostility, culminating in the 2009 *coup d'état* which removed José Manuel Zelaya from the presidency.

The attempt to grapple with so many issues simultaneously is both the strength and the weakness of the book. Exploring the similarities and relationships between the different types of social change and trying to contextualize each in broader historical terms creates a rich and complex text. However, it also requires that some issues be given relatively superficial treatment. This is particularly true in the last chapter, in which several theoretical discussions would have been improved by considerable expansion.

This book is an important and compellingly written treatment of social change in one rural Honduran community. It would be important even if the kinds of social change it examines were limited to Honduras. However, the problems and solutions that Reichman explores here are found broadly throughout Latin America. In some ways, this is a portrait of a moment that has already passed: migration to the United States is on the decline in the economic crisis, while the price of coffee and other agricultural goods has risen sharply since his research was done. However, the general processes that Reichman lays out continue, and whatever some community members would prefer, La Quebrada and places like it cannot change back to the communities they were.

JULIA SMITH *Eastern Washington University*

YARROW, THOMAS. *Development beyond politics: aid, activism and NGOs in Ghana*. xv, 199 pp., bibliogr. Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. £55.00 (cloth)

*Development beyond politics* is a book about the lives of activists, aid workers, and the social elite who run NGOs in Ghana. It is also a book about the lives of concepts, in the hands of these specific actors. In part I, Yarrow focuses on how development – as a set of persons, things, practices – is made and maintained. Part II explores the intricacies of simple ideas used in complex ways and complex sets of information

strategically simplified. The implicit problem revealed through the text is: what is analysis when the words familiar to anthropological framings are in use by those one studies? How to disentangle the distinct intentions of overlapping vocabularies?

Chapter 1 documents the means by which people learned about change and became activists in the turbulence of 1980s revolutionary Ghana. Many of those active in the NGO sector now were students during that era, profoundly affected by the ideals and ideology of movements of the time which sought 'to change the way people relate to one another' (p. 26). Chapter 2 introduces 'personal lives in the aftermath of "great ideas"' (p. 49), exploring the compromise in action and ideals entailed by NGO work when experienced against Ghana's political history. It explores the currency and use of terms in people's narratives of themselves and their country, demonstrating the incursion of development thought into how people think about themselves in their work. Yarrow finds in their stories that the development of a better society calls for the 'development of better kinds of self' (p. 75).

One of these kinds of self is the subject of chapter 3, which proceeds through an analysis of 'friendship': how friendships came to matter in the 1980s – and continue to matter still. The implicit question is how long-standing relationships are to be cast: negatively, as a compromise of independent modern governance, or positively, independence borne of groups unified into the 'voice' of civil society (p. 95). In donor discourses of good governance for Africa, personal relations tend to be designated as matters of 'corruption', 'nepotism', and 'neopatrimonialism' (p. 70). The difficulty of escaping analytically a framing of personal relations as either 'good' or 'bad' is that this well-rehearsed judgement repeats in the critiques Ghanaians level at themselves. *How things are done* is inflected with *why* they are done – with what interest (personal, public) – such that this valuation becomes a key upon which the nature of the action turns. Through the understanding gained by his own relations with Ghanaian NGO workers, Yarrow places the necessary relations of development – not the systems – at the centre of this account. This foregrounds the stories NGO workers tell themselves about their hopes and struggles, their strategies for living with the tensions of public organizations built through private networks. Together, the chapters of part 1 comprise a strong case against the portrayal of development as a 'charade' of selfishness, where

NGOs are a 'set of resources that elites exploit to their own advantage' (p. 75). By turning away from outcomes of development, Yarrow addresses more closely the conflicts, intentions, struggles, and compromises of people who work in NGOs, and how they make (up) what development is in and for Ghana.

Part II turns ethnographic attention to the dualisms at work in development discourse: global/local, indigenous/Western, policy/practice. These chapter titles ought not be read as analytical terms; the use and manipulation of these value-laden oppositions is the ethnographic object at hand. They are the language with which people already work, called upon to frame debates and to align or distinguish viewpoints. Furthermore, Yarrow points us in an analytic direction unusual to anthropologists: by bypassing the well-worn tension between the 'complex detail' of academic knowledge and the seemingly formulaic reductionism of development knowledge, he is able to attend to what reduction, formula, and strategy do. What, he asks, are the achievements of simplification? What does it make possible? Mindful of critiques of abstraction as objectification and dislocation (p. 112), the book draws attention to the productive capacities of abstracted knowledge. It is a well-worn path where academics criticize oversimplification and the insensitivity of development to context and development workers complain about the 'uselessness' of academic knowledge (p. 171). Instead of moving his account towards development-friendly 'use', Yarrow seeks what is generative in the difference between these knowledges, aiming to shift the arena for conversation. In this way, hope is placed not perpendicular to development in the detached critique of academia, but parallel, in what already happens. This is an unusual opportunity for rethinking the engagement of anthropology with development, and is deserving of broad readership.

RACHEL DOUGLAS-JONES *Durham University*

## Social anthropology

BENSON, MICHAELA. *The British in rural France: lifestyle migration and the ongoing quest for a better way of life*. ix, 182 pp., map, illus., bibliogr. Manchester: Univ. Press, 2011. £65.00 (cloth)

For at least sixty years, thanks in part to Elizabeth David's food writing, a fraction of the



British middle class has looked to rural France as the locus of 'authentic' living: the simple honesty of the *paysan* in the distinctive *paysage* guarding the appropriate *genre de vie*. It is a well-honed imaginary playing upon seductive ideas about rootedness, dwelling, intimacy with the landscape and its products – in short, the dream of belonging. Going beyond 'the rural idyll', it incorporates British notions of French exclusivity, distinctiveness, and (natural) refinement. Michaela Benson conducted fieldwork in the Lot, engaging with British people who had migrated specifically to achieve this life-style, but finds that, 'My respondents never appeared to be any closer to their self-defined better way of life, irrespective of the length of their residence in the Lot' (p. 67)

Following compulsory redundancies, early retirements, or disillusionment with their work in Britain, people had sold up and relocated in *la France profonde* – drawn by spectacular scenery, cheap housing, and, most importantly, the chance to reinvent themselves. The move to a beautiful region in France dislocated them from the disappointments of Britain, allowing them to define themselves as more discerning than those they left behind or others who chose more conventional locations: 'Normal people go to places which are like England except warm' (p. 125). They then construct narratives of local acceptance and integration, appearing preoccupied with achieving 'authenticity' through house styles, shopping practices, gardening, and other activities. However, as chapter 3 demonstrates, Benson believes that they live in a 'persistent state of uncertainty' about their integration and their achievement of the illusive 'better way of life'. She toys with the idea of their lives as hovering within a liminal space, but rejects this because liminality requires 'two fixed and immutable points ... whereas my respondents in the Lot had no well-established and commonly attributed end-point, other than the vague notion they were headed toward a better way of life' (p. 68). Instead she prefers to think in terms of 'ambivalence', manifested when they deviate from their project or look back nostalgically to British systems. She notes that contact with friends and relatives back in Britain remain important and that, though they distance themselves from tourists, they recognize that tourism is an important source of income for many. Rather than seeing this as a deviation from 'authenticity', one might see it as sensible strategy.

Successful ethnographic monographs should equip the reader with sufficient resources to interrogate the researcher's conclusions; here the author's viewpoint prevails, backed by 'apt illustration'. Although 'the ethnographic fieldwork comprised extensive participant observation, a series of unstructured interviews, the collection of life and migration histories and documents' (p. 17), the richness of this experience does not emerge; it is condensed into generalization reinforced by short quotations (never knowing which quotations are culled from interviews and which from life). Named individuals and couples provide snippets of their experiences, but there is little clue as to who these people are – from which fractions of the British middle class they emerge or how they relate to each other. Their stories are never allowed to unfold.

The British of the Lot are a category defined from outside – by the French, by the ethnographer, by themselves when they step away from the 'others' who are too 'same' for comfort. They certainly are not a community or a group, and this poses problems for the generation of meaningful ethnography; how does one catch the social/cultural in the determinedly individual? The answer could lie in attention to performativity, the crafting of meaning through a continuous interplay of ideology and performance, the process of achieving identity. This study cries out for detailed life-stories, extended case studies, social dramas, situational analysis.

This book is one of the New Ethnographies from Manchester. In his foreword to the series, Alexander Thomas T. Smith refers to the Manchester School monographs of the 1950s and 1960s as 'the "gold standard" for how ethnographers might grapple with new challenges and issues in the contemporary world' (p. vii). In particular, Jaap van Velsen's situational analysis recognized that in the modern world norms are in conflict and people expediently plot paths between contradictions ('The extended-case method and situational analysis', in *The craft of social anthropology* (ed.) A.L. Epstein, 1967). Words like 'ambivalence' and 'authenticity' rarely illuminate this manoeuvring. I relished the prospect of a new wave of ethnography and was particularly attracted to this study, resting as it does on a rich vein of the British imaginary, but sadly I found little of the old Mancunian flair.

PAMELA SHURMER-SMITH *University of Portsmouth*

HASTRUP, FRIDA. *Weathering the world: recovery in the wake of the tsunami in a Tamil fishing village*. viii, 150 pp., illus., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2011. £42.00 (cloth)

As we all well recall, the tsunami of 2004 killed vast numbers of people who happened to be on the coast, most significantly in Indonesia and Sri Lanka. Large numbers of scholars were attracted by the horror and humanity in the aftermath. Consequently, a substantial literature is now emerging on what happened after the waves receded. We now understand well the context and consequences of the tsunami for society, politics, and the world of aid. For some, the tsunami was a logistical problem for those implementing, as well as those subject to, reconstruction programmes in the aftermath: 'inappropriate' housing, improbable peace agreements, and the well-known glut of fishing boats. The tsunami has also proved to be an intellectual opportunity for exposing the fallacious reasoning of governments and humanitarians, questioning concepts such as 'aid', 'community', and 'nationalism'.

In contrast, this book is an attempt to understand the tsunami anthropologically, using anthropological rather than disaster theory, and the ethnography of everyday lives rather than policy pronouncements and failings to frame the material. This is an important shift, and the amount of theorization and conceptualization that must have gone into tugging a disaster away from its usual moorings in the literature is not to be underestimated.

Drawing on the writing of Veena Das (and a group of other scholars primarily known for their associations with the University of Cambridge, University College London, and Copenhagen University rather than with disasters), Hastrup explores how the 'ordinary' of Indian Tamil village life was perforated by the tsunami, and the other way around. In this act, she posits a relation between disaster and the everyday in which each figure is made to appear when seen through the other.

Careful discussions of post-tsunami housing, environmental forecasting techniques, aid and opportunity, causation, temporality and planning, and the memorialization of the tsunami allow Hastrup to suggest that the villagers of Tharangambadi have also engaged in the work of 'conceptualization' after the tsunami. In this light, we learn that there is more to remaking a home than shifting to a new house. Fishermen recast the tsunami in

pre-existing patterns of seasonal variation and climate change. Aid was distributed and negotiated through more general understandings of authority and privilege. The tsunami provided some people with opportunities to engage with problems which preceded it; animosity and poverty were not simply washed away. The formal memorials erected along the coast by the state and other agencies do not engage with the ways in which villagers recollect and remember the waves.

Through these discussions, the everyday is 'unpacked', emerging, like the tsunami, as a product of 'figuration'. Life is shown to have become a matter of 'weathering the world' – for people to make it their own again – rather than overcoming an intrusive and singular event. This approach is compelling and attractive for it opens up the aftermath to agency, culture, and sociality – and, perhaps more importantly, to thought and thinking. I wonder, however, whether the terms 'conceptualize', 'theorize', and 'figure' can really be used, seemingly as synonyms, without elaboration and clarification. The self-evidence of these terms does not win through in the ethnography. The words of Tamil fishermen are few in the book as it is – their words on the conceptualization of conceptualization are absent altogether.

Aside from some rather defensive comments about the 'female bias' (pp. 33–4) of the work (when the most substantial quotes are all from men), the greatest opportunity missed, it seems to me, and given the material presented, is unpacking the tsunami and the everyday in gendered terms. Material on gender lurks throughout the text and raises many fascinating questions, but the analysis remains undeveloped and is never taken to a satisfactory conclusion. We have been told repeatedly that the fishermen had a relationship, of sorts, with the sea at the time of the tsunami. Those at sea at the time often barely noticed the waves. The story also goes that men were able to run from the approaching wall of water and climb up trees to survive. The other side of survival, of course, is that they left their women and children to drown. In the longer drag of the aftermath, what has happened to the everyday of gender and gender relations in relation to the sea, temporality, and kinship?

Such questions notwithstanding, there is much to recommend in this book, not least its subtlety and persuasiveness.

EDWARD SIMPSON *School of Oriental and African Studies*

HAZAN, HAIM & ESTHER HERTZOG (eds).

*Serendipity in anthropological research: the nomadic turn.* xix, 332 pp., table, illus., bibliogrs. Farnham: Ashgate, 2012. £65.00 (cloth)

In his foreword to this *Festschrift* for Emanuel Marx, Dick Werbner writes of Marx's ability to define and refine his work by setting the results of his fieldwork against preconceived notions of the nature of Bedouin life. Perceived differences between 'Bedouin', 'nomad', and 'peasant' were shown to have been shaped by sources and influences that Marx could document from records, including those dating back to the Ottoman period. Werbner emphasizes Marx's own life experience: 'refugees, immigrants and people on the move as nomads loom large in his nine books, all written with a deep sympathy from his boyhood experience, being a refugee from Hitler's Germany'. Marx, the first anthropologist to have been a recipient of the Israel Prize, was able to use his 'Manchester School' background to establish the study of social anthropology in Israel. His mentor was Emrys Peters, whose Bedouin essays he collected and published in a posthumous book.

Hazan and Hertzog's introductory chapter (one of twenty chapters) describes the way in which the anthropological quest and time in the field constitute a nomadic experience that transcends boundaries and, through 'shifts' and 'transformations', is 'arrested and shaped in the published text ... turning lives into works'. The freedom to be able to exploit serendipity is, indeed, to the advantage of both the nomad and the anthropologist in the field, and the occasional opportunity to revisit both field-site and ethnography itself is examined. Interestingly, the initial and apparent honesty of informants may sometimes be reappraised during that revisitation, with subsequent revelations raising other questions.

Amongst the groups living in Israel who enliven the book's pages are Yemenite and Libyan Jews, the Bedouin, and a group of Palestinian women prisoners. The book includes case studies provided by Israeli and Arab-Israeli scholars in Israel and elsewhere, while the Tuareg and Puerto Rican spiritualist-witch healers gain inclusion as exemplars of nomadism. In the main, however, the stories of peoples whose 'nomadic turn' has brought them to a life in Israel make this a book of profundity, and illustrative of the extensive variety of human experience in one small country.

Fabietti describes his own 'nomadic turn' from the discipline of philosophy to anthropology, with fieldwork ranging through the Arabian peninsula, Persian Gulf, Great Nefud desert, and Baluchistan. Using Horace Walpole's coinage of the term 'serendipity' in 1754, he tells of his experiences in comparing his fieldnotes with those of other writers, particularly with regard to Bedouin genealogies. This is a *tour de force* of scholarly and entertaining writing.

Marx contributes an enlightening chapter, delineating the influence of time upon the changing face of Bedouin fortunes in terms of economic and political cause and effect on men and women in differing rural and urban environments. Revisiting his own fieldwork, he illustrates the value of the movement of the anthropologist between stages of multiple visits to the field and subsequent reanalysis of research.

Hazan writes of a period during which a project of 'Renewal' engaged with indigent communities in Israel during the 1980s. He describes a particular community not always fully cognizant or, indeed, accepting of its role as grateful or needy recipients of a new 'citizen' status in a city that acquired several improvements within an ameliorated urban setting. Perceived by a charitable state agency as having experienced a 'degrading past as residents of an isolated neighbourhood', the residents are ultimately shown to have remained relatively 'set' within their previous life-styles and cultural constructs, instead of becoming the expected new bourgeoisie.

Eickelman's study examines the pressures on social science, a struggle of intellectual passion and academic discipline where autonomy is maintained against political advocacy and 'research for hire'. He writes: 'Now it is not just the views of the political religious elite that count but also the views of everyone else'. His chapter is emblematic of the situation in the Middle East today. He cites Bourdieu's incisive works as 'illustrating the balance between social science and charged politics in a time of crisis'. In particular, and presciently, he writes of the 'effect of mass higher education and its relationship with the practice of religion and politics'.

Hertzog, in relating her mother's experience in Auschwitz, provides a moving study of a Holocaust survivor's reflections on her past. The enormity of the experience on a young girl is indicated with the description of having one's head shaved and then walking naked in front of the perpetrators. The narrative shift from the

personal to the group becomes the *conscience collective* writ large.

'You stood there naked, naked in front of the ...'

'That was already nothing ... nothing.'

'How could that be? They stripped you naked and you walked around there like some sort of ...'

*Yes, like a what? Like everyone. That's it. You get used to it. So I walked around. So what? It passed ... when you're in a group, so is it exactly the one standing there who matters? He's looking exactly at you? He doesn't see anyone. He sees women as animals ... I didn't give a damn about him. As far as I'm concerned he humiliated himself.*

The insights into such an enforced nomadic turn, with its tale of devastating loss, displacement, flight, and resettlement, together with an admirable, indeed noble, forgiveness, contrast strongly with Jakubowska's chapter on the efforts made by Polish nobility to reclaim their lost property following the Soviet period. The latent/dormant anti-Semitism of the nobility is mentioned, with its aristocratic disdain towards those not of the same class, extending to, and including, Jews and Russians. One is compelled to beg the unaddressed question regarding property lost forever by those who disappeared in plumes of smoke at the end of a journey with no return.

Rapport's chapter unfolds with an elegant analysis of 'homeland' and 'the global guest'. He remarks that 'what has a hold over the popular imagination is not ... cosmopolitanism ... but neo-tribalism promoting rights to indigeneity and primordial ties of blood to soil', and that this trend seems to obfuscate other, nobler ideals of coexistence.

Abu-Rabia's interesting analysis of Bedouin folk medicine and the colour-related symbolism of dress, pastoral customs, and other patterns of culture is enriched by research that is embedded within an informant-cum-researcher with intimate local knowledge of the field.

Stewart's painstaking research amongst the Bedouin and Fallahin of the Negev and Sinai provides the chapter that most closely resembles Marx's own prodigious work in its detail and coverage. The importance of water cisterns in the area and notions of ownership contrive to enmesh the researcher in somewhat difficult situations and decisions. The kinship patterns and lineages of the Bedouin are discussed,

compared, and contrasted, giving a fascinating picture of lives in transit, lives sometimes constrained by state decrees and yet retaining their intrinsic characteristics as nomadic tribes, sub-tribes, with groupings of descent and vested territorial rights: '[T]he tribe may include some people who are not members of the clan, and there may be members of the clan who are not members of the tribe'. One is immediately made aware of the complicated nature of the study of nomadic peoples, be they pastoralists or subsistence agriculturalists.

Weingrod's treatment of burial patterns focuses on both customary interment and the reinterment of bones of those considered to have been 'heroes of Israel', such as Theodor Herzl, the 'father of modern Zionism'.

Greenberg's use of the word 'kaleidoscope' in the title of her chapter, the last in the book, serves to illustrate the resilience, movement, colour, and sometimes alarming changes that occur in the shifting political, economic, and emotional themes. Ultimately, however, Greenberg exposes the frailty of the ethnographer's reliance on the honesty and reliability of her informants. The spoken and the written word are liable to engage in their own nomadic turns, and 'writing culture' is perhaps better for revisiting sites and texts in that quest for the absence of the subjective and the presence of the objective.

Parts of the book are dark with the sorrow of displacement, duplicity, and destruction. Others reflect lighter realities, laying bare the coping mechanisms, subterfuges, and artistry that characterize the human condition. Like a tapestry, the book is in itself a work of varying shades and patterns. The chapters constitute a mosaic, displaying a design that is as multi-faceted and rich as the variegated nature of ethnography allows. These essays reveal contents that are a worthy tribute to an eminent scholar, a man of courage and integrity.

MAUREEN BLOOM *Independent Scholar, Tel Aviv*

KARLSSON, BENGT G. *Unruly hills: a political ecology of India's Northeast*. xiv, 315 pp., maps, illus., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2011. £55.00 (cloth)

In *Unruly hills*, Bengt Karlsson analyses the intersection between environmental and ethnic politics in Meghalaya and in doing so makes four departures from conventional scholarship on Northeast India. First, Karlsson's choice of Meghalaya is significant. Interest in the erstwhile Garo, Jaintia, and Khasi Hills was high among

anthropologists and linguists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and again during the pan-tribal movement for a separate hill state between the 1950s and the 1970s, led by the All Party Hill Leader's Conference, yet since then Meghalaya has received limited scholarly attention compared to other parts of Northeast India. As Karlsson demonstrates, this is hardly owing to a lack of action. The hills of Meghalaya have been the site of intense contestation over natural resources, territory, and identity. They have been, and continue to be, unruly. The second departure is the political ecology Karlsson utilizes to examine relationships between the environment, society, politics, and capitalist development in Meghalaya. This directs readers to the diverse actors with a stake in natural resources and their divergent agendas and influences; the majority of whom are tribals indigenous to the hills. Third, while the story is certainly a local one, Karlsson recognizes that the dynamics that affect environmental politics in the hills emanate in international and national spaces as much as regional and local ones. This matters because scholarship on the Northeast is so often locked into assumptions about an isolated frontier, far from the impacts of transnational capital, central government machinations, and upwards accountability from the local government to its benefactors. Fourth, Meghalaya is not a frontier of passive indigenes being crushed by the onslaught of modernity. The various institutions, officials, activists, leaders, corporate employees, headmen, and even villagers take action and respond to actions taken by others. It is a landscape full of contention, shifting alliances, and power politics. Most importantly of all, it is a landscape where resistance takes expected and unexpected forms. By the time readers reach the end of the book, the familiar cast of characters paraded in most scholarship of the Northeast are unrecognizable.

At the core of the book is an argument about capitalist expansion into the frontiers of colonial and postcolonial India. Expansion has intensified pressure on the environment in Meghalaya and this has engendered struggles around particular environmental issues. Forests, the focus of chapter 2, are studied through the ban on timber-felling by the Supreme Court in 1996 and the ways the ban produced clashing understandings of what constituted forest and who had the rights to exploit it. This gives the author the opportunity to analyse the ways in which traditions are being reconstituted under changing social and economic relations at the

local level. Chapter 3 looks at the disjuncture between imported property rights regimes in the Garo Hills and older land tenure arrangements. Here the author adopts a longer historical view and provides one of the more complete accounts of transformation in Garo society and its internal and external drivers. Chapter 4 focuses on the most contentious environmental issue in Meghalaya: mining. Mining draws all the elements of the story together: local power struggles between the Khasi Student Union and the government of Meghalaya; pressure from the government of India and its Uranium Mining Corporation; the use of science in arguments for and against the project; and the retreat into ethnic identity politics as part of the opposition to mining. In chapter 5, the author turns his attention to traditional institutions of governance in Meghalaya, given legal standing under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, and also given a new momentum through the norms of the global indigenous and environmental movements. Karlsson is not afraid to unsettle assumptions about traditional institutions and political power, and this chapter is perhaps the strongest in the book for the ways it details the complexity of natural resource governance. Chapter 6 draws all of this together into a discussion of the relationships between capitalism, the environment, the state, the frontier, and ethnic identity.

In departing from conventional scholarship, the book makes a major contribution to the study of Northeast India but also to the study of environmental politics in frontier regions more generally. As such, *Unruly hills* may prove to be the blueprint for similar approaches to other parts of the region, especially given the centrality of environmental questions in the Northeast. As scholarly interest in borderlands reaches its zenith, Karlsson's work should be highly valued among scholars interested in India and beyond. This is an outstanding book for its content and the challenges it sets out to its readers.

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PEDERSEN, MORTEN AXEL. *Not quite shamans: spirit worlds and political lives in northern Mongolia*. xii, 250 pp., maps, illus., bibliogr. London, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 2011. £17.95 (paper)

In this innovative, engaging ethnographic account of the complex social upheaval and ontological uncertainties that characterized

'transitory society' in the immediate aftermath of the collapse of state socialism in northern Mongolia in the 1990s, Pedersen has cultivated a theoretically nuanced approach that provides creative space for his ethnographic material to 'speak back' to the ready-made anthropological concepts that seem, at first sight, to be most apposite as explanatory tools. In an intriguing reversal, and building on the perspectival approach pioneered by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro among others, Pedersen allows space for the complex ontology of multifarious Mongolian forms to suggest other possibilities of becoming in the world, subverting the tendency of conventional anthropological and sociological analysis to offer an interpretation premised on epistemological assumptions that themselves remain unacknowledged and unchallenged.

Drawing on nearly three years of fieldwork between 1995 and 2001, Pedersen's ethnography explores the complex interpenetration of shamanist and postsocialist aspects of life in the remote community-collectivity of Ulaan-Uul in the Shishged region of northern Mongolia. Attracted initially by the prospect of contributing to the ethnographic study of Mongolian Darhad shamanism, Pedersen was confronted by a deficit of 'genuine' shamans and the presence instead of gangs of youths intent on disruption fuelled by vodka and uncertainty, violent strongmen, and the proliferation of incomplete or 'half-shamans', individuals permanently stuck in the process of becoming shamans owing to the lack of senior shamans to oversee their ability to control and contain the insistent presence of the spirits. For Pedersen, this 'study of shamanism without shamans' (p. 5) offers an opportunity to explore complex forms of social and shamanic agency in the context of a society in transition in which the escalation of economic crisis, the perceived collapse of the state, and the sense of chaotic dislocation that accompanies this process of uncertainty and unpredictable outcomes is characterized by one of 'occult excess' (p. 8) in which the capricious forces of postsocialist transition and the invisible, labile powers of spirits are understood as inseparable and, in significant respects, indistinguishable from one another.

While recognizing certain affinities between his own material and the literature on 'occult economies', Pedersen provides a constructive critique of the tendency of much of this literature to study occult phenomena only insofar as they are explicable in terms of anthropological categories that serve 'as fixed and therefore "dead" containers of sociocultural

content and their purported political-economic context' (p. 36). The way in which Pedersen's own theoretical approach differs is succinctly captured in his inversion of the now commonplace anthropological assumption of 'the modernity of shamanism' (following Peter Geschiere's Africanist emphasis on the 'modernity of witchcraft'), favouring instead what he describes as 'the shamanism of modernity' itself. This inversion, more than merely a play on words, provides Pedersen with the conceptual space and clarity to privilege the labile and amorphous ontological reality of the shamanic spirits in encompassing the experience of the state as a 'swarm-like multitude of political affects' (p. 80) in the period of postsocialist transition. For Pedersen, this shamanic imperative transcends the work of shamans proper; instead, it is the immutable transformative potentiality inherent within a shamanist ontology itself.

Arranged in five chapters, Pedersen's study combines detailed description and theoretical sophistication to explore, in a "prismatic" way' (p. 221), several, partially overlapping ethnographic scenarios. These encompass the complex historical and political transformation of social life in northern Mongolia as a result of both Buddhist and communist regulatory practices prior to the reconfiguration of landscape and worldview following the disappearance of the old socialist welfare state in the 1990s. However, they also extend to detailed exposition of the significance of the Shishged landscape in refracting the inner topography of Darhad persons, the complex ontology of shamanic spirits and artefacts, and the social and political efficacy of Darhad joking in postsocialist life. The result, as Pedersen explains, 'is an ethnography of a community that sees itself as incurably labile; a chronicle of selves and bodies changing uncontrollably in the face of occult forces that take the form of spirits, the market, and democracy' (p. 5).

In conclusion, and lest it be assumed that the importance of Pedersen's ethnography resides solely in its innovative interrogation of 'shamanism without shamans', it should also be pointed out that it offers a number of interesting perspectives on the anthropological analysis of shamanism *with* shamans itself, best exemplified by his intriguing discussion of the complex materiality of the shamanic gown (possession of which distinguishes 'genuine' shamans from the 'half-shamans' of Pedersen's account), the spatial, temporal, and corporeal inter-layering of shamanic bodies and entities, and the



'swarm-like' presence of the shamanic spirits themselves in all their assumed multiplicity.

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ROLLASON, WILL. *We are playing football: sport and postcolonial subjectivity, Panopompom, Papua New Guinea*. x, 250 pp., map, figs, illus., bibliogr. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011. £39.99 (cloth)

It is occasionally suggested that sport is a sorely neglected topic in anthropology, though a recent surge of interest would seem well on the way to rectifying this. Rollason's innovative account of football on the island of Panopompom, Papua New Guinea, is an intelligent and nuanced contribution to this movement – even if one ultimately senses that this is not, in fact, a book 'about' football as such, so much as an attempt to use football as a prism for examining the ways in which Panopompom people today seek to manage and transform their sense of self in a globalizing world. There is relatively little ethnographic description or analysis of the sport itself; the reader is instead offered fascinating reflections on, among other things, the considerable efforts made by one team to procure matching uniforms; the occasional outbreaks of violence on the pitch, provoking much soul-searching and moral debate; and racializing discourses on 'natives' as opposed to *dimdims* or 'white people', for example as they figure in projects of 'development'.

The fact that football does not form part of Panopompom 'culture', and indeed is explicitly seen as external and foreign by Panopompom people themselves, is central to the story being told here and precisely what makes its performance of such interest for all concerned. The knowledge of 'custom' that pervades activities such as ritual, canoe manufacture, or kinship relations is quite consciously opposed to the 'law' that is held to govern football. For this reason, playing football – or, more precisely, *appearing* to play football, that is, creating a satisfactory visual image for a real or imagined audience – is all about becoming 'developed', like the white people with whom the game originates. The question being posed here, in other words, is not what the people of Panopompom have done to football, in the sense of adapting or incorporating it into their own local 'culture' (the act of contextualization, as it were), but rather what playing football has

done, or might do, to rework people's understandings of their place in the world (which involves a kind of decontextualization). The discussions of the development industry cleverly tie football in to other aspects of life on the island, for example through the concept of 'counterparts', prevalent in development discourse, in which black people are trained eventually to 'replace' white people. In examining how football makes them who they are, Rollason develops an insightful analysis of Panopompom subjectivity through the lens of poststructuralist critical theory, arguing that football effectively disembods subjects from 'culture', conceived of as local and specific, displacing them from their past and recontextualizing them as cosmopolitans. As such, his approach runs almost precisely counter to a dominant anthropological approach to sport at least since the classic film *Trobian cricket* (1975), in which this gentleman's game is thoroughly reworked to fit local cultural idioms. This leads to reflections on important broader questions about the practices of cultural contextualization that lie at the core of the anthropological endeavour.

This is a compelling argument, though one wonders about the untold stories that might complement the portrait of football as generic and universalizing. Rollason emphasizes the essential similarity of football as it is played on Panopompom and elsewhere, including the United Kingdom, but occasionally hints at differences in, for example, playing style, and pursuing these further might lead the analysis in a different (if more conventional) direction. A more detailed exploration of the history of organized team sports, both in Papua New Guinea and in Western Europe, would also help to evaluate their degree of foreignness to the former while embedding them in the modernist nation-building projects of the latter, and to recognizable 'football cultures' that may ultimately be far from homogeneous. The codification and standardization of football, like the development industry, could presumably be considered as a part of the specific cultural formations of modern Western Europe, even if these now appear to many as global and cosmopolitan. The analysis of violence is intriguing, and neatly shows how strategies of self-improvement are often condemned to fail, though I wonder whether on-field violence could not also be seen as something akin to a strategy of resistance, to the modernizing project and the hegemony of 'law'. Recognizing the multiplicity of possible interpretations of the

phenomenon of football might add ethnographic complexity to what is nevertheless already an insightful analysis, one which opens up a number of stimulating lines of inquiry that significantly push forward the anthropology of sport while also managing to extend well beyond it.

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SKINNER, JONATHAN (ed.). *Writing the dark side of travel*. ix, 209 pp., illus., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2012. £15.50 (paper)

Why do travellers seek out destinations marked by violence and suffering? What is the allure of these 'dark' sites, and how should they be represented? Do travellers' encounters with the 'dark side' ultimately lead to the commodification of human misery and a blunting of historical consciousness? Or might such encounters inspire human beings towards greater sensitivity, creativity, and change? These are the central questions explored in this unusual, yet thought-provoking, interdisciplinary collection of essays.

Skinner probes the allure of such sites by reviewing the literature on dark tourism and 'thanatourism'. As he notes, while some scholars argue that dark travel 'has evolved for millennia, particularly out of the Christian cult of death and preoccupation with pain and suffering for our sins', others propose that its appeal stems from particular changes associated with late modernity. Dark tourism, he suggests, may be symptomatic of the affective estrangement that characterizes everyday life in the 'postemotional society' (Stjepan G. Meštrović, *Postemotional society*, 1997). Moffat, by contrast, questions whether human beings are drawn to 'the horrific' by an unsettling 'morbid curiosity', or by a 'more compassionate desire to acknowledge the intensity of such atrocity'. Similarly, Isle argues that tourists' attraction to dark places may have less to do with a 'ghoulish' interest 'in death and disaster' than it does with experiencing a sense of emotional engagement and identification that can often take visitors by surprise. Though written from different vantage-points, all of these essays prompt us to ask: Does the allure of dark travel primarily stem from its ability to facilitate an encounter with a suffering Other? Or might it also derive from the way it entices, if not requires, travellers to re-encounter *themselves* through a searching interrogation of their own motives, desires, and emotions?

The idea that the appeal of trauma is linked to quests for self-discovery and self-transformation is also richly explored in the essays by Egan, Elliott, Nagle, and Murphy. Murphy provides a moving analysis of Aboriginal women from 'the Stolen Generation' who attempt to relieve their suffering by journeying back to the childhood institutions in which they were abused. While the journey is cathartic, she also notes the pressure these women feel to synchronize their personal narratives of suffering with public ones. This opens the door to a much larger set of questions regarding the politics of representation, a theme which is pursued with great nuance by other contributors to the volume (Hepburn, Nagle, Cooke, Walker).

For instance, in examining how trauma is used as a tourism marketing strategy in Belfast, Nagle explores the precarious line between representations of the city that promote a 'social amnesia' and those that remain 'too fixated' on the traumas of the past, thereby making possibilities for future peace and healing less likely. As he guides us through the debates surrounding the branding of Belfast, he expertly captures the complex ways in which trauma can emerge as both an impediment to, and a lucrative source of, value creation. Indeed, from my perspective, one of the greatest strengths of this volume is that it demonstrates how experiences of trauma take on multiple forms of significance as both individuals and collectivities attempt to mobilize them towards ends that are at once political, ethical, commercial, and even therapeutic.

Throughout these essays we discover that debates about the representation of suffering are intimately tied to the forms of value they are perceived as generating. This is rendered particularly clear in the essays by Cooke and Walker. Both examine how dark travel writers negotiate the tensions between upholding an ethical commitment to memory and documentation, on the one hand, and perpetuating a highly profitable 'pornography of suffering', on the other.

Of the nine essays gathered in this collection, some are truly excellent and others are less compelling, mostly for stylistic reasons. Yet all of the contributions are thought-provoking. In fact, reading this collection has the quality of participating in a journey. The greatest insights and discoveries come from actively exploring and mapping out the fertile connections between the different essays. If readers are willing to do this, they will, I think, ultimately find that the book provides a very stimulating engagement with both the dark side of travel,

and the dark side of travel writing. It would certainly be an interesting text to include in courses on the anthropology of tourism, as well in courses on travel writing and literature.

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## Story-telling and myths

KNOWLTON, TIMOTHY W. *Maya creation myths: words and worlds of the Chilam Balam*. xv, 231 pp., figs, illus., bibliogr. Boulder: Univ. Press of Colorado, 2010. \$55.00 (cloth)

After the Spanish Conquest of Yucatán, a number of manuscripts were written in classic Yucatec Maya that preserved some of the Maya Classic and post-Classic knowledge into the early colonial period. Some of these manuscripts were collectively called the *Books of Chilam Balam*, which are distinguished from one another by the town in which they were found.

The most well-known and well-published of these documents is *The Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel*, named for a town in southern Yucatan, and Bruce Knowlton has taken on the task of untangling the pre- and post-Conquest influences on three myths contained within this important manuscript. With a knowledge of Yucatec Maya, Maya epigraphy, Roman Catholic doctrine, and ecclesiastical history, Knowlton has related these myths to their Classic, post-Classic, and ecclesiastical influences, and illuminated the knowledge that enabled the people of Yucatán to understand the meaning of these texts in their colonial context. As a consequence, he has contributed much to understanding the historical circumstances that affected the creation, perpetuation, and preservation of the cultural knowledge embedded in these important documents.

Chapter 1 introduces the book with Knowlton's methodological approach. He considers mythological texts themselves as a discourse by which cultural knowledge emerges through negotiation between historical and social verbal-ideological systems that result in shared meanings. His research first involved rendering the myths in a style that fits the natural discourse features of classical Yucatec Maya. Then he analysed these myths using the features internal to the texts themselves and their relationships with other manuscripts. These features formed the shared knowledge necessary that their authors used to compose the text, and

that their audiences needed to understand its meaning. This knowledge had its origin among the Classic and post-Classic Maya and some of it was integrated into the religious transformation of post-Conquest society.

The remainder of the book unpacks the content of this knowledge. Chapter 2 is a brief overview of ancient Maya society and cosmology. Chapter 3 provides the historical and ecclesiastical context of the Maya documents of the colonial period and provides the reader with an understanding for the forces of what was preserved and why.

Chapter 4 consists of the analysis of the first myth (the Katun 11 Ahau Creation Myth), examining it in the context of the social and cultural upheavals of the colonial period. This myth is unique in that it is found in other documents of the period, and the appendix of the book provides a concordance of sections of its content found in either or both the *Book of Chilam Balam of Tizimin*, and the *Pérez Códice*.

Chapter 5 analyses the 'Ritual of the Angels Myth' and Chapter 6 analyses the myth concerning the 'Creation of the First People and the Origin of Death and Disaster' as dramatized in the Itzá song of the collapse of the ancient city of Chichén Itzá. This chapter discusses the colonial approach to suffering, illness, and death and evaluates interpretations of indigenous ontologies that existed during the pre-Hispanic and colonial eras.

Chapter 7 analyses the 'Birth of the Uinal', a song set within the 260-day Maya divinatory calendar (the *Tzolkin*). This myth juxtaposes Maya and Christian cosmologies in a synthesis that Knowlton says undermines the claims of European clergy and catechism texts that divine truth excluded Maya voices.

Chapter 8 concludes Knowlton's analyses with a reflection on the complex influences affecting Yucatec creation myths in the colonial documents and with suggestions for future research.

The references to Christian themes in the *Books of Chilam Balam* have led some scholars to assume that Christianity contaminated these myths. Knowlton, however, shows that there are many more similarities to the cosmogony of the ancient Maya in these texts than a superficial consideration of their post-Conquest references to Christian doctrine might suggest, and he demonstrates that the relationship is far more nuanced than one might think. It is thus possible to untangle the ancient Maya, colonial Maya, and Christian cosmologies in these texts because the Inquisition did not control the

content of handwritten texts as it did for published books.

This book is a very important contribution to Maya studies, especially for the study of the colonial documents and myths, and for studies of ancient Maya epigraphy. It has great relevance to Maya linguists and epigraphers, but it is most appropriate for specialists who have considerable knowledge of the Maya languages, mythology, and epigraphy.

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UZENDOSKI, MICHAEL A. & EDITH FELICIA CALAPUCHA-TAPUY. *The ecology of the spoken word: Amazonian storytelling and shamanism among the Napo Runa*. xiv, 245 pp., tables, figs, bibliogr. Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2012. £34.00 (cloth)

The work of Amazonian anthropologists from Claude Lévi-Strauss onwards has resulted in a rich ethnographic literature on the diverse range of vivid and infinitely creative stories produced by Lowland South American societies. However, to date little has been published on the nature and significance of the story-telling process for Amazonian cultures. Furthermore, 'oral' story-telling traditions such as those found in Amazonian societies continue to be perceived by many as somehow inferior to the written traditions of the 'Western' world. In the present publication, Michael Uzendoski and Edith Calapucha-Tapuy set out to address these issues, drawing upon perspectives from French and Brazilian structuralism, ethnopoetics, and ethnomusicology, as well as from their extensive knowledge of story-telling practices among the Napo Runa, a Quichua-speaking people of the Ecuadorian Amazon.

Uzendoski and Calapucha-Tapuy observe that Quichua story-telling, unlike the written stories of the 'West', is 'somatic poetry': an embodied experience that draws its power as much from the performance of the story as from the words uttered. For this reason they suggest that merely translating and transcribing Quichua stories into text is insufficient to communicate fully the experience of witnessing the telling or singing of a story. The authors attempt to overcome this difficulty in several ways, the most intriguing and successful of which is a website via which readers can access audio and video footage of stories mentioned in the book. They argue for a more nuanced approach to the study of story-telling in non-Western cultures, one that does not assume hierarchical oppositions of the

type 'Western/non-Western', 'literacy/orality', or 'civilized/primitive'. Instead, they consider Quichua stories not to be 'inferior versions of Homer or Shakespeare' but rather story-telling traditions in their own right. The stories recounted in the book are also used as convenient springboards for discussing other topics, including perspectivism, origin narratives, and female 'shamans' in Quichua society.

Uzendoski, as an American socio-cultural anthropologist, and Calapucha-Tapuy, as a translator and native of the Napo Runa community, contribute different perspectives, attributes, and approaches to produce a uniquely thorough and convincing analysis of Amazonian story-telling traditions. They combine texts and recordings of Quichua stories and songs with ethnographic accounts of the moment they first heard these stories: who was there, under what conditions the stories were told and for what reason, how the stories were received and understood by other onlookers. The effect is to emphasize the principal message of the book, that Quichua stories and songs constitute an integral element of Quichua life, and that to remove them from their context and turn them into 'things' (such as 'Amazonian folklore' or 'MP3 files') is to isolate the stories from that which gives them meaning. Another advantage of the book from the point of view of this reviewer is the effort on the part of the authors to appeal to a wider audience beyond the confines of (Amazonian) anthropology, and the clear, direct writing style (which Uzendoski has developed into something of an art form) facilitates this process.

My quibbles with this fine volume are minor. I felt that the accompanying website was an innovative and extremely useful resource, one that has the potential to reach a far wider audience than most academic books can hope to achieve. However, apart from a brief (and difficult to locate) reference in the introductory chapter, the website was barely mentioned in the text. Given that comparatively few anthropologists are taking advantage of the Internet's potential to present ethnographic data in new and exciting ways, it seems a terrible shame to me that Uzendoski and Calapucha-Tapuy are content to hide their light under a bushel. Furthermore, given that one of the explicit aims of the text was to problematize the orality-literacy divide that is taken for granted by so many authors, I was surprised to find nothing about the influence of literacy among contemporary Quichua (alluded to in the book)

upon story-telling practices, not to mention the role of these practices in efforts to transmit Napo Runa culture to the next generation, many of whom lead hybrid lives that are increasingly dominated by Hispanic influences. I also found the frequent typographical errors in the book frustrating, particularly in those parts of the text that had not previously been published elsewhere.

Nevertheless, these issues do not detract from the wider achievement of this volume, one that ought to adorn the shelves not only of Amazonianists and ethnomusicologists, but also of anyone, anthropologist or otherwise, who is interested in the history and practice of story-telling in all its various, equally beautiful and equally valid forms.

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