

Reviews

Archaeology and material culture

HARRISON, RODNEY & JOHN SCHOFIELD. *After modernity: archaeological approaches to the contemporary past*. x, 328 pp., maps, figs, illus., bibliogr. Oxford: Univ. Press, 2010. £65.00 (cloth), £27.50 (paper)

This is one of those rare books poised from the outset to become a classic. In many ways it is what archaeology is at its best: a creative and scholarly exploration of everyday life. Yet *After modernity* also offers fascinating explorations of the possibilities of the past in the present, and the contributions archaeologies can make to a range of contemporary social issues. The authors' success derives from their deployment of the approaches of a discipline evolved to explore the distant past as a means to illuminate not only the recent and contemporary past but also the post-industrial and super-modern present, and in doing so to help us to better understand ourselves and change through time. The authors' starting-point was the challenge set by a leading theorist to develop a 'counter-modern' perspective to salvage the discipline for the new age (Julian Thomas, *Archaeology and modernity*, 2004). Hence, this book and the ideas it contains are a product of the twenty-first century, a time for reflection and reassessment, encouraging the reapplication of skills, methods, and instruments beyond traditional realms.

The book is divided into two parts. Part I, 'Surveying the field', sketches out the development of this distinct research stream. A

disciplinary (pre)history is provided which notes the crucial role of commercial archaeology, developer funding, and local authorities in its emergence. This is refreshing as the considerable impacts of such bodies often go unrecognized. Coverage is also given to the field methods involved in the archaeology of the contemporary past (ACP). The main conclusion is that there is an amplification of the degree to which our cultural backgrounds influence our practice on material which feels closely familiar. The theoretical imperative for cross-disciplinary working and the shared concerns of archaeology and numerous other disciplines, including Actor Network Theory, psychology, and cultural studies, are asserted. There is an outstanding section on the 'archaeological gaze' and its artistic resonances. The convergence of art and archaeology is bound up with core transdisciplinary debates: art as archaeological record; archaeological investigation as embodied performance; and art as interpretation.

In part II, 'Archaeological approaches to late modern societies', detail is offered as to the 'doing' of relevant archaeological engagements, with reference to a series of case studies. There is a dual perspective to consideration of 'functioning' and 'non-functioning' artefacts, sites, landscapes, non-places, and virtual worlds. For instance, the Ford Transit van and the IKEA Billy Bookcase are used to elucidate super-modern relationships with the material world, linked to manufacturing histories, modularization, mass customization, and material meaning. Moreover, through cross-reference with oral testimony, studies of an abandoned peace camp and student halls of residence demonstrate the potency and fragility of memory. This facilitates some discussion of

the 'haunting past', 'non-places', and 'material witness'.

This reviewer does have a handful of slight criticisms. Although Harrison and Schofield use the ideas of Paul Virilio concerning the vector of speed to advance understandings of conflict, protest, and technology, they do not adopt the quasi-Heideggerian position that technology is the demiurge of society. Indeed they see the 'globalized technopolis' as at once interesting and available for understanding. Given this standpoint, more commentary would have been welcome on the shift from geo-politics to chrono-politics, on the control of the logistics of perception, and on instruments of information, communication, and destruction. Modern technologies should form the basis of the ACP in line with similar biases towards technological refinements in evolutionary and prehistoric archaeologies. Media are, for example, involved in the montage of experiential time through the parcellation and fragmentation embodied in broadcasts. Further, more consideration could have been given to the ACP as political gesture. Clearly, when material residues concern more recent times, deleted or unacknowledged events can make for difficult analyses. In this context, the ACP has a role to play in the presentation of dark heritage and remembrance of uncomfortable episodes. In terms of theoretical context, it is also a little disappointing that ideas relating to the manufacture of the past-in-the-present developed in Scandinavia and South America are rather glossed over as the Anglophone academic tradition is afforded primacy.

In sum, Harrison and Schofield's book is a provocative contribution to our understanding of the archaeological discipline and the heritage world around us. *After modernity* earns its place in any humanities or social sciences library. After reading it, of course, one realizes that these libraries and the book itself must be recognized as material residues of the contemporary past and valid objects of archaeological study.

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OPPENHEIM, ROBERT. *Kyōngju things: assembling place*. x, 281 pp., map, figs, illus., bibliogr. Ann Arbor: Univ. Michigan Press, 2008. \$65.00 (cloth), \$22.95 (paper)

Kyōngju things is an engaging book dealing with how the capital of the ancient Silla Kingdom, famous for its temples and burial mounds, emerges as a place within the context of modernizing South Korea out of the relations

between various people, institutions, and organizations engaged in shaping the past, present, and future of the city.

It is a book that will be of interest to both Koreanists – as it goes beyond the staple diet of village life, on the one hand, and ultra-modern Seoul, on the other – and those wishing to learn more about the politics of things, and people's engagement with them in the creation of a meaningful place. In short, Oppenheim's book is at once a historical ethnography and an ontography of Kyōngju (p. 3). The theoretical perspective that he adopts in his analysis is that of Actor Network Theory (ANT). This makes the book additionally attractive to those wishing to examine an example of the application of ANT in an anthropological study.

Oppenheim organizes the book into three parts: 'Models', 'Levers', and 'Assemblies'. In part 1 he focuses on how Kyōngju fitted into President Park Chung Hee's notion of Korea's glorious past, especially in relation to the future of Korea and its aspirations. He presents the process of classifying, selecting, preserving, or eliminating evidence of the past, depending on whether it was judged in a positive light or not, and how various actors and institutions were engaged in negotiating the process. This is the subject of chapter 2, where Kyōngju is presented as a place full of tension, especially between the city (*si*) and its citizens (*simin*). Here the notions of locality, native place, and local knowledge are examined in greater detail, also in relation to the agenda of people representing the interest of the national government.

In part 2, the author addresses the practice of *tapsa*, which is a form of 'field investigation' based on seeking out, viewing, or documenting relics, artefacts, and historical sites, often carried out in an informal or semi-formal setting. It is within this setting that official versions of history might be challenged, and the boundaries between people and objects breached, as the practitioners of *tapsa* engage in active care for historical objects by, for example, cleaning them. It is at this point that local people assert their ownership of relics, and manifest and produce local knowledge and understanding of history. This understanding, as chapter 4 demonstrates in the case of the Namsan, a mountain on which there are numerous historical artefacts, does not have to be considered in opposition to the official or academic, but can be recognized as authoritative in its own right.

In part 3, 'Assemblies', Oppenheim focuses on the complexities of micro-politics dealing with the development of high-speed railway in

the area. The development project caused much controversy in the years 1995-7 as the rail track was planned alongside Namsan, and was a potential threat to the pagodas and statues on the mountain. As Oppenheim charts the involvement of various social actors in the debate, further meanings of the 'local' emerge. Depending on one's standpoint, 'local' can denote local knowledge and competence or provincial selfishness that stands in the way of modernization. Using the case study of the Citizen's Coalition for Economic Justice, its involvement in the railway controversy and the tensions present within the association, Oppenheim demonstrates how the concept of 'local' is open to contention and doubt. It is in the third part of the book that ANT comes to the fore as an interpretative tool. This seems a particularly appropriate choice as one is dealing with a fairly dynamic process of assembling place by various actors and networks of alliances involved in the dispute. What worries one somewhat, however, is Oppenheim's apparent over-reliance on newspaper articles. While they might help one to identify various processes that take place in assembling place, they present or represent the views and actions of only a selected number of actors engaged in the enterprise. The use of more data independent of media representations would make for a more balanced argument, especially in the area dealing with active engagement of social actors in the various processes, and interactions between them.

Overall, *Kyōngju things* provides a fascinating account of the dynamics of a place. The way Oppenheim shows how the dynamic and contested 'local' is part of a larger context, yet not wholly determined by it, might also prove inspiring to researchers dealing with changing cities and places in other regions.

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Diaspora, migration, and nationalism

DE GENOVA, NICHOLAS & NATHALIE PEUTZ (eds). *The deportation regime: sovereignty, space, and the freedom of movement*. x, 507 pp., bibliogr. London, Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2010. £80.00 (cloth), £19.99 (paper)

Deportation is the flip-side of managed migration, returning those who refuse to be

properly managed to their 'right place' in predominantly poor countries. The past two decades have marked a 'deportation turn' (M.J. Gibney, 'Asylum and the expansion of deportation in the United Kingdom', *Government and Opposition* 43, 2008, 146-67) with dramatic increases in numbers of deportations from Europe and the United States and greater powers designated to bodies charged with immigration enforcement. This has been accompanied by a steady growth in activism around deportation and borders, yet until recently interest in deportation has been confined to a small number of academics. This collection brings together some of these, including the co-editors, with emerging scholars. While two of the papers (by Walters and Nyers) are updates of seminal articles, most of the papers are new, and the volume marks an important development in the study of deportation, as well as making a significant contribution to the literatures on migration, citizenship, and sovereignty.

The deportation regime begins with a theoretical overview by co-editor, Nicholas de Genova. De Genova's 2002 paper ('Migrant "illegality" and deportability in everyday life', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31, 419-47) analysed how deportation produces 'deportability'. 'Deportable' migrants, haunted by the possibility of deportation, are a subordinated labour force. This piece further develops this argument, linking freedom of movement and labour and relating deportation to 'the global politics of the capital-labour relation'. De Genova maintains that deportation is the manifestation of a socio-political regime that reproduces and reinforces ideas of nationalism, race, sovereignty, citizenship, and class (his analysis, and the volume as a whole, is surprisingly silent on gender). This framing facilitates the historical and theoretical analyses of the second section, which comprises three papers examining the relation between territoriality, rule, and statehood, and how deportation reveals the disjunct between nation, state, and territory. Galina Cornelisse examines the limitations of human rights 'solutions' to the violence of deportation and detention, because they cannot challenge the state's exercise of territorial sovereignty. The current deportation regime is thus revealed as the latest manifestation of attempts by rulers to control the mobility of the ruled, attempts which are both brutal and endlessly subverted.

The third section reveals the specifics of deportation regimes of different states. Research on deportation has concentrated on the United States, but these chapters offer a range of case studies in Europe and the Middle East. They point to the value of inter-state comparisons, but at the same time indicate the importance of particularities. Sarah Willen, for example, argues that mass deportations of foreign workers from Israel must be understood within the context of Israeli treatment of Palestinians, while Heidi Castaneda examines the anxiety over certain manifestations of state power that is a legacy of the Holocaust and has given rise to a degree of public resistance to deportations in Germany. The chapters elucidate some of the previous theory, and Hans-Rudolf Wicker's piece, for instance, is a fascinating example of the limitations of human rights approaches in Switzerland, 'which sees its role as the depository state of the international convention on human rights as being its single most prestigious asset' yet nevertheless manages surveillance and repression directed at both 'illegal' and 'legal' migrants.

The final section of the book comprises three case studies of deportees. As Susan Bibler Coutin puts it, 'removal is the default position'. Deportation is imagined as the return to the 'right' place, and those who are deported simply disappear. This means the violence of deportation, its ongoing consequences for the deportee and the wider community, are obfuscated. These chapters not only make the individuals visible, they also make visible the cruelty of the deporting state (in all three cases the USA). People are deported in the clothes they were wearing on arrest (for one woman, deported to Somalia, these were seen as highly inappropriate, resulting in threats to her person), sometimes to states where they have never been before. These, it seems, are not people in their 'proper place' at all, but people who have been dumped in states to which they have only the most tenuous connection, and where they are often poorly regarded as criminal elements, or otherwise 'polluted' with Western values.

This collection is truly impressive. It demonstrates the importance of deportation as a mechanism for producing citizenship and alienage, nations, states, and territories in both theory and practice. There are gaps, of course. Gender and sexuality do not really get a mention, and the regions covered are limited. But this is the state of scholarship, not a reflection on the collection. There is much to be

done, and this book outlines an emerging research agenda.

BRIDGET ANDERSON *Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), University of Oxford*

DINERO, STEVEN C. *Settling for less: the planned resettlement of Israel's Negev Bedouin*. xiii, 222 pp., maps, figs, tables, illus., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2010. £42.00 (cloth)

The book seeks to evaluate the Bedouin permanent settlements through the eyes of their inhabitants, using Segev Shalom as a case study. The book is based on a longitudinal study which examined the changes that occurred over the years 1996, 2000, and 2007 in the inhabitants' attitude towards the urbanization process, and its financial and social influence on them and on their identities.

The first chapter includes a historical review of the urbanization plans for the Bedouin population, from planning 'for the Bedouins' to planning 'with the Bedouins'. This chapter details the roots of the land dispute between the Bedouins and the State of Israel, as well as its difficulties and challenges. The planning history of the seven permanent settlements is brought out in detail. From this historical review it is evident that the State of Israel tried to learn from its mistakes and implement a different kind of planning strategy and space division in each new settlement.

The naïve claim that is derived from this historical review, which is repeated throughout the book, is that the state built these seven settlements in order to modernize Bedouin society and to improve its way of life. Based on this claim, the author constructed a quality of life questionnaire to measure the population's satisfaction with the education, welfare, and health systems. Recent literature shows that the fundamental conflict that lies behind the forced urbanization process – which is overlooked in this chapter – and which constitutes the bone of contention between the Bedouin population and the state is the issue of landownership. The discrepancy that exists between the landownership definition by the State of Israel and that of the British or Ottoman governments is missing. Settling the Bedouins in permanent villages is not only a matter of urbanization, as several researchers claim, but also a matter of recognizing and preserving the ownership rights of the Bedouins to their lands, which date back to before the establishment of the State of Israel,

and of allowing the Bedouins to preserve their lifestyle on these lands.

Throughout the book (mainly chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5), the author attempts to show the improvement that has occurred in the lifestyle of the Segev Shalom inhabitants in the fields of education, welfare, and health. He eventually reaches the conclusion that is described as 'ambivalent findings' (p. 86). On the one hand, the urbanization process has provided various services for the benefit of the Bedouin population (welfare, education, and health), which have improved the population's situation in comparison to its state in the unrecognized settlements. However, on the other hand, previous reports have shown that the urbanization process has in fact failed for the Bedouins, owing to factors that the author brings out in detail: feelings of frustration, lack of resources, lack of economic development, the inability to complete the building of a house, and gaps between the financial state and lifestyle requirements in an urban settlement, which results in the highest rates in Israel of unemployment, school dropout, and poverty. This feeling of disappointment is described by the author at several levels, including a decline in the number of voters for the Israeli Knesset (chapters 3 and 4), Islamization processes, and the strengthening of the identification with the Islamic movement as an alternative. A more optimistic picture is presented regarding the positive influence of education on the Bedouin population, which is manifested in the development of awareness and political criticism towards the services offered by the settlement and towards the state (chapter 5).

In the fifth chapter, the author reaches the conclusion that a process of de-bedouinization is occurring within the Bedouin population (p. 127) in the direction of Arabization and identification with Islamic values. Focusing on the Bedouins as a group of nomads detaches them from the discourse of nationality, the Nakba, and their identity as Palestinians, as Muslims and Arabs living within the State of Israel.

Finally, the author arrives at the conclusion that developing identity in Bedouin society is a function of environmental conditions rather than of self-conceptualization (p. 136). As such, Israeli identity, which a small number of individuals who answered the questionnaire adopted, does not indicate a feeling of identification with the values of Israeli society, but rather indicates a favourable financial state.

A special chapter is devoted to the urbanizing Bedouin woman, but a chance was missed here

by the author to discuss up-to-date data regarding women's NGOs which have been active in Segev Shalom for almost a decade, as part of the battle for women's rights.

The most refreshing chapter is chapter 7, which deals with documenting tourism in relation to the Bedouin population; a fertile ground for government investments towards economic development of the Negev.

In conclusion, this book allows a reader who is unfamiliar with Bedouin society to learn about it in greater depth by focusing on one settlement, but it does not challenge previous literature on Bedouin urbanization/resettlement.

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GLICK SCHILLER, NINA & AYSE ÇAGLAR (eds). *Locating migration: rescaling cities and migrants*. ix, 279 pp., Illus., bibliogr. London, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 2011. £45.95 (cloth), £19.95 (paper)

This work is very dense. It is not a quick read. But it will pay back the time spent reading the numerous chapters. It is, as the title suggests, about the varying pathways through which migrants of different backgrounds become established in a range of cities in the United States and Europe that are differently positioned within the globalization process. It is about the mutual constitution of the global, national, and local migrants' contribution to the transnationality of cities. It is about concepts of scale, particularly neoliberal rescaling. It is also comparative in nature and asks why scholars of migration so often fail to address variations between cities and the different outcomes of urban restructuring. Developing paired studies between, for example, Halle and Manchester, New Hampshire, or New York and Paris, the work succeeds in bringing to life the debate about the impact of immigrants on cities and nation-states. As the editors make clear, there are many studies of migration to cities and the life of migrants in cities, but very little about the relationship of migrants and cities (p. 2). That is the special contribution of this volume: the concerted effort to examine how migrants actively contribute to restructuring and repositioning their cities of settlements and how transnational connections are developed, maintained, and expanded. This book examines migrants as residents of cities and actors within and across space rather than as aggregated ethnic communities. The case studies extend from the United States, Europe, and Africa to the

cities of New York, Paris, Berlin, Manchester, New Hampshire, and Halle, Germany, Ravenna and Rimini, Dallas-Fort Worth and Philadelphia, Amsterdam and The Hague.

The editors have recognized the need for continuous signposting and thus have a long introductory essay followed by three theoretical chapters which refine conceptual issues: chapter 2 by Neil Brenner on 'The urban question and the scale question'; chapter 3 by Michael Samers on 'The socioterritoriality of cities'; and chapter 4 by the book editors on 'Locality and globality: building a comparative framework in migration and urban studies'. The first eighty-four pages of this collection set the conceptual framework for the case studies to follow.

Part II looks at migrants as scale-makers in urban neighbourhoods, cities, and regions. Chapter 5 by Catherine Bretell looks at the Dallas-Fort Worth area as the recent gateway for many Asian Indians. Chapter 6 by Rijk Van Dijk compares The Hague and Amsterdam and tries to understand Ghanaian migrants' responses to different conditions of housing, job market, and levels of police surveillance in each of these two cities. In chapter 7, Ruba Salih and Bruno Riccio show how unskilled migrants in northern Italy can serve as scale-makers in the cities (Ravenna and Rimini) and region. In this case, low-wage but flexible migrant labour was instrumental in reviving a wave of deindustrialization and depopulation in the region. Judith Good's chapter 8 examines the legacy of racial polarization in Philadelphia's legacy, and the way that memory was an important contextual factor in the insertion of both highly skilled and entrepreneurial migrants in the reinvention of the city. Chapter 9 by Monika Salzbrunn looks at two global cities, Paris and New York, and describes neighbourhood development, in which migrants who are workers or owners of small businesses play important roles. The book's editors then contribute chapter 10: a case study of migrants in Manchester, New Hampshire, and Halle, Germany, and consider cities of different scale. They describe the non-ethnically organized pathways of migrant incorporation and transnationalism in these two cities. Chapter 11 by Bela Feldman-Bianco takes a historical perspective in the examination of New Bedford, Massachusetts. Originally a settlement of fishing and whale industry, the city was able to attract migrant labour to contribute to its transitional positioning as a major centre for textile production in the nineteenth century. This historical transnationalism has contributed to the current gaze at Portuguese transnational capital

in its effort to leave behind its 'downscaled' status.

The book closes with an afterword by Günther Schlee, who takes an ethnographic view of size, scale, and locality. This short piece moves the debate forward by considering again the earlier contribution through the lens of size and then raises some questions about the connection between city scale, size of groups, and their interrelationship. The afterword pulls the collection neatly to a close without dictating a particular conceptual positioning. The book closes leaving some debates open.

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KAUANUI, J. KĒHAULANI. *Hawaiian blood: colonialism and the politics of sovereignty and indigeneity*. xvi, 241 pp., illus., bibliogr. London, Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2009. £50.00 (cloth), £12.99 (paper)

Appearing as one of the inaugural volumes in Duke University Press's new 'Narrating Native Histories' series, *Hawaiian blood* is a triumph of scholarship from an emic perspective and a powerful indictment of the institutionalized form of racialism known as the 'blood quantum' as practised in the United States and especially in Hawaii. The book has three objectives. First, in the field of Hawaiian studies and political activism, it argues that blood quantum is a colonial project in the service of land alienation and dispossession. Second, it tackles the question of blood quantum within the broader field of Native studies. Third, it expands the field of critical race theory by showing how indigenous identity is redefined through blood racialization, with the discourse of whiteness constituting a project of disappearance for Native peoples. It also revitalizes the field by adding a Hawaiian-Asian-White paradigm to the long-dominant triangle of White-Black-Native American. Written from within Hawaii's complex heritage, it applies the standards of academic scholarship and the rules of legal evidence to the contested subjects of race, identity, and sovereignty, in a book that transforms our understanding of the past, present, and future of Hawaii and Hawaiians, and of 'race' more generally.

One of the legal artefacts of the colonizing period in American domestic history, 'blood quantum' was a method devised by the United States government for calculating the differential eligibility of Native American peoples to receive 'benefits' on the basis of whether they were

full-blooded, half-blooded, quarter-blooded, and so on. This invidious policy has had profoundly destructive political consequences for indigenous peoples, dividing those considered 'eligible' from those who are not, and giving rise to popular misconceptions about cultural authenticity and biological difference that continue to strike at the very heart of Native American identities and communities. In a study that lays bare Hawaii's little-known legal past, Kauanui shows how the imposition of the blood quantum in Hawaii was and is similar to but fundamentally different from those of continental indigenous peoples.

As she describes, in 1921 the enactment of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act saw the adoption by the federal government of the blood quantum method in Hawaii as a means of distributing leasehold parcels of residential, agricultural, and pastoral lands newly set aside for use by 'Native Hawaiians', legally defined as descendants 'with at least one-half blood quantum of individuals inhabiting the Hawaiian islands prior to 1778'. It was, as Kauanui neatly puts it, a case of the government 'returning Hawaiians to the land' rather than returning land to the Hawaiians. Before the forcible annexation of Hawaii by the United States in 1898, the islands had been a sovereign country organized as a constitutional monarchy and recognized by the major European powers and Japan. The annexation of Hawaii was effectively an act of colonial land appropriation by the United States, and advocates asserted – and still do – that all Hawaiian people had and have a shared right to the lands held by their former sovereign on their behalf. However, as the author shows, the imposition of the blood quantum meant that instead of being an act of restitution, returning the land to its rightful owners, the apportionment of these lease-holdings was cast as an act of charity for the needy, dispossessing Hawaiians from prior claims and sovereignty, dividing communities and families, and undercutting both cultural and legal identities.

Kauanui contextualizes her study by examining traditional Hawaiian means of defining kinship, relatedness, and identity, showing how the imposition of Western law in Hawaii in the nineteenth century increasingly served as a means of social and cultural control, displacing indigenous epistemologies. Moving forward to the congressional debates that led up to the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, Kauanui carries out a detailed analysis of the transcripts to construct a critical genealogy of the adoption of the 50 per cent racial criterion,

highlighting the nuanced ways in which the United States government redefined Hawaiian identity. Of particular interest is the influence on the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act debates of the strong anti-Asian sentiment among whites in the islands in the 1920s, particularly directed against the Japanese who had come to the islands in large numbers in the 1880s to work in the sugar plantations. Putting paid to a common etic perception of Hawaii as a 'melting pot' untroubled by racial tension, Kauanui shows how the Hawaiian case was further complicated by the territorial government's policy of 'different racializations' and forms of exclusion for Hawaiians and for Asians.

Kauanui's is the first work to tie Hawaiian identity to land in this way, helping to provide a legal foundation for ongoing claims to Hawaiian sovereignty as described in her final chapters, and enabling Hawaiians and others to understand better the internal conflicts that have often divided the indigenous community. This highly important study of how natives think and why enriches and challenges us all.

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NYÍRI, PÁL. *Mobility and cultural authority in contemporary China*. ii, 231 pp., bibliogr.

London, Seattle: Univ. Washington Press, 2010. £18.99 (paper)

This is the latest of the six monographs that Pál Nyíri has authored or co-authored since 1999, branching out from his original interest in the international migration of Chinese in Hungary to tourism in China and, most recently, the 'clash of cultures' in contemporary Western European societies. Although Nyíri clearly is not in any recognizable way an anthropologist, historian, geographer, sociologist, political scientist, or even a sinologist, he has important contributions to make to all of these disciplines. The book under review here is perhaps the clearest example as, in many ways, its focus on 'mobility' serves as a foil to bring together many of the questions and interests that have driven Nyíri's research and writing on China in the last decade or so. The theme of mobility is admittedly an extremely broad one, even if limited to just one country or culture (China), but its intersection in this book with 'cultural authority' allows Nyíri to construct an argument that connects internal rural-urban migration in China with international migration from China, Chinese tourism inside and outside of China, and international tourism in China.

Mobility, according to Nyíri, is entangled with China's fascination with modernity and deliverance from the 150 years of national humiliation at the hands of Western and Japanese imperialist aggression before 'Liberation' in 1949. Mobility in the present also serves as a counterpoint to the lack of mobility of the high-socialist past. Nyíri shows that mobility does not bring unqualified individual freedom. Everything that the Chinese migrant or tourist does and sees, both at home and abroad, is infused with the state's interpretative authority. Chinese on the move seek and see what the state wishes them to see: the world for them really is a place different from anybody else's. This is a vitally important argument. It reveals that many basic ideas about China's place in the world are habitually shared by virtually all Chinese one meets, even those who are otherwise critical or even hostile to the Chinese Communist Party.

However, there is also the real danger here that the argument sometimes gets the better of the evidence. For all its strengths, Nyíri's work lacks what anthropologists would consider to be a robust methodology. He draws on a dazzling array of popular novels, movies, soap operas, interviews, personal observations, secondary literature in Chinese, English, and many other languages, and informal conversations with other academics, without specifying what kind of information can and should be used as evidence for what specific points. Can one really prove that Chinese migrants or tourists think in a particular way on the basis of an episode from a soap opera? Perhaps so, but we would like to know why, how, for whom, where, and to what extent.

Anthropologists normally carefully describe their fieldwork experiences, thus creating the ethnographic authority that allows them to establish the significance and limits of the statements they make. Nyíri, however, seems simply to pick and choose mere illustrations for the arguments that he wants to make. As a result, this book is thought-provoking, compelling even, but not conclusive in any way or form. Yet the audacity of many of the points at least make you think and force you to look at the world through the eyes of China's fresh global citizens. *Mobility and cultural authority* may only be the start of the debate, but it is required reading for anybody with a serious interest in culture, modernity, and the Chinese nation in the twenty-first century.

FRANK PIEKE *University of Leiden*

THOMSEN, ROBERT C. *Nationalism in stateless nations: selves and others in Scotland and Newfoundland*. xi, 273 pp., maps, tables, plates, bibliogr. Edinburgh: John Donald, 2010. £20.00 (paper)

This book is an examination of 'the national self and its "others" in Scotland and Newfoundland' (p. 1). The Scots and the Newfoundlanders both belong to larger states, without an independent state of their own. Hence central decisions are made which may go contrary to the wishes of local popular opinion, as occurred, for instance, during the eras of Margaret Thatcher and Pierre Trudeau. During the period under study – from the late 1960s to the late 1990s – significant proportions of both these populations, we are told, considered themselves distinct 'nations'.

Robert Thomsen elaborates upon the likenesses between Scotland and Newfoundland. Both have histories of independence coupled with a strong widespread sense of a unique cultural heritage and identity. Both are junior economic partners which have never been fully assimilated into the political unions to which they are party: since 1707 (Scotland in Great Britain) and 1949 (Newfoundland in Canada) there have been equivalent, persistent, and increasing perceptions of being different, culturally, politically, and socio-economically. Both Scotland and Newfoundland have deemed themselves relatively poor, and have blamed this on a lack of appreciation from central governments (in London and Ottawa) which have neglected to implement the necessary special policies: both have deemed their dependency on the majoritarian other as the great obstacle to positive local socio-economic development and the cause of their political impotence. Both have enjoyed recent cultural revivals: Scotland from the 1980s and Newfoundland from the 1960s.

Yet, 'sub-state political nationalism has followed different paths in Scotland and Newfoundland' (p. 1). It is the case, Thomsen argues, that while nationalisms all share the idea of the nation as a point of departure, nationalist movements are as diverse as their social contexts. The appropriate question to ask is: 'How does a particular kind of nationalism manifest itself in different societies?' (p. 228). If national identity is a discourse, then the negotiation of images of self and other is a struggle for kinds of discursive hegemony.

Thomsen draws on arguments that nationalism may be interpreted, alternatively, as a functional phenomenon (Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson) or primordial (Antony Smith) or

instrumental (Eric Hobsbawm), and how these theoretical variants might be applied specifically to the Scottish case (Tom Nairn, Anthony Cohen, David McCrone) and the Newfoundland one (Jim Overton, Doug House). Thomsen's special contribution, however, is in an emphasis on the notion of 'autonomism', understood as a kind of nationalism without a well-defined goal or without independence as its cardinal aspiration (because unattainable or not deemed indubitably beneficial). The idea of the nation remains – so autonomism is not mere regionalism – and implicit rights to national self-determination are implied, as is a subtle deployment of ethnic essentialism. Compared to classic nationalist movements, however, those autonomistic ones in Scotland and Newfoundland base their demands for constitutional change on well-considered calculations of socio-economic (and also politico-democratic) pros and cons. No Scottish or Newfoundlander actors seek to 'push forward on a political nationalist path unless the present level of social welfare can be met in the proposed, not-too-distant, future constitutional scenario' (p. 225).

This is a well-researched and nicely presented volume (there are nine attractive colour photographs). My quibble – as an ethnographer of both of these locations – is with the level of generality adopted. 'For people to unite in a national cause', we are told (p. 12), 'it is necessary for them to feel a sense of common destiny with their co-nationals'. Truly? Could it not be a matter of those 'ego-syntonic' processes (George Devereux) whereby individual senses of self come to be translated into equivalent senses of 'personal nationalism' (Anthony Cohen)? In other words, the precise ways in which people become 'co-nationals' in Scotland and in Newfoundland are more assumed than demonstrated. But then the phenomenological is less Thomsen's brief than the socio-political, and his study of politicians and newspapers performs the latter well.

NIGEL RAPPORT *University of St Andrews*

History, politics, and law

DREXLER, ELIZABETH F. *Aceh, Indonesia: securing the insecure state*. 287 pp., maps, illus., bibliogr. Philadelphia: Univ. Pennsylvania Press, 2008. £39.00 (cloth)

In this book, Elizabeth Drexler argues that cycles of violence in Aceh, which were only

halted by the greater natural violence and devastation wreaked by the 2004 tsunami, demonstrate the falsity of the assumption held by international human rights organizations that exposure of past violence promotes reconciliation in post-conflict situations. Drexler's meeting in 1999 with Abdullah Syafi'ie, the leader of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), frames her account. Syafi'ie was in the habit of carrying a black box, allegedly filled with bullets, and this container provides Drexler with ammunition for her own argument. Drawing analogously on Bruno Latour's notion of the black box (*Science in action*, 1987), she posits that the actual conditions of the existence of GAM are a social phenomenon so complex they are inscrutable to analysis. As such, they are 'black boxed': the complex, contested conditions of their emergence no longer subject to scrutiny, they are treated as self-evident fact. Drexler thus draws on the conceptual presence of the black box filled with ammunition 'to emphasize the existence of the conflict protagonist GAM for the extension of violence in Aceh' and the importance of considering the social lives of conflict narratives in analysis (p. 26).

Examining New Order representations of Acehese history and culture, Drexler argues that the DI/TII movement for an Islamic nation in the 1950s, the Aceh Merdeka movement led by Hasan Tiro in the late 1970s, and the subsequent Free Aceh Movement (GAM) were distinct events in their own right. However, these separate historical moments of resistance to external authority in Aceh were recast by New Order state as a linear history of struggle by the Acehese against centralized authority. Culturally, this was attributed to the propensity of the Acehese people for bravery and rebelliousness, their religious fanaticism and liking for war. Violent intervention in Aceh was thus legitimized by its representation as suppression of a separatist threat from a bellicose population bent on secession.

Turning next to the trial of the Bantaqiah massacre perpetrated by the army at the Islamic boarding school of Teungku Bantaqiah in West Aceh in July 1999, Drexler asserts that in Aceh, state-sanctioned violence did not serve to establish rule of law; rather, law served violence. Trial investigations brought to light a 'dark pattern' of military involvement in creating a separatist enemy, but failed to bring those ultimately responsible for human rights abuses to account. Failed attempts at justice gave rise to

calls for self-determination, and appeals to the international community for intervention in the Aceh conflict. Yet intervention by international mediators only served to exacerbate the conflict by the retrospective imposition of a common narrative of opposed protagonists that failed to appreciate the complexities of the conflict. Through the consolidation and legitimization of the GAM as representatives of the Acehnese people, the intervention curtailed broader engagement with other factions in the peace process and ultimately structured the conflict dynamic in ways that locked parties into cycles of renewed violence after the Humanitarian Pause. Such interventions, Drexler suggests, would be better off paying attention to the dynamics and processes of conflict rather than attempting to triangulate historical accounts of conflict.

The subtext of Drexler's argument would seem to be that long-term ethnographic engagement should be a central component of any sustained analysis of conflict. Yet through the examination and analysis of conflict narratives, Drexler is herself involved in a historical project. The book makes extensive use of textual sources, and relies heavily on interviews with a limited number of people. As ethnography, the conversations and exchanges with people upon which Drexler's monograph is based are for the most part synthesized and summarized or alluded to in support of her argument. She notes the importance of protecting the safety of informants and preventing her account itself becoming embedded in cycles of vengeance and conflict (p. 14), and one would of course agree that the safety of informants should take precedence over all else. However, as a consequence we are given very little insight into the sociality of violence at a personal level, or into the mistrust and suspicion that we are told were characteristic of social relations in Aceh. The effect is that the inner workings of Drexler's own analysis are themselves black boxed. One could accept this as a consequence of the limitations of reporting from war-torn Aceh were it not for the theoretical claims that are made, and which require greater substantiation than would seem possible because of these restrictions. Hence, while the book provides very useful insight into the material effects of discourse and the failure of rule of law as structural factors shaping violence in Aceh, it overreaches in the theoretical claims that it makes from a limited ethnographic base.

LEE WILSON *University of Cambridge*

MILLS, DAVID. *Difficult folk? A political history of social anthropology*. x, 221 pp., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2008. £35.00 (cloth)

David Mills's political history of social anthropology in the UK from the 1930s to the 1960s is increasingly valuable to British anthropologists and looks set to become a set textbook in the history of the discipline. At a time when universities are bridleing in the face of massive upheavals, and anthropology departments around the UK are under increasing pressure, there is much in this book that might prompt us to consider both what might have been, and what might yet be.

Having chosen to recount a political history, Mills offers the kind of insights we do not achieve from purely intellectual histories, and expands on the more personalized hybrid histories we are familiar with from Kuper. Putting anthropology in a broader institutional context, Mills helps to situate arguments about the discipline itself, and shows how our apparently intellectual debates about what anthropology is are heavily influenced by the institutional conditions and contests that left anthropologists in minor academic departments, eschewing for a long time the potential of what became applied anthropology, and rejecting invitations to work with industrialists and businesses, as some kind of intellectual pollution.

The book begins with a fairly impassioned plea for the value of political history from within. Why anyone would object to a political history I am not sure, but it is clear that Mills has encountered such resistance and works hard to ensure that there can be little doubt that his project is a worthy one. From there, he treads a careful line between chronology and theme, incorporating different social networks and different institutional issues as the chapters progress. He starts, of course, with the almost unbelievably incestuous world of the London School of Economics and Oxford of the 1920s and 1930s. It is breathtaking now to be reminded of how cosily a few individuals sewed up a series of senior positions, how their personal and intellectual rivalries slashed and burned their way through the ethical positions of others while creating an establishment. Mills presents the intrigues and events with a level head, leaving the reader to contemplate how much more open and inclusive the subject might have been, and equally how all might have come to nought without the ambitions and boundless confidence of the founding

fathers and mothers. His account of relations with the Colonial Office offers a level of detail that helps us to understand properly the tensions for anthropologists of working in colonial contexts, while not excusing instances of actions that contemporary anthropologists can be less proud of.

The book moves onwards and outwards, chronicling the rise of the Cambridge department, Manchester, and the School of Oriental and African Studies, and later Edinburgh and the then-new universities. Mills considers in turn the discipline's relations with, first, sociology and, later, race relations. At each turn, he shows us how an anthropological establishment pulled back from expansion, preferring to consolidate narrower, more exclusive intellectual traditions. The irony, of course, lies in Mills's own contribution to the report to the Economic and Social Research Council that highlighted the 'export' of anthropology Ph.D. graduates into other disciplines. So while anthropologists find work in all sorts of disciplinary contexts, the core retrenches, making these 'exports' feel like refugees, semi-detached from the mother-ship. Few anthropologists who have spent significant amounts of time in other disciplines are later appointed to anthropology departments, and Mills's account shows that this is a sign of the peculiarity of our own disciplinary history rather than a reflection of the intellectual contributions that such scholars make.

Perhaps overall, the shape of this history is something of a rise and fall, ending as it does with the era that Mills describes as one with a 'defensive outlook' in the 1960s, in response to a dramatic reduction in research funding.

In the afterword, Mills turns his spotlight towards contemporary institutional pressure for 'interdisciplinarity', and reflects on the continuing relevance of disciplinary academic departments. Published well before the current 'crisis', Mills's remarks remain timely and insightful. He reminds us of the cost that we all have paid for in-fighting and bickering between competing interests (and egos), and the risks we take for the whole discipline with narrow institutional political manoeuvring. His account contains implicit, shadow counterfactual histories that remind us, too, how the current state of anthropology might have been very different indeed, reminders which one can only hope might prompt more imaginative and outward-looking responses to the crises that are awaiting us.

SIMONE ABRAM *University of Sheffield*

O'KANE, DAVID & TRICIA REDEKER HEPNER (eds). *Biopolitics, militarism and development: Eritrea in the twenty-first century*. xxxvii, 197 pp., tables, bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2009. £37.50 (cloth)

This sixth volume of Berghahn's 'Dislocations' series provides a much-needed collection of ethnographies and historical analyses on Eritrea's development model and its discontents. Comprising one of the youngest countries on the globe, Eritrea is examined from a perspective that views post-liberation development and state formation as a mode of militarization. This then sets the volume on a dynamic analytical track, which, although not employing the width of theoretical critique one would expect in light of recent anthropological discussion of biopolitics, does indeed contribute significantly towards a clearer understanding of the current state of social life in Eritrea.

The eight core chapters included in the volume focus on the tension between party-state hegemony and social autonomy within a climate of increased authoritarianism and exceptionalism on the part of the ruling People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ). Bringing in tension what Tekle Woldemikael describes in the first chapter as the party-state's integral nationalism and grassroots perceptions of national, social, and individual self-determination, Michael Mahrt gives us an ethnographically nuanced account of grassroots accounts of time, space, and place *vis-à-vis* PFDJ 'struggle' historicism. The theme of this tension is further developed by Amanda Poole, who examines issues of autonomy in resettled refugee communities. This aspect is further strengthened by the analysis, in chapters 4, 5, and 6, of the closure of the University of Asmara, the repression of youth, and the militarization of education through its enclosure and regimentation at the notorious Sawa Defence Training Center. Tanja Müller and Jennifer Riggan both discuss the imposition of forced conscription for young men and the overall militarization of education since the outbreak of the Eritreo-Ethiopian War in 1998. Riggan in particular focuses on notions of wastage and efficiency in education. Her chapter relates to how the state and teachers' 'national education imaginary' and their respective agendas of social promotion of students clash as distinct modes of discipline, the former advancing homogenization and the latter stratification of citizens. Approaching the same theme from the perspective of conscripted youth, Magnus

Treiber provides three men's biographies, analysing their individual strategies *vis-à-vis* state repression and the militarization strategies of discipline involved in projects such as Sawa. Similarly, Tricia Redeker Hepner contributes to the discussion by analysing the exodus of educated youth seeking asylum abroad as a strategy of re-humanization. However, the latter's attempt to interpret this through Giorgio Agamben's category of 'bare life' is analytically unconvincing, and characteristic of the collection's main weakness: a confusion of biopolitics with disciplinary power and biopower, and of sovereign power with state sovereignty. A more careful engagement with Foucault's and Agamben's work and its anthropological critique would have allowed both authors and editors to avoid a series of unwarranted theoretical generalizations, and further explore the dynamic relation between sovereign power, discipline, and biopolitics, giving emphasis as much to processes of subjectivation as to the micropolitics of counter-conducts.

Despite this theoretical weakness, the ethnographies presented in this volume contribute towards a rare perspective on Eritrean militarized and militarizing development and state formation. If their biopolitics argument remains analytically undeveloped and largely unconnected to issues of gender and class, these ethnographic chapters clearly indicate the scope of such analysis. I suggest that this can greatly benefit from contextualizing Eritrea's model of self-reliant development through militarism within its transregional governmental genealogy, taking into account conflicting models of Marxism and nationalism in East Africa. This would inevitably demand a coherent analysis of Maoism's influence on the Eritrean People's Liberation Front until 1993 and its residual effect on the PFDJ's biopolitical strategy and its technologies of self-reliance and moral rectification, a theme indicated but not explored in the current volume.

CHRISTOS LYNTERIS *University of Cambridge*

REBEL, HERMANN. *When women held the dragon's tongue and other essays in historical anthropology*. ix, 309 pp., tables, bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2010. £58.00 (cloth)

This is a provocative, demanding, and sometimes annoying book that is nevertheless

very much worth the effort it takes to read it. The author, Hermann Rebel, is a philosophically and anthropologically erudite social historian among whose earlier publications we find *Peasant classes: the bureaucratization of property and family relations under early Habsburg absolutism, 1511-1636* (1983). The many topics addressed in the present book include Swiss rural politics in the 1600s, infanticide in nineteenth-century Austria, contemporary genocide studies, and European fairytale collections. Throughout the text, Rebel also scrutinizes the work of several anthropologists, including Eric Wolf's (which he admires) and Sherry Ortner's (of which he is critical). The book comprises a long introduction, six inner chapters, and a conclusion.

The author's oft-stated purpose is to develop a 'narrative-critical historical anthropology' that is ethically responsible and capable of taking empathic stances. This objective is reflected in the organization of the six inner chapters around three 'kinds of narrative options' (p. 40): 'myths', 'fairy tales', and 'histories'. To this reviewer the argumentation is clearest in the essays on fairy tales. In one of the two, Rebel examines the Grimm folktale collections in order to find out what they 'were about', both at 'the time the Grimms and their helpers wrote them down' and in subsequent editions (p. 104). He demonstrates how, in the first edition of 1812, the tales offer windows into 'the historically conditioned' social, political, and psychological interaction between the poor and 'the not so poor' (p. 124). Then, as time goes by, 'middle-class anxieties' take over as editors shun the concerns of the poor and bring readers into 'the mental world of early Biedermeier pedagogy' (p. 105) and, eventually, into the psychologizing and sexualizing of the late 1900s. Rebel follows up this argument in the essay for which the book is named, in which he investigates French folktale collections. A major point also here is that a narrative-critical historical anthropology must take into account the actual concerns of those who told the tales. The fawning narrators who told stories to the courtier Charles Perrault in the late 1600s expressed concerns that were very different from those of the working-class women from whom Paul Delarue recorded tales in the late 1800s.

This point might seem self-evident and indisputable. Yet, Rebel demonstrates how scholars have continuously disregarded the voices of tellers at specific historical moments

and, instead, been preoccupied with fitting tales into pre-conceived patterns and structures, such as the type and motif indexes by Stith Thompson and others. Such indexes, he notes, have parallels in various 'anthropological histories' (the very antithesis of a critical historical anthropology), such as the many structural patterns in whose light anthropologists have tried to make sense of human experiences. These patterns, Rebel argues, have made it possible for scholars to disregard actual experiences and the 'multiple, interwoven', and conflicting stories linked to them (p. 88). A similar disregard, he emphasizes, is true of 'symbolic actionist' and other 'culturalist' agendas that have imprisoned anthropologists inside pre-conceived configurations and enabled 'cultural-scientific hermeneuticists' (p. 256) to ignore people's capacities for empathy also across cultural boundaries. Rebel criticizes several North American anthropologists in this context, in particular Clifford Geertz, whose influential 'theatrics' and conceptualization of people's 'culturally encapsulated minds' (p. 261) have made it possible for anthropologists to disregard suffering and engage in 'repressive, academic collaborations with violence and human destruction' (p. 274).

This is a difficult book to read. Hermann Rebel often expresses his arguments in convoluted sentences that may be fifteen lines long, and it is not unlikely that his intentions are misrepresented in this brief review. And of course, the book invites questions and objections. Why would a concern with structures and patterns be incompatible with empathic historical anthropology? And is not Rebel banging on open doors? After all, scholars have long criticized both ahistorical anthropology incapable of taking ethical stances and simplistic folklore scholarship relying on catalogues and indexes. Indeed, Rebel does not mention any of the recent studies by folklorists in which the conflicting stories linked to specific historical moments are analysed. Charles Briggs's *Stories in the time of cholera* (2003) is but one example. But by the same token one has to agree with Rebel that anthropologists and researchers in related fields still often ignore historical specificities and allow complex human experiences to disappear into pre-conceived templates. Hermann Rebel puts his finger on difficult and unresolved issues in this challenging book.

BARBRO KLEIN *Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study, Uppsala*

Landscape and property

HECKLER, SERENA (ed.). *Landscape, process and power: re-evaluating traditional environmental knowledge*. xv, 289 pp., maps, tables, figs, bibliogrs. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2009. £45.00 (cloth)

Landscape, process and power presents an excellent overview of the study of traditional environmental knowledge (TEK) and the directions in which it has evolved in recent years. When the value of TEK (or indigenous or local knowledge – the implications of these different terms are carefully discussed in Heckler's introduction) first began to be recognized by international development and conservation professionals, much effort was put into its collection and preservation. It has become clear, however, that recording TEK and taking it out of its original context often rather misses the point. Like other bodies of knowledge, TEK is grounded in local landscapes, practices, and politics, and is changing and dynamic. Individually but especially together, the contributions of this volume do a fine job at providing such a contextualized and fluid understanding of TEK.

One of the collection's core themes, then, is 'process' – the processes by which TEK is generated and transmitted as well as processes of studying TEK. Gilberthorpe follows the pathways along which the Fasu in Papua New Guinea move through and experience the landscape around them, whilst Vermonden shows in rich detail how fishing knowledge in South Buton is acquired through years of participation, rather than 'transmitted orally from generation to generation', as the Convention on Biological Diversity defines TEK. Boissière takes an unusual research angle in exploring the exchange of knowledge between neighbouring groups in West Papua, instead of the more commonly researched relationship between indigenous and 'non-indigenous' knowledge. Thomas and Fujimoto, too, adopt different approaches to conventional research on plant knowledge by respectively focusing on observations of birds in Papua New Guinea and on the use of wild plants in Ethiopia as agricultural indicators, again highlighting the situated and practice-bound nature of much TEK. The fact that TEK is also politically situated emerges clearly in Carss, Bell, and Marzano's chapter, showing as it does that fishermen's observations and understandings of cormorants in European wetlands are inevitably shaped by

(perceived) competition between man and bird over scarce fish resources. Other contributions address further aspects of 'power', the volume's second theme: Gilberthorpe asks how the Fasu have responded to the establishment of mining operations in her research area, thus explicitly relating TEK to contemporary local political economy, whilst the political implications of TEK research itself and its uses in a global context are discussed by Alexiades and also Zent, in his exhaustive genealogy of the field. 'Landscape', finally, provides a 'contextualizing frame for human activities and perception', as Heckler puts it in her introduction (p. 12). Gilberthorpe in particular adopts an Ingold-inspired approach of linking TEK to landscape, but in different ways landscape features in all contributions. Indeed, one might say that landscape and power are implicitly brought together in the three contributions that address more long-standing discussions in TEK research, namely the relative sustainability of indigenous land use practices and the search for appropriate terms in assessing it. Sillitoe, on the basis of his many years of research in Papua New Guinea, shows just how difficult it is to employ the carrying capacity concept, whilst Thomas argues that even if indigenous practices are not intrinsically sustainable, their environmental impact is nevertheless mostly benign or limited in damage (in part simply because of low population densities amongst the Hewa). Kassam and Ganya, finally, demonstrate how Gabra pastoralists in Kenya, contrary to colonial and postcolonial expert assertions, have traditionally managed their cattle very successfully on the basis of in-depth knowledge of the Oromo landscape and weather patterns.

Overall, *Landscape, process and power* does not so much advance one cohesive argument as shine light on TEK from many different angles, giving the kind of holistic understanding that only in-depth ethnographic research can provide. Indeed, the collection shows just how important proper anthropology (rather than rapid rural appraisal) is for good TEK research. At the same time, it proves the relevance of TEK research to wider fields in anthropology, such as political ecology and the anthropology of knowledge and learning.

Minor quibbles aside (some chapters would have benefited from more careful copy-editing), I have no hesitation in recommending this volume not only to anyone wishing to catch up on recent developments in TEK research, but also as

a useful teaching resource in a range of anthropology courses.

PAULINE VON HELLERMANN *Goldsmiths, University of London*

LESOROGOL, CAROLYN K. *Contesting the commons: privatizing pastoral lands in Kenya*. xiii, 250 pp., maps, figs, tables, bibliogr. Ann Arbor: Univ. Michigan Press, 2008. \$75.00 (cloth), \$28.95 (paper)

The process of 'reform' of customary land tenure in Kenya began during the British colonial era, and has intensified under successive independent governments. The move from communal landholding to privatization has long been regarded by the state as a means of providing incentives for increased agricultural production, but over the past two decades many pastoralists – once contemptuous of farming – have also embraced privatization with enthusiasm, and diversified their economic livelihoods. What factors determine the choices individual pastoralists make, either to seek private land or to retain and defend traditional communal norms? What are the socio-economic outcomes and policy implications, and has individualization of landholding led to more selfish behaviour and the erosion of moral norms? Are people any better off when they own land individually?

These are some of the questions Lesorogol explores in her fascinating study of land and social transformation among the Samburu. Through comparative micro-level case studies of the Siambu and Mbaringon communities, she sets out to understand 'how individual choices and actions, conditioned as they are by the normative frameworks and habits of culture, mediate and shape the contours of social change processes' (p. 2). Siambu is the only area in Samburu district that has been completely privatized (though land use is a hybridized mix of individual and common use despite privatization), while land remains communally owned in Mbaringon. Lesorogol examines the push and pull factors, internal and external, that determine why and how people behave as they do, and which shape institutional change. An anthropologist, her methods and analysis are refreshingly different, and include experimental economics and game theory. Chapter 8 gives an entertaining account of Samburu playing games, with small sums of money, that tested hypotheses about how behaviour may have changed since privatization. The result? Contrary to expectation, privatization has not undermined

fair-minded and trusting behaviour; in fact, those favouring privatization were less selfish than the other group.

The author thinks outside the box of traditional ethnography, moving beyond kinship-centred structural-functionalist models to seek broader explanations for how society ticks and, most importantly, changes over time. She challenges the perception, commonly held by non-pastoralist Kenyans and outsiders, that Samburu culture is unchanging; in fact, change is happening fast and modernity increasingly embraced, both in this area and among other Maa-speakers. On her evidence, earlier gerontocratic models no longer apply; younger men and some women are using new sources of power to shift the balance between generations, and between men and women. For those seeking private land and other freedoms, this often involves violating social norms, and deciding it is worthwhile (as Kenyan citizens linked to wider networks, rather than primarily Samburu) refusing to conform to certain social expectations; for this and other reasons, male elders' authority has waned. Lesorogol's work complements a range of existing literature, including that on the subdivision of Maasai group ranches in Kajiado district, and gendered analyses of pastoralism in Africa, and brings a welcome richness of personalized detail that is often lacking elsewhere. She could have made more use of Hodgson's work, however, and does not cite her edited volume *Rethinking pastoralism in Africa* (2000).

Lesorogol gained *entrée* to Samburu as a development worker, which gives her particular insights into local problems and challenges. The strengths of this book include the light-touch self-reflexivity, detailed household-level data and informant profiles, and the use of lengthy verbatim quotes from named informants, though an appended list of oral sources with brief background information on each person would have been a useful addition. However, the downside of micro-level studies is that broader arguments and contextualization can be neglected. While the author provides some historical background (chap. 3), and mentions some continuities in postcolonial policy and practice, more could have been made of this, drawing on the historiography of the Maasai in British East Africa, to explain where these ideas came from and how pervasive they are. There are, for example, clear legacies in colonial betterment schemes, environmental controls, and the notion of the deserving poor. I could see no mention of leasing land for wildlife

tourism, and only passing reference to community-based natural resource management, which are an increasingly important feature of the Kenyan landscape. Moral economy theory could also have been developed, since much of this study is about changes in the 'traditional' moral economy. On balance, however, this is a rich work that will appeal to a wide range of scholars and students.

LOTTE HUGHES *Open University*

WESZKALNYS, GISA. *Berlin, Alexanderplatz: transforming place in a unified Germany*. xii, 214 pp., maps, illus., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2010. £35.00 (cloth)

Gisa Weszkalnys begins this book by stating her intention to pay 'ethnographic homage' (p. 1) to Alfred Döblin, the title of whose 1929 novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz* is identical to that of Weszkalnys's monograph, save for one comma. Döblin's book is a wild trip around Weimar-era Berlin, packed full with powerful affects and chance happenings, alternately tearing apart and reassembling its protagonist. In a similar vein, out of her Alexanderplatz, 'described, heard, smelled and embodied' (p. 6) with the help of grilled Bratwurst, screeching cars, 'disintegrating socialist exemplars', putrid toilets, and totalizing planners, Weszkalnys aims to assemble, following Annemarie Mol, 'Alexanderplatz multiple' (p. 6).

To this end, Weszkalnys makes deft use of her fieldwork material, drawing on experiences as an intern in a municipal planning office, a waitress in an ill-fated pub, an attendee of public debates, a participant in activists' meetings, a demanding interlocutor, and an alert explorer of the square's interstices. I was struck by the vivid contrast drawn between the hotshot 'new Berlin' dispositions of the planners, officials, and investors responsible for 'filling' the anachronistic emptiness of Alexanderplatz – and the forlorn resignation expressed by the ex-East German designers of what had long been the flagship urban space of socialist Germany's capital city, now being 'rationalized away' by both public and private decision-makers (p. 125). However, while today's planners take care to point out that they are not Corbusierian demiurges, in practice they share their predecessors' 'God's-eye view'. They may buy lunch at the local Kaufhof, but they eat it in their offices on the fourteenth floor of a (GDR-era) tower block, with commanding views of the square (p. 91).

Weszkalnys juxtaposes these high-rise observations with an intricate account of street-level Alexanderplatz. Local residents link dismay at the physical decay of their surroundings with narratives of post-unification moral decline. Meanwhile, a sort of grassroots public-private partnership made up of youth workers and multinational firms reaches out to the square's wayward youths by providing temporary facilities for recreation. Their efforts, however, do not impress city officials, who hold on to an incommensurably different vision of what a desirable *sociology* for Alexanderplatz should look like (pp. 138-61).

Descriptively, Weszkalnys's book achieves exactly what it intends – to produce an account of how 'partially connected' entities assemble to enact or hinder the production of an urban space in transition. In other words, this book is a description of complexity. For Weszkalnys, 'ambiguity', 'fluidity', and 'elusiveness' are the trio of words that best 'encapsulate' Alexanderplatz, in contrast to the misleading solidity of 'this concrete plane and the sturdy buildings around it' (p. 167). This suspicion towards *concreteness*, however, is also the source of the book's limitations. In part, this is a problem of description. Despite the text's ethnographic richness, I have difficulty anchoring myself in the Alexanderplatz it conveys. For all of Weszkalnys's interest in temporality, the famous World-Time Clock receives only a few cursory name-checks. For all the emphasis on materiality, the gigantic television tower looming over the square is similarly elided. Would its vast bulk interfere with the ANT-esque, 'socially flat', non-linear anti-narrative so carefully crafted by the ethnographer?

This is also a problem of theory. Weszkalnys enlists an impressive array of philosophers and social thinkers to shore up her affinity for multiplicity. It seems, however, that the author is weary of over-epistemologizing her 'ontology of place as assemblage' (p. 164), to the extent that she avoids a sustained critical engagement with the items in her bibliography. Alongside some conspicuous gaps in description, this analytical thinness undermines somewhat the author's (as such well-rendered) claim that the object of her attention really is best characterized as an inchoate collectivity of indeterminacies. An awareness of this creeps into the book's final six pages. Appealing to her informants' sense that the sphere of 'economics and money' comprises a 'fundamental reality' onto which successive levels of 'relative realities' are layered (pp. 167-8), Weszkalnys introduces the possibility of reducing

the complexity she has spent 167 pages fleshing out to a political-economic oneness. However, this suggestion is swiftly diluted into a much broader question of ownership, before being dropped altogether in the book's concluding sentence: 'In the end, it is Alexanderplatz that makes people live things simultaneously' (p. 172).

The 1929 book called *Berlin Alexanderplatz* turns out, in the last instance, to be all about fate. To complete an otherwise very worthy ethnographic updating of Döblin's novel, Weszkalnys would have done well to tell us more than that, in the last instance, Alexanderplatz is all about Alexanderplatz.

MICHAŁ MURAWSKI *University of Cambridge*

Language

BEAKEN, MIKE. *The making of language* (2nd edition). xv, 239 pp., bibliogr. Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2010. £17.95 (paper)

This is a revised version of a book which Beaken published under the same title in 1996 with Edinburgh University Press, in which he sought to examine the origin of human language from his interpretation of what constituted a Marxist point of view. Beaken's basic viewpoint is unchanged in this revised version, and in this book we see that much of his philosophical framework remains intact from the previous work, though his worldview has (we should note with relief) not led him into the inanities or indeed insanities of more clearly Marxist linguists. This book can be seen as an update of Beaken's earlier book, but the present volume can easily be read as a work in its own right, and the bibliography is full of references to works from the past fifteen years. The idea of language as a social creation *sensu stricto* (rather than as a 'social construct' in the sociological sense) is not new, and the theme has also been pursued in Martin Edwards's recent book *The origins of language: an anthropological perspective* (2010). Beaken's approach is indeed summed up on p. 26: 'When we look for the origins of language, we are simultaneously looking for the origins of the social life of human beings'. The result bears a strong resemblance to some of the generality-packed treatises on language and the structure of human societies produced in the late nineteenth century.

Beaken has a great deal of ground to cover (not all of it clearly connected with language),

which he does with concision and not always with a lot of supportive references for the reader to examine. The first chapter sets the scene and presents the theoretical backdrop, and in chapter 2, 'Language and labour', after discussing the nature of labour itself, he examines the role of the sign, the use of language as a tool and a means of expressing opinions and disseminating techniques. In chapter 3, the focus is on various forms of communication and co-operation among hominids and other primates. The next chapter deals with the role of gesture in communication, and is followed by the longest chapter (pp. 86-128), which covers an immense amount of territory, from the vocal abilities of early *Homo sapiens* to the importance of fire in human social development. This is followed by chapters dealing with the parts played by music and dance in the development of meaning and language (especially speech), and the rise of grammar, while the final chapter presents Beaken's general conclusions and the likelihood of linguistic progress. A glossary of sociological, linguistic, and anthropological terms (pp. 203-11), bibliography (pp. 212-25), and index (pp. 226-39) complete the volume, while the cover shows an otherwise unidentified 'Ethiopian Forest People' (which people?).

A lot of the details in the book are open to question, and some are simply wrong. For instance, what Beaken refers to as Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's work on Klamath (an Oregonian language which Lévy-Bruhl examined in the context of his interest in what he referred to as 'inferior societies') was actually his analysis of work on this language by Albert S. Gatschet in the 1870s. Some of the terminology Beaken uses is no longer regarded as acceptable; the Uto-Aztecan 'Papago-Pima' language is nowadays usually referred to as O'odham, and why Beaken mentions Texans in his discussion of the language is puzzling to me, as O'odham-speakers largely live in Arizona. This kind of cavalier approach to detail and to modern sensitivities rather devalues the book: why should people swallow Beaken's arguments wholesale when the approach to minutiae is so casual? Rather few of the references which Beaken cites are themselves sources of primary linguistic data against which one can judge his claims about what he calls 'prepolitical languages' (pp. 170-5): for instance, his assertion that such languages tend to lack a possessive verb 'have'. Bernd Heine's cross-linguistic study *Possession: cognitive sources, causes and grammaticalization* (1997), with examples from

dozens of languages throughout the world, would have refined Beaken's claims, but this book is not in his bibliography.

Beaken's book takes in many topics, and treats some of them with care, though few of them are covered with much profundity. His work often devotes just a few lines to a topic, and cites case studies from the literature which are not the ones that most linguists would have chosen. Coverage of several major topics at between two and three times the length they are currently given, and the provision of some diagrams and tables, would have made this ambitious book a lot more satisfying as a treatment of the issues which frequently are only adumbrated here.

ANTHONY P. GRANT *Edge Hill University*

EHRET, CHRISTOPHER. *History and the testimony of language*. xii, 274 pp., maps, figs, tables, bibliogr. London, Berkeley: Univ. California Press, 2011. £20.95 (paper)

The front cover of this book is set in a deliberately eighteenth-century mode of typography, which emphasizes the 'history' in the title while making the book resemble a rediscovered work by Mary Wollstonecraft or Thomas Paine which is being reprinted. This mock-Enlightenment montage may redound to the book's credit, as the arresting appearance should provoke the attention of curious readers, and this is Ehret's intention.

The aim of this book is to demonstrate to historians (especially cultural historians) how an understanding of diachronic or historical linguistics can enable them to learn much about societies which were vital at periods before written records from the areas where they lived were available. This is germane to Ehret's own work, as he is an Africanist who has been using the findings and tools of linguistics to construct cultural history (especially that of East Africa) for the past forty years. The techniques which Ehret discusses are applicable to other parts of the world and are especially useful in areas where the earliest written records are not as early as historians may hope. East Africa itself is a fascinating testing-ground for this kind of work, as it is the intersection of the four great phyla of African languages, namely Afroasiatic, Nilo-Saharan, Niger-Kordofanian (including Niger-Congo), and Khoisan, of which only the first seems secure as a genealogically justified and scientifically demonstrable language family. Within Afroasiatic, Ehret draws particular

attention to data from Cushitic, Omotic and from Proto-Erythraic, the ancestor of Berber, Egyptian, and Semitic languages.

The first half of this book consists of five chapters and demonstrates Ehret's methods, which are, as he shows, the methods of standard historical linguistics and what it can tell the observer. The reader learns about the nature of historical linguistic inquiry, sound correspondences and sound changes, methods of phonological reconstruction, the identification of items of cultural vocabulary (the kind of material which is most easily transferred from one language system to another, but which is also especially informative for people wishing to understand which kinds of cultigens, kinship terms, artefacts, etc., are reconstructible back to a proto-language), and the ways in which linguists can use information gleaned from the application of these techniques to identify borrowed items in a language's lexicon. Such studies, built on the application of the techniques which Ehret explains, enable us to see that borrowing has played a major part in shaping the languages of this area: he shows that there are some Cushitic elements in the basic vocabulary of Ethiosemitic and (this fact is less well known in linguistic circles) some Nilo-Saharan elements in Egyptian cultural vocabulary. Ehret's examination of linguistic dating relies to a considerable extent on glottochronology, a method of assessment which, because it can considerably overestimate or underestimate the depth of time which has elapsed since two related languages constituted one speech community, is not especially reliable.

The second half of the book contains worked examples. As such it contains some new versions of four previously published case studies of Ehret's which illustrate points of his methodology, and which concentrate on exploring aspects of cultural vocabulary, such as herding and crop names, and the light which they shed on the diachrony of the languages discussed. There are also several appendices which furnish relevant linguistic data, some of which contain sets of reconstructed lexical forms which Ehret has assembled and attributed to various phyla.

Ehret's work draws considerably upon the concept of 'core vocabulary', which in his work seems to correspond to the contents of the Swadesh 100-item list. While this stratum of vocabulary is more resistant to change through replacement via borrowing than other lexical strata are, it would have helped if Ehret had provided readers who were previously unfamiliar

with historical linguistics with a copy of this list as a table somewhere in the book. What he should be saluted for, however, as this is something which few scholars are willing to do in print, is his readiness to admit when he was wrong about something, and when a viewpoint or set of conclusions which he voiced in an earlier publication has been shown to be erroneous and needs to be retracted, as with his previous exuberance in reconstructing Proto-Southern Cushitic consonants, some of which have not withstood further onslaughts of comparative Cushiticists.

In short, this is a book which can, should, and does speak about historical linguistics to historians who might previously have been unaware of the richness that diachronic insights can bring to their discipline. Any cultural historian interested in linguistics and especially in Africa (and any linguist interested in the reconstruction of cultural history) should read this.

ANTHONY P. GRANT *Edge Hill University*

Media and technology

BIRD, S. ELIZABETH (ed.). *The anthropology of news and journalism: global perspectives*. ix, 328 pp., figs, bibliogr. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2010. \$65.00 (cloth), \$24.95 (paper)

This landmark volume opens with the valid premise that media anthropologists have so far neglected the study of the news media and journalism in favour of entertainment media such as radio, television, and film. The book sets out to rectify this situation by bringing together leading scholars in the field with contributions published here for the first time. The aim is to reach out not only to other anthropologists but also to students and scholars in media, communication, and journalism studies. Describing news as a form of 'cultural meaning making' or 'cultural storytelling', the editor, Elizabeth Bird, argues that anthropologists have an important contribution to make to the long overdue de-Westernization of this interdisciplinary field. The book consists of an introduction followed by three sections of varying length: part 1 (eight chapters) on the ethnography of news production; part 2 (five chapters) on everyday news practices; and part 3 (three chapters) on news in the new media era.

The anthropology of news and journalism succeeds admirably on a number of fronts. First, it broadens the scope of news from its traditional focus on the Anglo-American newsroom (Wahl-Jorgensen) by demonstrating that news comes in many shapes and forms around the globe, including personal funeral announcements on Zambian public radio (Spitulnik), digitized newsmaking in post-reunification Germany (Boyer), gossip-mediated news in provincial Portugal (Drackle), and news-like popular music genres among activists in the United States (Pedelty). Second, many of the book's chapters deftly weave together the theoretical and the empirical through ethnographic vignettes that capture both the quotidianity and the contingency of news-related practices (see in particular Spitulnik, Peterson, and Boyer). Third, the empirical examples track global historical transitions in the journalistic field that display diverging regional trajectories. We learn, for instance, about the commercialization and (uneven) democratization of African journalism from the late 1980s through the 1990s (Hasty, Spitulnik), about the rise in India from the early 1990s of a neo-Hinduist, commercialized press (Rao, Peterson), and about the leftist-populist turn in early twenty-first-century Latin America epitomized by Hugo Chávez, the Venezuelan leader who has 'neutered an aggressive watchdog Western-style press' (Manzella and Yacher). Finally, far from being at the mercy of invisible market forces, media tycoons or state apparatuses, journalists and other news-making actors are compellingly portrayed as historical agents caught in swift technological and societal changes not of their own making. Thus we follow the trials and tribulations of politicians and journalists in London after a volcanic eruption in the British colony of Montserrat (Skinner), German journalists straining to adapt to a digitized workplace (Boyer), young Christian activists in Bethlehem framing their actions to meet the perceived priorities of the Western media (Bishara), and Vietnamese photojournalists during the Vietnam War who regarded their professional work as part of a popular struggle against American imperialism (Schwenkel).

The one area where the volume falls short of expectations is the scant mention of social network sites, micro-blogging sites, and mobile devices in the empirical materials presented. Only three of the book's sixteen chapters are devoted to 'new media' developments, which is rather disappointing for a volume published in 2010. Of course, this is in part a product of the

long fieldwork and publishing cycles that characterize anthropological knowledge production, but a closer engagement with mid- to late 2000s technologies would have none the less strengthened the book.

At any rate, this volume will remain a key work of reference in the field for many years to come. It greatly enriches the media anthropological corpus and offers a range of case studies and conceptual tools that students and scholars in the anthropology of media and neighbouring fields will want to apply and develop in new contexts. These include the earlier mentioned idea of news as cultural meaning-making (Bird), the suggestion that newspaper readers are engaged in complex 'literacy practices' (Peterson), the emic perception that digital technologies contribute to the *Aushöhlung* ('hollowing out') of journalistic practice (Boyer), or the contention that present-day (on-line) journalism has entered a 'post-objective era' (Russell).

JOHN POSTILL *Sheffield Hallam University*

KELTY, CHRISTOPHER M. *Two bits: the cultural significance of free software*. xvi, 378 pp., figs, illus., bibliogr. London, Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2008. £51.00 (cloth), £12.99 (paper)

The significance of this book is wider than its subtitle might at first suggest. Its ethnographic focus, so-called 'free software', will likely be exotic to many readers. But what the book offers is a remarkable perspective on the wider computing infrastructure that has found its way nearly everywhere over the past decades. The story of free software (what we might think of as an exotic other) shows how more familiar computing environments share in free software's dimensions of culture, and in the social, economic, political, and historical dimensions that are also covered in this book.

Free software and the wider computing infrastructure that more readers will be familiar with are in fact parties to the same story, much like anthropologists doing fieldwork in the colonies gradually realized was the case for themselves and their exotic others. This becomes more apparent in the book's second section, which covers the historical emergence of standards in, and related to, computing. As is familiar from other contexts, standards are anything but innocent. Yet, new and diverse visions of possibilities drive different parties to attempt collaboration and navigate the

multitude of cultural, political, and economic hurdles entailed in hammering out standards, sometimes only to part ways and abandon their standards, or be overtaken by unforeseen circumstances or events entering the scene. The complexity of this history is considerable: it comprises standards in terms of computer operating systems, licensing and intellectual property, computer networking, programming languages, and standards of interdisciplinary creativity, to list just some. The less-than-computer-savvy reader will find many unfamiliar but significant parties to this drama, and also some familiar ones (above all, as it relates to the Internet). But this is precisely what makes this history such a captivating reading: familiar standards did not have to be the way they are. It is from this perspective that the book's 'two bits' about free software and its many dimensions are exotic in the best anthropological sense of the term.

The book's overall argument is that understanding the dynamics of free software development helps understand dynamics of wider changes variously related to the Internet. This is so because the Internet itself grew out of developments that were also the spawning grounds of free software, and so harbours potential for change along lines similar to what takes place in the realm of free software.

The book is divided into three sections. The first section focuses on computing 'geeks', to introduce Kelty's analytical concept for what he considers the distinguishing feature of free software. This is what Kelty calls 'recursive publics', by which he means

a public that is vitally concerned with the material and practical maintenance and modification of the technical, legal, practical, and conceptual means of its own existence as a public; it is a collective independent of other forms of constituted power and is capable of speaking to existing forms of power through the production of actually existing alternatives (p. 3).

The book's second section develops key features of recursive publics through a historical account of the emergence of free software. Among other things, this section examines the development of UNIX operating systems, which played an important role in the emergence of the Internet. This is a rare, richly detailed social science account of an important technology's

history, in some ways resembling the orientation of Eric Wolf's *Europe and the people without history* (1982).

The book's third section examines wider implications of free software, by looking at more recent 'modulations' of the free software movement into domains that are not strictly about software. The ethnographic cases considered here are based on the author's own involvement as a participant-observer, and concern academic publishing, in particular from technical and legal perspectives (which in turn have much to do with power and knowledge, and the ways publics are constructed more widely in this domain).

A critical reader may find the book a bit repetitive and too long, and that key notions such as freedom and publics could have been better situated in terms of social science literature. Specialists in science and technology studies may also find the book inadequately situated in terms of this genre; or, alternatively, they may find it refreshingly straightforward at the level of prose and argument.

Overall the book will likely appeal to a broad audience, and it will be difficult to ignore in fields of study focused on media, science, and technology, and globalization and change, in any way involving the Internet.

JENS KJAERULFF *Independent Scholar*

Medical anthropology

GOOD, BYRON J., MICHAEL M.J. FISCHER, SARAH S. WILLEN, & MARY-JO DELVECCHIO GOOD (eds). *A reader in medical anthropology: theoretical trajectories, emergent realities*. xiv, 559 pp., tables, illus., bibliogr. Oxford, Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. £29.99 (cloth)

Byron Good *et al.*'s *Reader* is a survey of contemporary theory-driven medical anthropology; absent is a section on methodology or examples of medical anthropology as 'a largely a-theoretical practice-oriented discipline' (p. 2). Instead, one finds compelling, well-written essays on those issues the editors consider most significant and vital to the subfield today, traced to their theoretical forebears. Highlighted is research at the border between medical anthropology and science and technology studies and analyses of subjectivity and identity formation, particularly in contexts of political and social unrest. This,

then, is the medical anthropology that documents global technological and human-centred entanglements and its object is the theories that drive medical anthropologists' own analyses. It makes for a great read.

By organizing the *Reader* around theory and 'emerging realities', Good *et al.* move away from accounts of medical anthropology that would distinguish between research conducted in the 'developing world' versus the 'developed world'. Against this dichotomy, they argue that the communities in which medical anthropologists conduct their fieldwork are almost universally touched by both modern biotechnology and biomedicine and its therapies, and that all live with the health consequences of international power relations. Throughout the volume's forty chapters, organized into seven theme-based parts – each accompanied by a brief introduction – the editors document the origins and permutations of the dominant approaches in contemporary medical anthropology through both original and republished contributions. Part I, 'Antecedents', is the only section of the book focusing exclusively on the history of the subfield. It traces the roots of modern medical anthropology back to familiar figures identified with the rationalist (e.g. Rivers, Evans-Pritchard), phenomenological (e.g. Hallowell), comparative (e.g. Leslie, Kleinman), and social medicine (e.g. Virchow) traditions. Subsequent sections are organized not only to present sets of concepts and bodies of work, but also to unsettle them. Part II ('Illness and narrative, body and experience'), for example, ends with an essay in which Robert Desjarlais questions the 'universal relevance' of the term 'experience' and its assumptions of 'reflexive interiority, hermeneutical depth, [and] narrative flow' (p. 160).

Parts III through V explore issues of power, life, and biotechnology, and together offer a core of texts immediately relevant to those interested in science, technology, and medicine. Part III, 'Governmentalities and biological citizenship', takes on issues of biopolitics in its many forms in a series of recent contributions from Lorna Rhodes's work on 'psychiatric citizenship' to Miriam Ticktin's study of 'medical humanism' and illegal immigrants in France. The terrains and forms of power presented in the chapters vary, but taken together they form a cohesive and compelling analysis of power and life. Part IV, 'The biotechnical embrace', further builds on analyses of life and power – see, for example, Lawrence Cohen's chapter on organ donation in India – drawing attention to the 'medical imaginary' (M. Good), the lustre of hope

associated with biotechnologies, the changes they engender, and those they do not. Part V, 'Biosciences, biotechnologies', documents the variety of ways in which medical anthropologists have taken science and technology studies from the lab and into the messy lives of individual patients, patient groups, and the media.

Part VI, 'Global health, global medicine', stands alone to a certain extent with its own 'antecedent' chapter (Foster) that identifies the novel trajectory of the work therein. Included are chapters on global health (Janes and Corbett) and social rights (Farmer). It closes with Didier Fassin's analysis of the 'inequality of lives' as a general phenomenon reflected in the organization of humanitarian work: the inequality between lives that cannot be risked (e.g. international humanitarian workers) and those that can (e.g. local workers and populations among whom they intervene). Fassin challenges readers to analyse 'the humanitarianism politics of life' (p. 463).

Part VII, 'Postcolonial disorders', focuses on the 'rise of the humanitarian impulse' versus the 'dark side of humanitarianism' and the complex ethical spaces in which anthropologists studying postcolonial contexts find themselves. The contributors' analyses of twenty-first-century subjectivity are stimulating for anyone studying the role of psychiatry and 'disorder' in contemporary life, particularly those working at the junction of psychological and medical anthropology.

Overall, Good *et al.* argue that by virtue of their objects of study, medical anthropologists deal with 'the most vital issues that define what it means to be human' (p. 1). Of this, the *Reader* provides compelling evidence through the work of senior and junior researchers working on home and foreign terrains (from numerous countries of origin) exploring the circulation of biomedicine, biotechnology, and the 'medical imaginary'.

STEPHANIE LLOYD *McGill University*

GRØNSETH, ANNE SIGFRID. *Lost selves and lonely persons: experiences of illness and well-being among Tamil refugees in Norway*. xv, 273 pp., bibliogr. Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 2010. \$40.00 (paper)

This book about Tamil refugees in Norway and their interactions with the health care system is an empirically rich and theoretically challenging text. The perspectives presented go beyond the discussion on integration of refugees. The study

is a very welcome contribution not only to medical anthropology, but also to theories of the person and self and how to interpret migrant communities. The study is based on one year's fieldwork in a small fishing village in Northern Norway, where the Tamils came to work in the fishing industry in the 1990s. The Tamils made up about 10 per cent of the total population of 2,500. Many of the young refugee men who first settled applied for, and got, family reunion, and so the community included many young children and newly arrived wives from Sri Lanka who also worked in the fishing plants.

Tamil patients who seek help from the Norwegian biomedical system for their aches and pains are reported to perceive treatment which does not recognize their personhood. The first chapter of the book discusses three cases of how the pains that the Tamils experience are treated in medical consultations. When physicians do not find efficient diagnoses, they see Tamil patients as suffering from presumed cultural difference. The physicians fail to create a meeting based on mutuality and moral inclusion. Hence, they fail to see how bodily symptoms are products of the social and cultural reorientation and losses their patients feel.

The author interprets illness and the search for medical advice as an ongoing mediating process when the Tamils are forced to reorient themselves and to find new ways of constructing selves and persons. The next two chapters explore further how the Tamils experienced social and religious life as torn apart from the usual wholeness of everyday existence in their homeland, and found themselves classified as strangers and 'the other' in their new social life. They feel vulnerable, lacking a sense of being reflected as valuable individuals, and they express this in terms of being 'invisible', 'falling apart', and 'empty', or as 'losing one's self'. Their illnesses express a social situation in which they suffer from loss of kin, temples, and other social arenas in which they can fully participate. Hence, the aches and pains cannot be fully explained by perspectives of individual somatization or psychological processes; rather, a collective experience of not being recognized as individual social persons must be included.

To further grasp the Tamils' aches and pains, the author explores the links between bodily symptoms and experiences of loneliness and vulnerability. She makes use of theoretical approaches that go deeper into the perceptive and creative body: embodiment theory and theories on self and personhood which emphasize the production of meaning and

intentional actions. A rough frame of Hindu philosophy and some central Hindu concepts are presented to reveal values and principles which can illuminate how Tamil Hindus experience selfhood and personhood. When examining different cases from family life and events in the fishing village, the author finds that the Tamils' general sense of well-being and identity is deeply embedded within the context of Hindu life philosophy. Considering the embodied and habituated level of such practices and knowledge, she sees the vague pains described as bodily expressions of tensions related to fulfilling social and spiritual expectations.

The last chapter discusses how the Tamils actively create new practices and meaning within their new and fragmented everyday life, by creating arenas and contexts that provide well-being, pleasures, and a feeling of success. The discussion addresses theoretical attempts to understand human agency. The author makes use of embodiment theories, but goes beyond Bourdieu and Merleau-Ponty to argue for an understanding of an embodied agency as a process in time. Although the Tamils tend to experience personhood and selfhood as strongly connected to a larger whole constituted by social and religious relations, the author finds a shift towards a socially generated pattern that moves towards individuation. Instead of larger events organized by the Tamil associations at the public Cultural Hall, which was the case in the first years of settlement, a smaller circle of invited people marked most contemporary events. This constituted more creative and flexible ways of organizing social life and led to a more successful experience of self and personhood.

I missed some concluding reflections on the implication of the insight the author presents for the interaction with the health care system and for the aches and pains which the informants genuinely experience. However, the fact that there are no longer any Tamils living in this fishing village underpins the conclusion that their ailments have to be understood as social rather than physiological phenomena.

HILDE LIDÉN *Institute for Social Research, Oslo*

HSU, ELISABETH & STEPHEN HARRIS (eds). *Plants, health and healing: on the interface of ethnobotany and medical anthropology*. xi, 316 pp., figs, illus., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2010. £58.00 (cloth)

Producing an edited volume at the interface of medical anthropology and ethnobotany can be

particularly challenging. Ethnobotany, being a relatively young and interdisciplinary science, sits between the social and the natural sciences. Ethnobotanical work is frequently criticized by social and natural scientists – each with their own methodological bias – for lacking rigour and scope. In this book, Hsu and Harris join forces with both social and natural science scholars to offer a fresh look at anthropological contributions to ethnobotany, advocating the need for multidisciplinary. Hsu confronts the problem that ‘many accounts of folk medicinal uses still lack serious consideration of local ethnographic context’ and takes up the challenge to situate plants in medical practice (p. 1). In the introduction, she criticizes empiricist, cognitivist, and bioculturist paradigms in ethnobotany and argues for a more phenomenologically inspired, culturally situated, and medically informed approach as a way forward. However, the disproportionate emphasis on and critique of the work of anthropologist Roy Ellen seems to underestimate the wider ethnobiological corpus. The other contributors also offer new insights on the practices they are examining, but they do so on their own terms rather than those of a more conventional ethnobiological compendium. Therefore, the strength of this volume lies in the diversity and rigour of the different scholars’ contributions. In their multidisciplinary approaches, the contributors use clinical medical, botanical, ethnographic, and historical perspectives to contextualize the diverse ways by which humans engage with medicinal plants.

Stephen Harris, a botanist, challenges the myth that cultural groups have their own set of pharmacopoeias, by highlighting the central role that non-native plants have historically played in *materia medica*. He emphasizes the need for accurate identification of plant species in order for ethnobotanical research to contribute to the conservation of rare medicinal plants. Elisabeth Hsu, a medical anthropologist, criticizes the notion of ‘natural herbs’ by examining the diachronic uses and preparations of Qing Hao (*Herba Artemisia Annuae*), a Chinese herbal remedy that has been found to have anti-malarial properties. She shows that the chemical constitution of the ‘herb’ depends on the time plants are harvested, where they grow, and how they are prepared and applied, thereby rendering the commonly used term ‘natural herbs’ inaccurate and misleading.

Anthropologist Françoise Barbira Freedman examines why, in the Upper Amazon, shamans

are mostly men and contextualizes their practice in a gendered plant and spirit world. She shows that plants are gendered and that shamans have to seduce associated spirits to engage them in the healing process. Medical anthropologists Wenzel Geissler and Ruth Prince show how the Luo of Kenya use plants to enhance children’s growth and highlight how plants are an integral aspect of social practices of belonging, childcare, and preventive health care. They show that for plants used externally in baths to enhance Luo children’s growth, it was important that they grew on the land that belonged to the clan. Grimley Evans, a clinical gerontologist, examines rather sceptically the alleged memory-enhancing effects of *Ginkgo biloba* leaf extracts for Alzheimer’s patients. He provides a succinct appraisal of double-blinded randomized control trials, and shows that there are none to prove the claimed effects. However, he argues that leaf extracts may have an indirect effect by modulating mood and reducing depression, thereby enhancing people’s performance in memory tests. Finally, Caroline Weckerle, Philip Blumenshine, and Verena Timbul combine botanical, biochemical, and historical analyses to explain why every plant that produces caffeine (*Coffea* spp., *Camelia sinensis* var., *Cola* spp., *Ilex paraguariensis* and *Paullinia* spp.) has become culturally significant in geographically distinctive societies. They identify references in myths and argue that traditional knowledge embodied in myths is based on detailed observations of human-environmental interactions.

The tantalizing and rather eclectic selection of edited chapters takes the reader around the world following plants making their way into local pharmacopoeias, symbolic systems, myths, and ways of coping with the unknowns of human illness. This book offers a much-needed, concise edited volume on plants, health, and healing. It brings together research in the disciplines of botany, biochemistry, clinical medicine, anthropology, and history, highlighting the contributions of multidisciplinary research to promote a more nuanced understanding of medicinal plant use.

SOFIA VOUGIOUKALOU *University of Kent*

TEMAN, ELLY. *Birthing a mother: the surrogate body and the pregnant self*. xx, 361 pp., illus., bibliogr. London, Berkeley: Univ. California Press, 2010. £37.95 (cloth), £14.95 (paper)

Elly Teman begins *Birthing a mother* with a prologue about a woman, Yael, whom she met

in Haifa, Israel. Yael had been married for fifteen years and was ‘completely focused on having her own genetic child, created from an egg harvested from her ovaries and gestated in another woman’s womb’ (p. xvii). Yael’s story about the emotional highs and lows that she faced in the process provides a powerful opening to this highly accessible yet intellectually rigorous ethnography of gestational surrogates and intended parents in Israel.

Birthing a mother is based on fieldwork carried out over a period of eight years. It focuses on gestational surrogacy which involves the surrogate conceiving using *in vitro* fertilization (IVF) technology: ‘[T]he egg of the intended mother or of a donor is fertilized in a Petri dish with the sperm of the intended father or of a donor, and the embryo is “implanted” in the surrogate’s uterus’ (p. 4). Teman examines the complexity of surrogacy arrangements, focusing on the relationship that develops between surrogates and intended mothers.

What I like most about *Birthing a mother* is the way the author pays careful attention to issues of space and place at a range of geographical scales, from the body to the globe. My disciplinary training is in human geography. Geographers argue that the notion of geographical scale is a useful platform for thinking about specific kinds of social and political activities. Teman, although an anthropologist rather than a geographer, recognizes that different scales overlap, and are fluid and contingent. As a result, she moves seamlessly between scales, especially between the scales of the body and the nation.

At the scale of the body, Teman explains how surrogates consciously distance themselves from the foetus by creating a mental map of the body. ‘Body mapping’, she argues, helps to distinguish between the parts of the surrogate’s body that belong to the self and those that help facilitate the intended mother’s maternal identity. This conscious division of the body gives surrogates a feeling of control over their body and helps prevent them from bonding emotionally with the foetus. Surrogates and intended parents both go to great lengths to identify the surrogate’s role as ‘carrier’ for the baby.

At the scale of the nation, the author explains, the choice of Israel for the research was not incidental. Israel is one of the few countries in the world where surrogacy is

legal. Clear legislative provisions have been put in place and professionals are trained to be aware of how to handle surrogacy arrangements. Also, the cultural context of Israel as a space in which motherhood and family are an important part of both Jewish religion and Israeli national discourse makes it a useful choice for studying surrogacy. In this way, Teman links the scales of the body and the nation, illustrating clearly the complex sets of power relations under which surrogacy arrangements in Israel take place. Teman also ‘jumps scale’ to discuss surrogacy in an international context, although her focus is mainly on the USA and UK.

Reviews I have read of *Birthing a mother* are highly favourable, but some offer critiques that the author could have provided more by way of ‘masculine perspectives’; that she could have paid more rigorous attention to the notion of ‘agency through objectification’; that the book occasionally reads like a dissertation; and that the tight focus on the experiences of women in Israel raises questions that are not addressed about surrogacy cross-culturally. These are useful points, but on balance my own reading of this book is overwhelmingly positive. Like Teman, I am profoundly interested in ‘bodies, boundaries, maternities, and meanings’ (p. xx). Also, in 2010, I took part in a conference hosted by the International Geographical Union Commission on Gender and Geography in Israel, inspiring my interest in Israeli social and political life. I mention these things because they suggest that as a reader I had high expectations and multiple ‘investments’ in this book, and yet it lived up to these expectations.

Birthing a mother, as the title implies, is about how the surrogacy experience is not just about giving birth to a child or to children but about giving birth to new parents by carrying their child or children. It ‘is first and foremost an in-depth ethnography of the complex “ontological choreography” of surrogacy arrangements’ (p. 3). Its strength lies in its examination of the experiences of both gestational surrogates and intended mothers. In the process it covers a wealth of issues. I would recommend it highly to lay and to academic readers not just in anthropology, sociology, and women’s and gender studies but also in a range of other disciplines such as cultural studies, politics, and human geography.

ROBYN LONGHURST *University of Waikato*

Method and theory

EDWARDES, MARTIN. *The origins of grammar: an anthropological perspective*. xi, 180 pp., bibliogr. London, New York: Continuum, 2010. £65.00 (cloth), £19.99 (paper)

Three things strike the reader on first examining this book. Firstly, emeritus Professor of Linguistics James R. Hurford's strong endorsement of the book on the back cover carries a similar advertisement for the merits of his own work of the same name, which is a little surprising to find in such circumstances, given that he was Edwardes's Ph.D. external examiner (Tom Dickins, one of Edwardes's doctoral supervisors, also presents some words of praise on the back cover). Secondly, the list of references (twenty-one pages against 145 rather widely spaced pages of main text) is longer than any one of the thirteen chapters of which the body of the book is composed. Thirdly, only one of the several hundred references listed therein is written by Edwardes himself. To this reviewer, the book reads a lot like a state of the art encapsulation of what is known about many fields which are relevant to the topic, rather than a long study and interrogation, with case studies, of a single topic.

Edwardes's view comes through clearly: humans are social (and generally sociable) beings who are more comfortable with co-operation and the altruism which sometimes results from this (and are therefore motivated towards establishing communication) than with the insistent self-centredness and individualism which it has become increasingly more popular to impute as being at the heart of human motives. In fact this book can be said to centre largely on self (as in an exploration of possible distinctions between *I love me* and *I love myself*), on humans' development of a sense of self versus others, and on the aspects of these characteristics which distinguish humans from non-humans in ethological or other terms. The role of grammar is a large one here, since Edwardes presents plentiful evidence that many aspects of language, cognition, emotion, and even forward planning (e.g. the manufacture of tools for later use), can no longer be seen to be the exclusive property of humans.

The first few chapters of the book discuss the human brain, the nature and characteristics of language (e.g. its tool-like nature), and generative and rival schools of linguistic

thought, and from chapter 5 onwards Edwardes takes a cognitive view of linguistics.

Unfortunately the references to chapters in multi-authored books and papers in collections by multiple authors do not contain the relevant page numbers, although page numbers are supplied for journal articles. The book as a whole draws on ideas from a range of thinkers from Plato via Ferdinand de Saussure to modern workers in the field of language evolution such as Alison Wray and Robbins Burling. It covers an immense amount of intellectual ground, yet cursorily: less than half of the main text could be said to touch on the origins of grammar, and only the last chapter is devoted solely to the topic, though observations on linguistics are scattered throughout the book. As such, despite being clearly written, it can read in parts like a literature review or a state of the art report on many topics in evolutionary anthropology rather than as a research monograph. The book would have been much stronger if a greater number of examples from linguistics had been presented in support of Edwardes's arguments. Even so, Edwardes leaves some questions unsettled: the issue of whether language began simple and became complex, or began complex and became simple, is crucial here, but he does not come down on one side or the other. The fact that linguistic structure cyclically simplifies and re-complicates over centuries or millennia, as far as our records of long-attested languages show, is demonstrated in Carleton T. Hodge's 1970 paper 'The linguistic cycle' (*Linguistic Sciences* 13, 1-7), which unfortunately Edwardes does not cite. And there are some pure errors: for example, the use on p. 102 of /sh/ between phonemic slashes to represent the first sound of *shibboleth*.

In conclusion, although Edwardes has interesting ideas to put forward in ways which distinguish this book from an *Annual Review of Anthropology*-style account which it sometimes resembles, we lack the density of discussion and the sets of case studies demonstrating and illustrating various facets of the theories which he espouses, which would enable us to see his major hypotheses worked out in more detail. And yet its very breadth is one of its strengths; the long list of references shows that Edwardes is *au courant* with large amounts of recent work in a number of fields (including the developmental psychology of children, theories of language evolution, and several aspects of primatology). So because of this, the book is a very useful primer on many issues in evolutionary anthropology for readers with little previous

knowledge of the subfields. And for that, though certainly no weighty tome, it is a valuable work.

ANTHONY P. GRANT *Edge Hill University*

HOLMAN, JEFFREY PAPAROA. *Best of both worlds: the story of Elsdon Best and Tutakangahau*. 344 pp., maps, figs, illus., bibliogr. Auckland: Penguin New Zealand, 2010. NZ\$40.00 (paper)

Students on their first encounters with social anthropology will sooner or later be confronted with Mauss's 1924 *Essai sur le don* (*The gift*). The 'essence' of the text is often seen to reside in that fateful paragraph on the 'hau' of the 'taonga', the Maori spirit of reciprocity that demands the recipient of a gift to make a return. Although this has been analysed and interpreted by generations of anthropologists, how many students are encouraged to go back and look at the original source? Will they go beyond the influential readings of Strathern and Sahlins to wonder about Mauss's own interpretation of his source? Mauss draws his quote from a passage in 'Maori forest lore', a 1909 essay written by Elsdon Best, Maori scholar, self-taught anthropologist, and pioneer ethnographic fieldworker. In his turn, Best relies on a letter from one of his informants – a Maori chief named Tamati Ranapiri.

Jeffrey Holman takes on the question of Best's intellectual and personal relationships with his Maori informants in this beautifully crafted piece of scholarship. *Best of both worlds* is framed as a biography, but this is a biography of the personal friendship between Elsdon Best and an influential Tuhoë modernizer – Tutakangahau of Maungapohatu. The Tuhoë occupied Urewara, a remote and mountainous part of the North Island that was one of the last strongholds of military and social resistance to settlement. Tutakangahau became a Christian catechist, a modernizer, and a voice of compromise. It was his own lobbying for continued Tuhoë autonomy that partly led to the appointment in 1895 of Best as a quartermaster on a government survey of the region. Best's unusual fluency in Maori and fascination with Maori history and knowledge of the area made him the perfect chronicler of the 'old' Maori ways, and also an invaluable political broker.

The book sets up their first encounter by describing the different intellectual and political journeys that had brought them together, and then unfolds this relationship in a way that weaves between the two protagonists and the

demands of the Maori and Pakeha worlds in which they now both lived. Best needed Tutakangahau as an informant, whilst Tutakangahau saw Best as his pupil, learning, documenting, and protecting Tuhoë stories and religious knowledge for posterity. Whilst Holman sometimes has to guess at the different motives driving this relationship, his attention to its intimacies (such as the way Best lent Tutakangahau his toothbrush on a trip to lobby the Wellington government) seems to demonstrate the trust that developed between them.

Ultimately, Holman argues that Best's empirical instincts were constrained by his romanticism for the 'lost' Maori past, the dominant scholarly evolutionist rhetorics of the time, and a desire for academic recognition. This led him to adopt uncritically the diffusionist theories of Victorian anthropology that demeaned his materials and the quality of his work. Holman documents Best's frustrations at not being treated as a 'proper' anthropologist, and the bitter rivalry that develops between him and the museum director. However, his dedication to documenting every aspect of Maori material culture and mythology led him to be appointed in 1910 as museum ethnologist. He spent the last two decades of his life publishing profusely, becoming the principal Pakeha authority on *Maoritanga*, and his work remains a key source to this day.

Developed from a doctoral thesis first begun in a Maori studies department, *Best of both worlds* combines a poet's eye for the power of language – both oral and written – with a nuanced historical sensibility. Having worked as a shearer and in the sawmills of the South Island's West Coast, Holman has an embodied empathy for the hardships faced by a Pakeha writer-cum-quartermaster in a remote part of New Zealand in the late nineteenth century.

This is a complex book with a whole cast of characters that offers insights at a variety of different levels. Holman deftly weaves together the intimate and the historical, describing the fast-changing politics of inter-clan wars, complex and shifting political alliances, governmental legislation, and repeated Maori religious resistance movements, all amidst the steady confiscation and dispossession of Maori lands that characterized this period.

A sub-text running through this volume is that 'orality and literacy are qualitatively different states of being' (p. 268), such that any reconstruction of the actual meaning of Maori practices and beliefs will inevitably fail. This

leads Holman to be sceptical of endless anthropological exegesis of the meaning of the 'hau', but also of any attempt to define and delimit Maori culture. For Holman, meaning and its power can be found in action. It is fitting, then, that since its publication, Tamakaimoana, the old chief's *Urewara hapu*, have adopted the book as their own, and as a living embodiment of Tutakangahau and his vision for the Tuhoe. This is also a testament to the intensity of the ethnographic encounter at its best, and to Holman's achievement in reconstructing the relationship between a pioneering anthropologist and his Maori collaborators.

DAVID MILLS *University of Oxford*

LAHIRE, BERNARD. *The plural actor*. xx, 271 pp., bibliogr. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011. £55.00 (cloth) £18.99 (paper),

Bernard Lahire admits that his sociology is 'inspired principally' by Pierre Bourdieu (p. 3). His book is an attempt to apply the latter's theory of practice and habitus to areas Bourdieu neglected such as crises of identity and maladjustments: individuals transplanted by social mobility, migration, illness, and war that lead to them being out of place. (Lahire's book is largely an English translation, supported by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Cultural Department of the French Embassy in London, of *L'homme pluriel*, first published in 2001 with the assistance of the French Ministry of Culture [National Centre for the Book].)

Lahire applauds Bourdieu's opposition to intentionalist theories of consciousness and action. It is a great contemporary myth, writes Lahire, that individuals lead free, interior, subjective lives. Individuals are not isolated, autonomous, responsible, endowed with reason, or possessing of an authenticity bound up with their singularity which deserves defending. 'Consciousness is a fiction' beyond the linguistic contexts of our social relations of interdependence with other actors and objects (pp. 174-5). As taught by Bourdieu, socialization causes the coming into being of an embodied system of dispositions for which there exists a preordained ontological complicity with objectified social situations and institutions.

What is there to add? Only that a theory of action that claims primary weight for the embodied past relative to present contexts and a theory of practice that emphasizes the non- or pre-reflexive character of individual actors neglects those individuals socialized in less

homogeneous cultural conditions and in highly differentiated societies where less coherent dispositions are inherited. Individuals subjected to 'the differentiated structuration of our societies ... , to heterogeneous and sometimes contradictory socializing influences', will be 'plural' fabrications (p. xvi); individuals are plural insofar as the forces working on them are contextually diverse: '[A]ctors are multi-socialized and multi-determined' (p. xviii).

The individual actor is not necessarily and universally plural, of course. But some historical and social conditions produce individuals who are dispositionally plural, each straddling a plurality of social situations and bearing dispositions which cannot always be transferred between contexts. To explain how the behaviour of this subset of actors is determined is to combine the dispositional and the contextual. Every current situation, one can say, acts as filter, selector, or trigger: an occasion for particular dispositional applications or suspensions, flourishings or inhibitions. It might be difficult to predict which of their plural dispositions will be triggered by a particular new situation, but we can safely say that individual behaviour is determined by the balance between internal and external forces: between habitus and objective characteristics of the new situation.

It is the case, Lahire concludes, that social scientists normally study religion, class, gender, family, occupation, media, ethnicity, and so on, separately. But only by regarding individuals as the product of their *multiple* experiences of socialization does one see how their dispositions might be plural and contradictory as well as harmonious. Social science has the duty 'more than ever' to bring to light the 'social fabrication of individuals' and 'prove' how the social 'dwells in the most singular folds of each individual' (p. xviii). Now, as complex social structures come to be embodied in individuals – as corporeal, cognitive, evaluative, appreciative habits of perception, action, categorization, orientation, and strategization – the specific contexts to which these embodiments are adapted may be diverse. What individuals feel, think, and do are hence determined by both dispositional and contextual forces.

Lahire is disparaging of that 'umpteenth version of a theory of the free' (p. 3); any *feeling* of freedom or ironic consciousness is simply the result of the complexity of that determination of whose actual weight individuals can have no practical intuition (p. 207). But perhaps more than anything else, this book demonstrates the continuing validity and relevance – and for

Bourdieuians 'more than ever' – of just such theories of freedom.

NIGEL RAPPORT *University of St Andrews*

ZENKER, OLAF & KARSTEN KUMOLL (eds).

Beyond writing culture: current intersections of epistemologies and representational practices.

ix, 245 pp., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2010. £50.00 (cloth)

After *After writing culture* edited by Allison James, Jenny Hockey, and Andrew Dawson (1997), deriving from the 1995 Association of Social Anthropologists conference at Hull, we now have *Beyond writing culture*. This comes from a conference held in 2006 at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle, to mark the twentieth anniversary of the original *Writing culture* volume. In particular, the Halle Department of Integration and Conflict, Günther Schlee suggests in his preface, proves an apposite setting since issues of representation are always political, conflictual, and hence anthropology can be deemed part of conflict studies, 'part of the conflict' even.

What is the conflict? This, Olaf Zenker and Karsten Kumoll explain in their long editorial prologue, entails the foundational question that *Writing culture* rather fluffed: the 'conflictual' intersections between particular epistemologies and particular practices of representation. How to conceptualize these intersections? Is there a meta level of conceptualization – since authors, in theorizing about intersections of epistemology and representational practice, are always already realizing such an intersection in their writing, and hence are self-conflicted. The editors claim we must look beyond the narrow focus on textual analysis that bedeviled *Writing culture*.

How do their contributors fare? Vincent Crapanzano judges that the contributors to *Writing culture* – including himself – were insufficiently sensitive to how their own conceptions of language and text were consequential for their analyses. Different linguistic ideologies prioritize different communicative functions, such as referentiality, the poetic, or the pragmatic-indexical. (Even phenomenological descriptions are linguistically bound and determined; to presume otherwise is a textual illusion.) Anthropology should become more aware of different linguistic framings so that communication is improved and local linguistic ideologies might be empowered.

Karsten Kumoll suggests that *Writing culture* be seen as a Western controversy, concerning

how scientifically to represent non-Western life-worlds. But from the worldview of non-Western science – where anthropology is a mere neo-colonial enterprise of power asymmetries – there is much we can learn concerning indigenous ways of knowing and narrating. Steffen Strohmenger contends that there is no non-value-laden dimension of reality – such as empirically verifiable, objective science. All knowledge is part of a moral ecology and all judgements share the same epistemological grounding. We need to uncover the hidden moral dimension in our so-called 'objective' evaluations, therefore, and so 'resymmetrize' ethnographic writing *vis-à-vis* scientific knowledge.

For Thomas Kirsch, reflexive anthropology has been blind to local conceptions of 'speakership'. There can be conflicting appellations – such as an insistence that the Holy Spirit is the speaking voice – and, to be properly reflexive, anthropology must open doors to these. Christophe Heinz would critique the textualism of *Writing culture* for leading to a neglect of aspects of context, such as the specificities of the human mind and the intense exchange between minds that lies behind authorship. Ethnographies are distributed cognitive processes of critical collaborative thinking. John Zammito observes that the culture concept has been put to different use in anthropology and sociology, and these conventions can cause barriers and epistemological blind spots; we must combine a cultural-sociological emphasis on structure and agency with a reflexive anthropology sensitive to the critique of representation.

For Olaf Zenker, the ethnographic process concerns translations between language-games – Western and indigenous – that are fundamentally symmetrical. In both, notions of truth and meaning are mutually constitutive. Facts lie at the interception of the respective worlds and worlds of the West and the Rest. Stephen Reyna attests that we need epistemological criteria of accuracy and reliability so that we can establish – after Popper – increasingly hard, unfalsifiable, approximating truths. Contrasting with the obscurantism of *Writing culture*, ethnographers cannot write while indifferent to questions of truth and veridicality. Günther Schlee concludes his epilogue with the observation that there is no contradiction between awareness of belonging to an epistemic culture and striving for a Popperian objectivity.

As the editors themselves observe, the chapters in this volume proceed in divergent

directions, methodological and epistemological. This, perhaps, gives testimony to the fecundity of *Writing culture*, and its sister volume *Anthropology as cultural critique*, twenty-five years on, and also their continuing relevance.

One thing that struck me about the present volume was the deployment of an unproblematic concept of culture, as if cultures existed as distinct things-in-themselves: 'the West', 'non-Western science', 'symmetrical language-games', and 'ideologies'. There were, after all, two fundamental queries aired by the Writing Culture Debate, as summarized by George Marcus and Michael Fischer: first, 'how might ethnographic writing be made more sensitive to its broader political, historical and philosophical implications?'; but also, 'how is an emergent post-modern world to be represented as an object for social thought?' For it was the case that penetrations of global economics, politics, and communications – world systems – now rendered differentiations such as traditional/modern unsalient. It was the case that anthropology's socio-cultural units of study were neither spatially nor temporally isolated; it was the case that the world was developing towards homogeneity and polarization along lines of rich and poor; and it was the case that ethnographic subjects may be more aware of the operation of a global cosmopolitan consciousness than the anthropologist him- or herself. In short, difference existed within a common world. To go beyond *Writing culture* is to validate further our human singularity.

NIGEL RAPPORT *University of St Andrews*

Religion

FLINN, JULIANA. *Mary, the Devil, and taro: Catholicism and women's work in a Micronesian society*. v, 200 pp., map, figs, illus., bibliogr. Honolulu: Univ. Hawai'i Press, 2010. \$47.00 (cloth)

This book is a study of Catholicism as a fundamental force in the lives of Pollap islanders in the Federated States of Micronesia. It describes in careful detail the rituals, beliefs, and practices surrounding Mary, the mother of Jesus, as they unfolded during Flinn's intensive fieldwork on the atoll (1998-9). It is fascinating to see how the islanders mould and bend Catholicism, which is in many ways incompatible with pre-Christian ideas of sexuality, gender

hierarchy, and cosmology (p. 35). In spite of the Catholic doctrines of life-long marriages, nuclear families, virginity as a virtue, and male dominance, women do not appear to feel subordinated or disadvantaged. The Pollapese version of Catholicism, as presented by Flinn, is based on the islanders' sincere belief in God and on their diligent worship of Mary as a focus of their ritual: 'Pollapese notions of Mary in many respects dovetail with proposals advanced by some feminist theologians regarding ways to improve women's status in Christianity' (p. 17). The account is firmly rooted in the female domain of atoll life, providing voices of Pollapese women and observations of the author who participated in their religious activities. The rich ethnographic data add to the slowly growing body of anthropological analyses of Christianity by providing a version of nearly gender-balanced Catholicism in relation to 'tradition' and 'government' – the other forces that provide frames for Pollapese day-to-day life. The book should be read by students of anthropology, religious studies, gender studies, theology, and political science; it is written in clear prose and should be useful in undergraduate classes.

The introduction provides a brief historical overview and description of island life in 1980 (when Flinn lived in the area as a Peace Corps Volunteer) and at the turn of the millennium (during her fieldwork). It would have been wonderful if someone had done fieldwork around 1950, when the islanders converted, or subsequently, when the process of adjustments set in. Flinn experienced the Pollapese as 'committed Catholics' (p. 14), but she describes how discussions and Bible interpretations are still shaping details of religious practice and how Catholic priorities are negotiated with the other political powers (chiefs, many of the moral values of old, and the government). She argues that elements of older ceremonies, such as competitive exchanges of coconuts, taro tubers, and fish were integrated into Catholic ritual, so that 'offerings for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in honor of Mary thus dovetailed with these older ceremonies' (p. 15). The imagery of Mary is discussed in chapter 1. She is 'perceived as a strong, capable woman, as mothers should be' (p. 34); her status of virginity makes little sense in the light of motherhood as the default role of adult women. Mary is the provider, nurturer, the Star of the Sea, the Mother of God and of humanity, and the enemy of Satan. To celebrate her also means to celebrate Pollapese woman/motherhood (p. 35). Chapter 2 provides a thick description of

the events around the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of 8 December 1998. Interestingly, theological intricacies explaining the value of virginity were not a topic of meditation or preaching, only a 'single line in one hymn' mentioned Mary's sin-free conception (p. 19).

Setting the frame of women's lives, the third chapter focuses on the activities of women and the way they are clustered in local terms. Using the ANTHROPAC software which includes interviews, sorting tasks, clustering, and the discussion of results, a normative view of female chores appears which is explained in the remainder of the chapter. I am not sure that this method is superior to participant observation during long-term fieldwork, but the clusters do provide some authority and detail, showing that women are in charge of the children and taro gardening, create woven and plaited objects, heal and nurture, and feel responsible for keeping harmony and order. Taro is the most important crop on the atolls of the Caroline Islands, and chapter 4 is devoted to providing some basic understanding of its central role in exchange and sociality. The image of strong, self-confident women is reiterated, of women who diligently and expertly take care of the taro gardens, who are proud of the hardships they sustain and do not feel subordinate to men.

Chapter 5 examines political domains on Pollap with a focus on women, pointing out how their voices are heard in the three domains (glossed by islanders as 'religion', 'tradition', and 'government'). This chapter shows in great detail how both disadvantages and opportunities for women (and men) have come with the new faith. Chapter 6 discusses the tension between patriarchal Catholicism and matrilineal Pollap in regards to the empowering ritual activities of women. Honouring Mary, as chapter 7 describes, involves many elements from pre-Catholic times, including the handling of statues, respect for sacred places, use of flowers and leaves, speech and movement to create 'beauty' (pp. 149-55), principles of rank, and gender relations. Virginity, however, is not a celebrated virtue of the Pollapese Mary (p. 159).

In her conclusion, Flinn shows that Pollap women did not lose status through conversion but remained on a balanced footing with men through an emphasis on motherhood, nurturing, protecting, providing, counselling, sustaining, and creating. Prayer has become a valued means to get help, as Mary is the generic Mother who will help with nurture and protection when addressed in the appropriate ways. This account is entirely credible and

matches my own experiences on nearby Woleai atoll in 2004. What I missed in this discussion was the incredible amount of time that Catholicism requires of the women, and the voices of dissidents (if there are any). Frequent references to alcohol problems and dysfunctional marriages (wife-bashing?) indicate that there are frictions that seem to be resistant to prayer – are there also Catholics who 'pray at home' (do not attend church on Sunday) or are generally not so concerned about God, harmony, and balance?

SUSANNE KUEHLING *University of Regina*

HANN, CHRIS & HERMANN GOLTZ (eds).

Eastern Christians in anthropological perspective. x, 375 pp., maps, tables, illus., bibliogr. London, Berkeley: Univ. California Press, 2010. £16.95 (paper)

Eastern Christianity is only beginning to receive the level of anthropological attention which has been paid to other major religious traditions. The reasons for its erstwhile Cinderella status may be linked, as the editors of this volume suggest, to a Weberian singularity of focus on the role played by Western, especially Protestant, traditions in the creation of modern selfhood and capitalism. Notwithstanding this teleological misprision, the Eastern tradition's growing importance as a field of unique ethnographic opportunity and its critical relevance to a number of the key issues in current anthropological debate are reflected in the diversity and depth of material which Hann and Goltz have assembled within this volume. This is an important collection of papers, ethnographic in focus, but containing significant theoretical leaven throughout, covering a number of traditions, not only Greek and Russian Orthodox mainstreams, but Armenian, Syrian, Uniate, and Old Believer strands of a continuous chain of belief stretching back through the fractures of socialism and its collapse, and the rise and fall of empires, to Byzantium, Kievan Rus', and the early Christian communities of the Near East.

The papers are grouped around four themes: 'Image and voice – the sensuous expression of the sublime'; 'Knowledge and ritual – monasteries and the renewal of tradition'; 'Syncretism and authenticity – shared shrines and pilgrimages'; and 'Person and nation – Church, Christian community and the spectres of secularism'. The sites of research stretch geographically from the Baltic to the Eastern Mediterranean, and politically from the recently

accepted and aspiring states of the post-Lisbon European Union, to the satellites and heartland of the former Soviet Union. The range and distinctiveness of the ethnographic detail are invigorating. The continuing power and relevance of the distinctively Eastern attachment to icon, pilgrimage, and monastery are present throughout. The co-habitations brought about by history are highlighted: the sharing of 'mixed shrines' between Orthodox Christians and Muslims in Macedonia (Bowman) echoes and amplifies the pilgrimages made yearly by Muslims to the island of Prinkipo in Istanbul to celebrate the feast of the Christian St George (Couroucli). The controversy over whether to include religious affiliation as mandatory in ID cards in Greece (Hirschon) contributes to a wider discussion on the role of religion in creating nations, empires, and other imagined communities that is continued in examinations of the way in which the Syrian Orthodox Church has reasserted its position within a Muslim-dominated society through skilful exploitation of its monastic tradition (Poujeau), and the expectations of a Russian public on the general duty of the Orthodox Church to provide public charity, echoing Dostoyevsky's assertion that to be Russian is to be Orthodox (Caldwell).

The trace of recently, and not so recently, demised empire is strongly present. The 'empire dust', a relic of the golden age of cosmopolitanism at the twilight of the Ottoman Empire, is reflected upon at the same time and in the same context as the sectarian fault-lines of the recent Balkan tragedy. The collective identity fostered under the Soviet Union re-emerges as a key issue for an Orthodox community in Russia struggling to maintain its primacy in the face of the rise of a secular individualism driven by Western consumerist values and human rights discourse. The recent cult of the 'martyred' Tsar Nicolas II and his family is an ironic bridge back towards collective values.

The work of a number of recent key theoreticians on the anthropology of religion, including Whitehouse and Hervieu-Légèr, is referenced in the analyses of ethnographic material. The wider theoretical context is picked up variously with references to Strathern on distributed personhood and Gell on indexical agency in a consideration of where the power of icons really lies as perceived by a peasant congregation praying for rain in Romania (Hanganu), or the way in which the hymns, bells, and singing which create a sacred territory on the Russian-Estonian border are 'the aural rendition of divine prototypes' (Engelhardt).

Latour, Barth, Asad, Turner, and Herzfeld are cited throughout, connecting this particular field with the wider discourses current in the anthropology of religion and of Europe.

At the heart of all of these ethnographic accounts, there is a concern for the struggles of believers, in the context of global modernity and technological and political change, to find ways to fashion ethical selves within a tradition which values above all long-term continuity and authenticity. The resilience of that tradition is clear to see in the breadth and quality of material assembled in this collection. It confirms Halle/Wittenberg as the centre of an exciting, emerging school. This volume will become indispensable for scholars, not just of Eastern Christianity, but of religion in all of its manifestations. As Doug Rogers asserts in his afterword: '*Ex Oriente Lux* – Light from the East – once again'.

DOMINIC MARTIN *University of Cambridge*

LEUTLOFF-GRANDITS, CAROLIN, ANJA

PELEIKIS & TATJANA THELEN. *Social security in religious networks: anthropological perspectives on new risks and ambivalences*. vii, 238 pp., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2009. £45.00 (cloth)

The editors of this book give exceptional added value to its eleven essays. They provide some fresh intellectual propulsion, indebted to Franz and Keebet von Benda-Beckmann of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle (Saale), which hosted a conference in 2005 from which the essays derive. Social security has been defined by the von Benda-Beckmanns (quoted in the introduction) as 'the dimension of social organization dealing with the provision of security not considered to be an exclusive matter of individual responsibility', in which they identify five 'layers': ideological (cultural and religious) notions with regard to risk and caring; institutional (often legal) provision; social relationships between recipients and providers; concrete social security actions; and, finally, the consequences of social security practices (for providers and recipients, and more widely).

This approach should be a challenge to those who study civil society, development, welfare, charity, aid, humanitarianism and NGOs. Its strong points are, first, that unlike all these much disputed concepts it is, as redefined by the von Benda-Beckmanns, as near value-free as we are likely to get. (However, even an ostensibly neutral term such as 'coping strategy' can be

abused as a pretext for aid donors to cut their relief food pledges to famine-stricken countries.) Second, it forces our attention towards the experiences and viewpoints of recipients. Despite the rapid growth of 'monitoring and evaluation' as a subsidiary of the aid and welfare professions, and despite the major contributions of anthropologists to understanding these professions as self-sustaining systems, the editors of this book make an original case that social security, being multiplex, requires an ethnography of layered networks. The recognition that 'social security is always bound to future expectations' leads them to consider the religious networks that provide spiritual or ontological security, though this can simultaneously aggravate material vulnerability, while religious affiliation can result in practices of exclusion as well as inclusion.

Kristin Kupfer asks a momentous question: what in China is replacing the current withdrawal of the state, and the increase in economic disparities and work migration? She sees Qigong and Christian groups as combining resources from folk religion and healing, evangelical movements, traditional secret societies, and the Communist Party. Mirjam de Bruijn and Rijk van Dijk, comparing Pentecostal Christian and Islamic charity in west Africa (the first exercise of its kind that I know of), argue that even the newly expanded, de-Westernized definition of social security is value-laden since it ignores that, in high-risk contexts, 'crises and related insecurities are experienced daily, and thus become accepted and integrated into their social structures'. Both Pentecostalism and Sahelian Islam tend to maintain insecurities as part of a natural order whereby the well-off give to the poor and in exchange receive heavenly salvation.

Gertrud Hüwelmeier examines the evolution of some transnational Roman Catholic sisterhoods that originated in nineteenth-century Europe and founded distant branches. Until the 1960s, members were required to break almost all ties with their families of origin: they were treated as spiritual daughters of their mother superiors, working without remuneration with an inflow of young sisters to look after the elderly. But after the Second Vatican Council they were given the opportunity to extend charitable activities to the wider world, and face-to-face relationships with their own kin were permitted. Health services for sisters in the West and care in their old age are now partly provided by the national security system; sisters from non-Western countries earn money as

hospital nurses in the West to support branches of their congregation in India or Latin America; and sisters in non-Western countries, sponsored by Western parishes, institutions, and individuals, work in mixed religious societies to mitigate disease, poverty, and disasters.

By contrast with these large-scale topics, Tatjana Thelen describes a small café in Rostock, eastern Germany, registered as a charity in 1999 and differing from an ordinary small business in that its Protestant sponsors wanted to give employment to mothers who under the GDR had been religiously active and had opted not to take full-time employment, rejecting the dominant role of Communist worker-mother and thereby marginalizing themselves economically. Thelen portrays an inward-looking Christian group that looks to the past for an 'ontological security' weakened by political differences after German unification and by the damage to relationships of trust brought about by free access to the GDR secret police files. The 'five layers of social security', well brought into analytical focus in this and other case studies, should provide researchers on welfare and aid with at least a check-list to help interpret their own field data.

JONATHAN BENTHALL *University College London*

Sex and sexuality

DONNAN, HASTINGS & FIONA MAGOWAN (eds). *Transgressive sex: subversion and control in erotic encounters*. viii, 280 pp., map, illus., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2009. £37.50 (cloth)

A book titled *Transgressive sex* propositions readers with specific expectations. At a time when anyone interested in a subject like this can find the most outré fetishes, activities, and identities by clicking a few times on some Google links, where mainstream television programmes like *CSI* or *Nip/Tuck* routinely cover topics ranging from auto-erotic asphyxiation to sex between people dressed as furry cartoon animals, and where a popular reality show like *Jersey Shore* features a seemingly irresistible hot-tub jacuzzi as one of its main characters, a book by anthropologists called *Transgressive sex* promises both to tap into unusual erotic practices and to do what none of those other sources does: provide informed, intelligent analysis of what transgressive sex is, how it is

enacted, what it means, and why (or if) it is interesting for anyone else besides aficionados.

Alas. Instead of animated explorations of peppery topics, what one gets in most of the chapters in this book are sensible analyses of sexual activities that undoubtedly, in the contexts in which they occur, are 'transgressive' – young girls having sex with blokes they don't know, gay men prowling about in dark parks, transgendered performers holding beauty pageants. But in a world where disability porn and Japanese *hentai* flourish, where adult babies, crush freaks, men who surgically split their penises in two and people who engage in pony play publicize their existence to anyone who wants to be titillated by them or join their ranks, one can perhaps be forgiven for leaving *Transgressive sex* with a sense that anthropologists have some catching up (as well as some Internet searching and television watching) to do before they have anything of much novelty to contribute to an understanding of transgressive sex.

Part of the problem is the title. The editors should perhaps have considered a less racy title for a book that, for the most part, is anything but racy. But having decided to call their book *Transgressive sex*, the editors were then compelled to define the scope of inquiry. They do this in the first sentence of the introduction, where they explain that '[t]his book is about sex that crosses or threatens to cross boundaries and about sex acts that flout social, moral and cultural convention' (p. 1). That is certainly one way to define the topic, but as the editors themselves indicate (p. 3), a definition like that could relatively easily apply to pretty much any kind of sexual activity, since sex itself, even fantasized sex, 'crosses or threatens to cross boundaries'. And many of even the most banal sexual practices in any given community or society (oral sex, sex between septuagenarians, sex in an interracial marriage, sex between two men or two women, solitary masturbation) will often violate *someone's* social, moral, and cultural conventions. So such a generous definition of transgressive sex leaves us, basically, with everything. This implies, in a kind of queer contortion, that the *really* interesting thing to study is not transgressive sex at all, but, rather, those precious and rare sexual acts that are somehow not considered transgressive by anybody. But that is not the point of this book.

The capaciousness of the definition of transgressive sex leads to chapters that are interesting without being exciting. Violence against women and rape are discussed in several

of the chapters, as are the challenges to conservative morality presented by teenage sexuality and homosexuality. These are all important topics, but they could have been published in any of the anthologies about cross-cultural sexualities that have been appearing since the 1980s. An exception is Rebecca Cassidy's brisk and informative essay on 'zoos' (men who form romantic relationships with animals, mostly horses). This chapter is important, partly because virtually nothing has been written on this topic, despite the fact that everyone has a strong opinion – usually outrage – about it, and also because it is the only chapter in this book that broaches the subject of truly transgressive sex and explores the kinds of challenges it presents for more general understandings of sexuality, personhood, sociality, and boundaries. Heather Montgomery's chapter on child prostitution in Thailand makes an important point about how discussions of transgressive sex often emerge from social anxieties about national identity. And Marc Johnson's cautionary essay on the role that 'transgender' plays in contemporary analyses of transgression leads helpfully to broader issues, such as anthropology's questionable desire for both transgression and sex.

DON KULICK *University of Chicago*

LEVON, EREZ. *Language and the politics of sexuality: lesbians and gays in Israel*. ix, 199 pp., figs, tables, bibliogr. Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave, 2010. £50.00 (cloth)

Language and the politics of sexuality opens with a promising fanfare but ends with a disappointing and frustrating murmur. Its first three chapters eloquently and rather thoroughly depict Israel's history and principal ideologies. Quite surprisingly for an 'outsider', Levon enthusiastically delves into and successfully familiarizes us with the intricacies of the Israeli lesbigay genealogy and present-day circumstances. He then meticulously renders the theoretical and methodological bases of his research, namely sociolinguistics, particularly the mechanisms of language and sexuality and their interface. Being immersed in the field for one year, Levon partook in various lesbigay activities conducting participant observations and interviews. One cannot wait to read the remaining two chapters in which the study is to be reported. The ethnographic promise is, alas, never materialized. Instead, a very stern positivist-empiricist epistemology is employed in

an extremely ascetic *reductio ad absurdum* methodology.

Acoustic measurements of minute speech variations (e.g. pitch levels) are meant to shed light on the complex and diverse ways individuals conceive and construct their identities, sexualities, political positioning, lived experiences, and so on. The researched persons are treated as if they were but talking robots; they are stripped of any biographical background (aside of their gender and organizational affiliation); their moods, feelings, and emotions are ardently eschewed. For example, measuring only the pitch levels of 'coming out' narratives totally ignores emotional factors (e.g. anxiety, stress, anguish) that constitute an essential part of this unique speech event, which carries immanent threats to the speaker's face and ontological well-being. These and other inherent human expressions are left outside the domain of Levon's study. His informants are conceived solely in terms of their political commitment and ideological perspective. Again: *reductio ad absurdum* of human research subjects cannot be considered as ethnography.

Apropos of informants: several critical flaws are worth mentioning. First, like in many studies of lesbigay populations, Levon admittedly remains within the easy confines of what I would call the tip of the iceberg: that is, a minority of lesbigays who have disclosed their sexual orientation to a relatively large number of people and are typically situated in the higher echelons of society (e.g. have relatively high income and education levels). They are easily located and willingly participate in research projects. In such a positivist framework, it would be wrong to assume that Levon's conclusions can be generalized onto the significantly larger, hidden parts of the Israeli lesbigay iceberg.

Second, Levon insists on a firm bifurcation of the Israeli lesbigay populations into mainstream versus radical activists. This dichotomy may lead the reader into erroneously believing that there indeed are two opposing groups of equal size, magnitude, or importance. Actually, the vast majority of lesbigays in Israel can be easily labelled 'mainstream' (see A. Kama, 'Parading proudly into the mainstream: gay and lesbian immersion in the civil core', in *The contradictions of Israeli citizenship: land, religion and state* (eds) B. Turner & G. Ben-Porat, 2011). Levon's radical informants represent a rather negligible if vociferous minority, at best. Indeed, the past three decades verify quite obviously the proven

success of the mainstream activists and their political agenda and ideological stance; while the radical groups have remained in the margins and their impact has not been felt at all.

Third, interestingly enough, Levon never inquires about his informants' position on the life-long process of 'coming out': that is, the ongoing discursive – verbal and/or performative – practice of disclosure of one's homosexual identity. Vast literature elaborates on this crucial aspect that constitutes the most important characteristic distinguishing between lesbigay and non-lesbigay individuals. Unfolding one's personal narrative, as Levon's interviewees were asked to do, is immeasurably dependent on one's positioning *vis-à-vis* the overarching 'coming out' issue. Thus, his precise acoustic measurements of voice inflections alone may altogether miss the most fundamental facets of identity and social interaction.

Finally, age was 'not shown to significantly affect language use' (p. 128). Although the author himself calls for 'more careful scrutiny' (p. 128), this finding negates the well-documented phenomenon of two or, some would argue, three distinct cohorts. Age is definitely a fundamental variable in the Israeli context and greatly affects lesbigays' subjectivities and biographies, even if it does not influence their minute phonetic variations.

Reviewing a published book is always frustrating for it is a *fait accompli*. In this case I sadly finished reading *Language and the politics of sexuality* even more frustrated than usual.

AMIT KAMA *Academic College of Emek Yezreel*

MURRAY, DAVID A.B. (ed.). *Homophobias: lust and loathing across time and space*. ix, 227 pp., illus., bibliogr. London, Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2010. £69.00 (cloth), £17.00 (paper)

This book is a splendid collection of essays edited by David A.B. Murray. The volume is the outcome of discussions first held in the mid-1990s in response to a growing recognition of the marked differences in the representation of 'gay culture' across ethnographic sites. The authors interrogate the notion of homophobia, demonstrating it to be a problematic category. 'Phobias', unlike 'isms' (racism, sexism), point to the 'psychological' rather than structural aspects of difference. As a

concept, homophobia concerns anthropologists of gay and lesbian cultures. The excellent chapters explore how categories and practices of anti-homosexuality are worked out in specific contexts, from New York, to urban Greece, to LGBT hate in Jamaica.

Expressions of, and resistance to, homosexuals have an anthropologically politicized history. Murray addresses these tensions by showing how positive images of homosexuality have been much exploited by anthropologists (such as Walter Williams) to show the lack of universality of gay-hate. Murray cautions this use of the ethnographic record, writing amusingly that 'the time is surely past when we can hope to move or influence anyone out of intolerance and prejudice simply by reaching into our anthropological top hat [and pulling] out examples of traditional societies that do things differently than "we" do' (p. 29). Homosexuality is now politicized in new ways. I found the authors' presentation of these current polemics one of the most interesting aspects of the collection, as well as the problems that confront the fieldworker in sites where being gay is seen as abhorrent. This is why the collection is as much a critical interrogation of fieldwork as it is about theories of homosexuality.

The authors point to the way in which who is and who is not 'anti-gay' has socio-political bearings. Being pro- or anti-gay can carry strong political messages against different kinds of otherness (Islam is one example explored in the book). Moreover, political and social acceptance of gays and lesbians has become a marker of what it means to be a 'civilized' country. Here the politically liberal cultures of European and American societies (who oppose anti-gay prejudice to varying degrees) are pitted (globally and internally) against those religious and political regimes that endorse anti-gay prejudice.

The chapters by Sullivan-Blum (contemporary Christian homophobia) and LaFont (LGBT hate in Jamaica) show how specific attitudes of anti-homosexuality are related to religion and class, respectively. The authors ground anti-homosexuality not in a psychological mindstate, but rather in a cultural matrix of the intersecting issues of globalization, race, gender, class, and religion. LaFont's chapter, for example, shows that being anti-gay is strongly mediated by class credentials in Jamaica. This book is a must for anyone interested in anthropological fieldwork methods as well as theories of homosexuality.

KATHLEEN RICHARDSON *University College London*

Social anthropology

BROWNELL, SUSAN (ed.). *The 1904*

Anthropology Days and Olympic Games: sport, race, and American imperialism. xviii, 471 pp., tables, illus., bibliogr. London, Lincoln: Univ. Nebraska Press, 2009. £36.00 (cloth)

The St Louis Olympic Games of 1904 have a bad reputation. They took place as part of a trade fair to celebrate the Louisiana Purchase centenary. This collection of essays examines the Games and their strange relationship with anthropology.

The Louisiana Purchase Exposition, like the Games themselves, had a strong anthropological flavour. As well as trade presentations, there were educational exhibitions and activities. Parezo's essay tells of a forty-acre village of native peoples from seventy-five societies from different parts of the world, with men, women, and children living in specially built traditional dwellings. There were also Wild West shows, demonstrations of seal-hunting, re-enactments of scenes from the Boer War, and much else. The central narrative explained human progress from savagery to civilization.

Sport was one aspect of this huge Exposition. There was a large sporting programme with some 9,000 athletes competing in more than 400 events. The Olympic Games were just a small part of this programme. They lasted a single week with a mere 687 entrants competing in eighty competitions.

Adjacent to the Olympic Games were the so-called 'Anthropology Days'. The idea was to compare the 'civilized' athletes in the Olympic Games with the peoples variously described as 'primitive', 'native', 'uncivilized', or 'savage'. This was a scientific investigation. Some thought that natives were merely inferior to white people. Another view, discussed here by Bale, was that even untrained natives were 'natural athletes'.

Much difficulty arose because the 'natives' did not always behave as they were supposed to. Some imperfectly understood the nature of the tasks they were set. Others were unwilling to take part unless they made money from their efforts. The Mbuti in particular used every opportunity to make fun of the proceedings. Eichberg's chapter attributes much of this confusion to the diversity of cultural significance attached to running, jumping, pulling, and throwing. Not all societies, it seems, are preoccupied with measurement and record-keeping.

Brownell further argues that the anthropological activities were uncertainly framed as a freak-show, a human zoo, a scientific experiment, or a commercial entertainment. She wonders if the events did not expose Western sports and even Western civilization as a cultural construction.

In the shadow of these goings-on stood the figure of Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic Games. Coubertin (discussed here by Schantz) had had reservations about the St Louis Olympics before they began. He thought sport could educate and civilize both working people and the savage races and he hoped it might bring the nations together and prevent war. Though Coubertin was not free from racism – he was an anti-Dreyfusard – the tendency of his views was away from racism's crasser forms. He found the St Louis Olympics and particularly the Anthropology Days insulting to participants and generally in bad taste. It was an opinion shared by many fellow-Europeans and, no doubt, by many of the 'savage' participants too.

The St Louis Games proved to be the darkness before a new dawn. As a concession to nationalist Greek sentiment (discussed here by Kitroeff), it had been agreed to hold a semi-official 'supplementary' games in Athens in 1906. Athens removed much that was distasteful about St Louis. Trade fairs, Wild West shows, historical re-enactments, circuses, non-Olympic sports, and above all the Anthropology Days all were absent from the 1906 Games. Instead of race, there was a renewed emphasis on nationality, exemplified by a 'Parade of Nations' which persists to this day.

In an excellent article, Knott claims that there were several competing notions of nationality before the Great War. Many nations, and of course the empires, were *unions* of different types of people. Others – not least the German *Volk* – were located in very many states. The dismemberment of Austria-Hungary in 1918 brought a more standardized view of nationality, which was later consolidated through the presentation of international sport in film and radio. The 1906 Greek Olympics importantly prefigured this more coherent view of nationality.

This is an elegantly produced volume. It has some extraordinary photographs, mostly of 'natives' engaged in sporting activities. Pictures of Native Americans in full costume engaged in tug-of-war and of an Igorot climbing a huge vertical pole are particularly arresting. My one criticism is that the chapters too often repeat

materials explained elsewhere. I would have preferred a monograph instead of a collection of essays. Nevertheless, the book throws considerable light on a strange corner of the history of sport and anthropology. It is well worth reading.

ANTHONY D. BUCKLEY *Queen's University of Belfast*

DESAI, AMIT & EVAN KILLICK (eds). *The ways of friendship: anthropological perspectives*. vii, 213 pp., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2010. £35.00 (cloth)

The study of friendship has been for anthropologists a friend who is 'like' a brother or a sister. There is a long-standing relationship to the topic, which has been visited from time to time, but it simply is not a member of the family. That is the starting-point for this edited volume, which illuminates the perfect blend of challenges and rewards for anthropologists seeking to study friendship.

The contributors demonstrate the diversity of what friendship is across cultures, complicating both the understanding that it is 'characterized by autonomy, sentiment, individualism, lack of ritual and lack of instrumentality' (p. 1) and the criticism that these are the requirements of modern Western friendship. Desai's chapter on ritual friendships in central India and Goncaldo Santos's chapter on 'same-year siblings' in rural south China suggest the need to suggest how and why friendship becomes formed. Both chapters describe the involvement of families in arranging ritual friendships between young men or boys. Desai notes that in India, men will arrange friendships between their sons or grandsons, establishing and maintaining ties between themselves and their families. The arrangement of ritual friendships not only draws parallels with marriage, but Santos also tells us that in China, same-year siblings become sworn around the time of marriage as 'a way of protecting and reinforcing their relation of close friendship and allowing it to last longer' (p. 31).

The contributors follow the lead of scholars of kinship and look to the local ideas and practices that shape the everyday experiences of friendship. In so doing, they assert the significance of friendship as an idea and a practice that is distinct from kinship. This is in part a response to the concept of 'relatedness' that has enabled anthropologists to think more expansively and more inclusively about what it means to be kin. Killick and Desai, in the

introduction, suggest that 'by subsuming friendship under a general category of relatedness, we miss what friendship does differently to kinship for the people who practice it, and the different ways in which the two general forms of relationship might be constituted in a particular society' (p. 5).

Yet, this also demonstrates a reason for why friendship has not been studied in its own right. Friendship is understood in terms of kinship, not only among anthropologists, but also among ordinary people themselves. It is defined as both 'not kinship' and 'like kinship'. Killick, in his chapter on social relations in the Peruvian Amazon, suggests that friendship-as-not-kinship permits the indigenous Asheninka to maintain their sense of equality with their *mestizo* bosses, whom they treat as *ayompari* (trading partners). *Mestizos*, who rely on the indigenous workers for labour and lumber, prefer to see their relationships in terms of *compadrazgo*, or co-parenthood and sponsorship. Michelle Obeid, in her account of social relations in a Lebanese town, suggests that the townspeople 'idolize friendship as a relationship that is "free" of the oppressive obligations dictated by kinship' (p. 94). Obeid also finds that the hope of individuals entering into friendships is to cultivate social relations of 'permanence, endurance, and irreversibility' (p. 110) – that is, to create friendships like kinship.

Friendship is regarded as opportunity because it is not kinship. Peggy Froerer observes that for the children living in a tribal village in central India, friendship crosses kinship, caste, and even age and gender. She finds that the boundaries of geographical location and physical proximity define who is or is not a friend. Because it becomes opposed to kinship, however, friendship can be regarded as a disruption. Graeme Rodgers describes the changing significance of kinship and friendship among Mozambican refugees who fled to South Africa during the 1980s civil war in their country. Kinship comes to represent the values of tradition 'left behind' in Mozambique, and friendship the values of modernity and of leaving behind kinship.

The potential of friendship to disrupt does not go unrecognized among the contributors. In his chapter based on fieldwork with the Mapuche, an indigenous people of South America, Magnus Course considers the social and cultural work that tending to the end of a friendship (and more particularly the death of a

friend) requires. What middle-class teachers and others see as disruptive behaviour in a London primary school, Gillian Evans sees as the making and managing of friendship among boys ages 10 and 11. Friendship, she observes, 'can easily become the grounds for a resistance movement' (p. 191).

Simon Coleman, in the afterword to this collection, remarks that studies of friendship have taken one of three paths: looking 'through' friendship instead of 'at' it, relegating it to 'the informal negative to kinship's formal positive' (p. 199), and 'purifying' or romanticizing it. This edited volume suggests still another direction that might be taken.

SALLIE HAN *State University of New York – College at Oneonta*

FALGOUT, SUZANNE, LIN POYER, & LAURENCE M. CARUCCI. *Memories of war: Micronesians in the Pacific War*. x, 277 pp., maps, illus., bibliogr. Honolulu: Univ. Hawai'i Press, 2008. £25.00 (paper)

The subject of this book examines the narratives of memory from the Second World War as remembered by Micronesians. The authors of *Memories of war* collected 'approximately four hundred oral histories from Micronesian elders' (p. 1). The retelling of these wartime memories in this depiction creates a memorable picture of Micronesians' experiences during the war, especially their relations with the Japanese, their hardships during wartime, and their encounters with Americans following the United States' occupation of the islands.

The Pacific area of Micronesia includes the Mariana Islands, the Marshall Islands, and the Caroline Islands and extends over an area larger than 'the continental United States' north of Papua New Guinea and Australia (p. 9). The memories of Micronesians in the book are mostly represented through stories and songs and form a 'construction of cultural memory' (p. 3). To most Micronesians the war made them bystanders to a conflict fought by foreigners, the Japanese and the Americans, over their islands.

The book is not a standard historical monograph about the Second World War but rather is made unique by personalizing the experiences of wartime through the viewpoints of Micronesians themselves. It is these personalized narratives which make *Memories of war* such a fascinating read, and should appeal

to anthropologists and historians alike. As Falgout, Poyer and Carucci state, themes in the book reflect

uniquely Micronesian perceptions and interests, certain ideas [that] have become part of the cultural corpus of war memories: the unexpected and shocking violence of the war, which arrived as an outside force; the sufferings and hardships that Micronesians underwent; their sensations of powerlessness and marginality and of being bystanders in this global contest; disruptions to happiness, harmony, and plentitude; changes in leadership and colonial rule; and new opportunities for romance all pervade the sensibility and knowledge of the war for modern Micronesians (p. 221).

The rich oral histories of Micronesians are woven together to portray the meaning of the Second World War in such a way as to make experiences real and vivid on multiple levels. These are riveting accounts, and for those who appreciate oral history, the book is certainly worthwhile. The stories told by Micronesians about the Second World War 'are personal, subjective, emotional, and concerned with the everyday' (p. 43). The narratives portray how the Japanese treated the Micronesians during wartime, including rationing their food to the point of starvation and other harsh measures. Many Micronesians were conscripted into labour for the Japanese to build such things as airstrips. Micronesian narratives also depict how they escaped the war theatre and what they did to survive wartime. The Micronesians experienced the American bombings of the islands and the subsequent benign military occupation by the United States.

What is impressive about this book is the sum of cultural memories that Micronesians represent about the war. It is a past with resonance and the authors make certain readers aware of the meanings attached to this illustration of memories. Wartime recollections likewise are notably described in beautiful Micronesian songs, which punctuate the oral histories. By depicting narrations of Micronesian experiences through varying survival themes, the authors of *Memories of war* have made a noteworthy contribution to Second World War studies, oral histories, and the historical narratives of Micronesians.

J.P. LINSTROTH *International Peace Research Institute*

GRASSENÌ, CRISTINA. *Developing skill, developing vision: practices of locality at the foot of the Alps*. xii, 212 pp., illus., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books, 2009. £35.00 (cloth)

Grasseni's *Developing skill, developing vision* looks at different aspects of dairy farming in a northern Italian Alpine village in Valtaleggio. The book explores questions of locality, identity, skill, and responses to mechanization, industrialization, and standardization in farming. The six chapters take up separate theoretical and ethnographic issues in turn. However, the central theme is how skill expresses the relationship between dairy farmer and the environment (p. 67), and encompasses local, more 'traditional' elements of mountain herding as well as wider European and international influences. The ethnographic foundations for the book are the practices and skills of local cattle breed and other experts, and the strategies of one particular family in the village of Taleggio, locally represented as 'authentic family farming in the mountains' (p. 177), but who embrace semi-industrial farming practices as well (this family's practices also formed the subject of Grasseni's ethnographic film *Those who don't work don't make love*, 1998).

The book's title captures the author's wish to counter critiques of 'visualism' in anthropology (p. 79). From a methodological perspective, she argues that using ethnographic filmmaking can convey 'a sense of immediate participation in a whole sensory experience' (p. 75) and can capture expressions of tacit knowledge while at the same time conveying more abstract notions. From a theoretical perspective, what she terms 'skilled vision' is understood as a form of tacit knowledge that is 'embedded in a multi-sensory practice, where looking is coordinated with skilled movements, with rapidly changing points of view, or with other senses, such as touch' (p. 79). This methodological and theoretical theme is particularly relevant to the ethnographic material on local skills, where vision is prominent as an expression of expertise: for instance, in cattle breed experts' assessments of cows on farm visits or at cattle fairs.

Grasseni's discussion of family farming reveals the way in which alpine herding traditions are combined with semi-industrial and commercially driven practices. The family in question continue to take the herd to higher pasture in summer, and have kept to the Alpine Brown breed rather than high-yielding Friesians, 'the "Ferraris" of lowland agribusiness' (p. 160).

On the other hand, they use modern techniques such as artificial insemination, and have built a mechanized milking parlour. In this context, Grasseni considers the farmer's 'worldview' as influenced by both local and 'traditional' perspectives as well as commercial and regulatory concerns that tie the farmer to broader national and EU-wide processes. The author considers the issue of changing skill in the face of semi-mechanized dairy farming, drawing on the work of Latour, and convincingly argues against the notion of deskilling and alienation of farmer from his animals, noting how new skills and interactions merely change this relationship.

Another major focus is the 'skilled vision' of breed experts. This discussion reveals how these experts' skills are premised in their own experiences as dairy farmers. Here, Grasseni draws on the work of Ingold and Lave and Wenger, in arguing for an integrated view of the role of vision with other senses in learning and skill. Her concept of 'skilled vision' is understood as a form of tacit knowledge that is embedded in local 'taskscape', and acquired through participation in particular 'communities of practice'. The discussion also highlights clashes of the 'worldviews' of more traditional mountain farmers and that of the experts, whose outlook is informed by international standards and production goals.

In this context, and in the book more generally, theory precedes ethnography. As a consequence, it is at times not entirely clear who the protagonists are (the introduction of ethnographic detail on dairy farming is suspended to page 110 of 189). Moreover, the theoretical discussions are at times not entirely transparent: many terms and ideas are left vaguely defined and appear in quick succession without being thoroughly considered: for instance, in the space of two short pages, ideas of 'situated learning' appear together with ideas on semantics, 'indexicality', 'speech as a way of acting in the world', 'professional vision', 'cognition', 'head-world interaction', 'thought-power', 'artefacts which embody values and enable perception', 'cognitive artefacts', and 'moral and aesthetic judgement' (pp. 135-6). This somewhat helter-skelter approach to the theoretical ideas that underpin this study stands in marked contrast with the otherwise clear and engaging ethnography. As a whole, the book reads more like a series of separate essays on aspects of dairy farming and conducting fieldwork in this Alpine community. While these are all of pertinence and interest,

they might have been made to speak to each other more clearly.

ANNA PORTISCH *School of Oriental and African Studies*

MINES, DIANE P. & SARAH LAMB (eds). *Everyday life in South Asia* (2nd edition). xi, 566 pp., maps, illus., bibliogr. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2010. \$65.00 (cloth), \$24.95 (paper)

The book under review is an expanded and updated version of the first edition, published in 2002. Many of the same essays are to be found in this edition (several revised and updated), while new essays bring the volume up to date with recent changes in South Asia. The book contains thirty-five short chapters, divided into six sections: 'The family and the life course'; 'Genders'; 'Caste, class and community'; 'Practising religion'; 'Nation-making and globalization'; and 'Public culture and the South Asian diaspora'. Mines and Lamb give a succinct introduction to each of these sections in order to contextualize the chapters and ground readers in the subject matter. Whilst almost all the chapters deserve individual attention, owing to the constraints of space I focus on some of the highlights of the book, before tentatively outlining some of the shortcomings.

The first section balances the work of experienced ethnographers of rural India (Jeffrey, Wadley, and Lamb) with new work such as Costanzo Kapur's account of courtship in a call centre in Hyderabad and Leichty's compelling chapter on the contradictions of modernity among young men in Kathmandu. The 'Genders' section is one of the most original in its approach. Reddy, Seizer, and Gamburd's essays stand out: the first for its sophisticated discussion of gender and sexuality in reference to *hijra* identity and the emergent gay scene in Hyderabad; the second for its description of changing notions of family, motherhood, masculinity, and gender roles in the face of rural Sri Lankan women's migration as domestic workers to the Gulf States, and the last for its finely observed account of the journeys of stigmatized women actresses and the ways in which they 'strive to erect those very physical confines the new middle-class woman has left behind' (p. 98).

The following section illustrates the entanglement of caste, class, citizenship, and community through descriptions of a festival in Nepal (Parish); the anxiety and illness of

impoverished slum-dwelling women in Bangladesh (Rashid); the trajectory of an educated, upwardly mobile, middle-class girl in Madurai (Dickey); and the class, caste, and religious politics of the Onam festival in a secular college in Kerala (Lukose), for example. The next section concentrates on religion as practice and the social role of ritual. Here, the chapters on Pakistan and Kashmir are particularly illuminating, especially Marsden's analysis of Muslim village intellectuals in the context of the Islamicization of Pakistan's Northwest frontier. Chapters by Lynch and Bates stand out in the section on 'Nation-making', as well as stimulating contributions from Butalia and Menon.

Chapters in the last section discuss globalization, diaspora, and public culture. Daniel's chapter from *Charred lullabies* highlights the vulnerability of asylum-seekers who try to escape death and torture in Sri Lanka by fleeing to Britain, Canada, and the US only to face new dangers in Western prisons and a brutally inadequate legal process. Other chapters look at the experience of diaspora Indians in the UK (Hall and Richman) and the US (Radhakrishnan) (Narayan's argument about 'emplacement' is particularly interesting) as well as the pervasive influence of cinema in the Tamil countryside (Pandian) and the 'erotics' of television and consumption in middle-class Delhi (Mankekar).

One of the problems with focusing on 'the everyday' is that it tends to privilege the 'stories' of individuals at the expense of a broader issue-based, institutional, or structural understanding of South Asia, and this is one of the criticisms that will no doubt be levelled at this volume. This focus is partly a result of anthropology's current tendency to shy away from generalization, comparison, and any 'grand theory'. While the best chapters in the volume carefully theorize their material, the weaker chapters remind us of the problems with this approach. Secondly, there is a surprising absence of ethnography on Dalits and adivasis, groups at the centre of South Asia's democratic and revolutionary 'upsurge', an upsurge which seeks to overthrow the normalized structures of everyday life that are described here. This leads to another question about the general impression of stability that is conveyed by a focus on the everyday, an impression at odds with the ubiquitous signs of upheaval, conflict, subordination, exploitation, corruption, and deepening inequality in a neoliberal era.

However, the criticism of omission is perhaps unfair, for as the editors point out, this is

intended neither as an issue-based anthology nor as an exhaustive account of family, class, caste, religion, nation, and diaspora (as if such an account is possible). Rather, the book offers keenly observed ethnographic snapshots, theorized by the authors and contextualized by the engaging section introductions. Indeed, the varied, rich, and sensitive portrayal of the ordinary (and extraordinary) lives of South Asians of vastly diverse backgrounds is just one of the volume's many strengths. In interpreting these 'everyday lives', many of the authors give us insight into the social and cultural fabric which give them meaning, and in doing so, make a lively contribution to the anthropological understanding of some of the most important axes of social differentiation in South Asia today. It is this that makes this volume not only an accessible introductory reader but also something of a showcase for some of the most interesting current ethnography of contemporary South Asia.

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WEISS, BRAD. *Street dreams and hip-hop barbershops: global fantasy in urban Tanzania*. x, 263 pp., Illus., bibliogr. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2009. \$65.00 (cloth), \$24.95 (paper)

Exploring the intersection of globalization, neoliberalism, and the imaginary in contemporary urban barbershops, bus stands, seamstress tables, and video halls in the northern Tanzanian city of Arusha, Brad Weiss's ethnography describes Tanzanian popular culture as an array of practices and performances through which people establish their place in a global flow of images, objects, and persons: 'In the modes of fantasy that constitute their popular culture ... urban Tanzanians imaginatively articulate and act on a world remade' (p. 2). Weiss builds upon Arjun Appadurai's claim that fantasy is now a social practice ('Global ethnoscaapes: notes and queries for a transnational anthropology', in *Recapturing anthropology: working in the present* (ed.) R.G. Fox, 1991) by arguing that acts of imagination, which mediate the processes through which consciousness engages with the world, are most evident in the modes of realism they generate. Weiss also points out that contemporary social conditions combine increased mobility, inclusiveness, and market openness with new forms of exclusion, marginalization, and restraint, and that the shifting intersections of

'here, there, elsewhere, everywhere' (Jean Comaroff & John L. Comaroff, 'Occult economies and the violence of abstraction: notes from the South African postcolony', *American Ethnologist* 26, 1999) are in fact an enduring feature of sociality and of social analysis in general, not an unprecedented possibility ushered in by globalization (p. 8). Lastly, Weiss effectively addresses the question of Africa's marginality and abject condition by presenting ethnographic data to illustrate the ways in which those on the margins grasp their relationship to the neoliberal world order and understand their own place within it.

In describing senses of both spatial incorporation within and marginalization from a new global order among young urban Tanzanians, as well as some of the potentials and constraints that frame their practices and experiences, Weiss attempts a critique that refuses to see only dependency and frustrated reaction to an order of domination, or a celebration of the creativity that Africans have generated independent of the harsh realities that condition their daily lives. In the course of discussing his data on self-fashioning and the pursuit of a desirable future in precarious circumstances, Weiss makes an important point; many Tanzanian people – and younger Tanzanians in particular – feel themselves to be living on the cusp of success or failure. In response, they can either scratch out a living looking for a life, or they can hope to reap unimaginable wealth by what he describes as 'unforeseen and incalculable techniques' (p. 237). However, and as Weiss is well aware, there is little to choose or realistically pursue between these polar options. As Weiss puts it, perhaps this is why these opposites are so frequently grasped as two sides of the same coin, and why they are so quickly obliterated: success is seen only as a temporary condition that leads almost inevitably to failure (p. 237). Under such conditions, it is all but impossible to understand one's present activities as orientated towards constructing and securing a desirable future. In a wider configuration of global forces that are increasingly felt by so many to undermine their capacity to secure their own future, all that matters is the hope of making ends meet, or at least to continue to participate in the presentist styles, gestures, and significations of self-presentation and performance that constitute a meaningful life for many young people in Arusha today (p. 238). In Weiss's own words, his 'assessment of Arusha popular cultural practices argues that struggling

with these contradictions is a call for belonging in modes that are recognizable and relevant to those making that call' (p. 238).

Daniel Mains ('Boredom in Ethiopia', *American Ethnologist* 34, 2007) remarks that theories of neoliberal capitalism are most useful for understanding economic decline and unemployment when they take local cultural and economic dynamics into account. In the course of addressing these concerns, Brad Weiss's ethnography makes a valuable contribution to the body of scholarship that documents and discusses the parts that neoliberal economic policies, particularly structural adjustment, play in creating gaps between the aspirations of youth and economic realities in Africa, and makes a strong case for the utility of anthropological theories of imagination and performance in social scientific analyses of social organization, power, wealth distribution, consumption, and conflict in the contexts of globalization and neoliberalism.

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XIANG, BIAO. *Global 'body shopping': an Indian labor system in the information technology industry*. xxii, 181 pp., Illus., tables, figs, bibliogr. Princeton: Univ. Press, 2007. £12.95 (paper)

The book under review is one of the few ethnographic studies of Indian IT workers and the only one on the system of labour circulation known as 'body shopping'. The fieldwork was carried out in Australia and India in 2000-1, just after the peak of the Indian IT boom, stimulated by the huge demand for software workers during the Y2K crisis. Although Indian IT workers on H1B visas were already a significant presence in the US, during this period, teams of temporary Indian contract workers were deployed across the world, making the Indian body shopping system a crucial element of the global informational economy.

Xiang's choice of Australia for fieldwork was a fruitful one. By living with a group of Indian 'techies' and gathering their life histories and narratives about work, home, and mobility, he was able to map the networks of agents who deploy software labour across different sites and document the strategies of software engineers as they work their way through the system, attempting to accumulate the social capital, skills, and work experience needed to acquire permanent residency or to move into higher-level employment in the US or other

more desirable locations. The book also addresses questions about control and consent within such flexible contracting systems, by examining how and why these contract workers comply with what is often a highly exploitative system – especially the practice of ‘benching’ (remaining idle but under the contractor’s control while waiting for a placement) – and how they cope with extreme job insecurity.

Because many of his informants in Australia were from Andhra Pradesh in India, the author could retrace their steps back to their home towns and villages, mapping the linkages between the (over)production of software engineers in the many small computer training institutes and private engineering colleges in the region, the chain of recruitment agents, stretching across several countries, who contract out software labour to clients, and the roles of caste and kinship in the operation of these transnational networks. Xiang also demonstrates the central role of dowry in the production of software labour. Families make heavy investments in producing (primarily male) IT workers, who in turn command substantial dowries which are then often used to invest in mobility or education. This articulation of a marriage/dowry system with the emergence of a particular ‘high-skilled’ labour system, and with class mobility, caste networks, and the agrarian economy (many Telugu software engineers come from landowning agricultural families) nicely illustrates the workings of ‘globalization’ on the ground.

Xiang shows that these diverse processes have led to the formation of a specifically Indian system, not only of labour circulation but also of capital accumulation (by the owners of body shops and training institutes in India and Indian ‘technopreneurs’ in Australia). Indeed, this informal IT economy is characterized by a blurring of boundaries between worker and labour contractor – a key strategy of upward mobility for software engineers is to become

agents or small businessmen. While entrepreneurialism and individualism are usually seen as typical of the ‘new economy’, here networking is the key to success. Indian body shops, building their networks across borders, make full use of the ‘ethnic’ connection, suggesting the formation of a distinctive form of transnational ‘vernacular capitalism’. Xiang thus argues that processes of ‘ethnicization’, individualization, and transnationalization all work in tandem. However, the book is not over-theorized, and includes much telling detail about the lives, dreams, aspirations, and dilemmas of this globally mobile ‘highly skilled’ workforce.

The body shopping system has gone into decline since 2001, being replaced by more ‘professional’ modes of software services provision and a rapid shift to the offshore model, but this study none the less retains its value in documenting a significant moment in the restructuring of the global informational economy. The book illustrates how new modes of labour production, deployment, and circulation emerge organically and very quickly in response to global opportunities, and how workers and entrepreneurs (especially from countries such as India and China) deploy diverse ‘informal’ and socially embedded modes of organization to infiltrate and derive value from globalized economic spaces. The ‘other side of globalization’, apart from the growing power of finance capital and multinational corporations, is the story of economic actors such as these body shop agents and contract IT workers, and of the vast ‘informal’ economies of production and labour that often remain under the radar of popular accounts of globalization.

Global ‘body shopping’ is important reading for scholars and students of transnationalism, South Asian anthropology, migration, and globalization and labour.

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