

UC Irvine

UC Irvine Previously Published Works

Title

Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America by Mae M. Ngai

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/15j8q726>

Journal

American Ethnologist, 36(2)

ISSN

0094-0496

Author

COUTIN, SUSAN BIBLER

Publication Date

2009-05-01

DOI

10.1111/j.1548-1425.2009.01142_20.x

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Peer reviewed

Book Reviews

Native American Life-History Narratives: Colonial and Postcolonial Navajo Ethnography. Susan Berry Brill de Ramirez. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007. 257 pp.

NANCY BONVILLAIN

Bard College at Simon's Rock

Native American Life-History Narratives: Colonial and Postcolonial Navajo Ethnography centers on a reexamination of the now-classic Navajo "autobiography" *Son of Old Man Hat* (1967), compiled and edited by Walter Dyk and based on conversations with a Navajo man named Left-Handed. In this new work, Susan Berry Brill de Ramirez convincingly argues that we should read *Son of Old Man Hat* not as a factual autobiography of Left-Handed's life but, rather, as a unique Navajo narrative of "resistance to ethnographic colonization." Brill de Ramirez contrasts the objectifying ethnographic discourse of researchers with the conversive strategies of oral storytelling conventions. While the former focuses on facts abstracted from their interactive context, the latter emphasizes the relationship between the storyteller, the audience, and the participatory community. Orality in Native American communities involves communicative events that weave together the tellers, listeners, and characters in conversive encounters. Brill de Ramirez relies on the works of Native American novelists, essayists, and poets to comment on the ways that storytelling is a complex encounter through which "tellers and listeners co-create and co-participate in the story and its telling" (p. 103).

In contrast to native traditions, Brill de Ramirez is critical of Dyk's methodology that includes eliminating episodes that Dyk considered unimportant, rearranging Left-Handed's narratives into fixed chronological sequences, and tampering with stylistic features characteristic of oral storytelling such as parallelism and repetition. In Brill de Ramirez's view, these procedures distort the authentic voice of the narrator and impose colonizing control on indigenous storytelling. Anthropological and linguistic treatments of Native American narratives are currently much more sensitive to the complex issues of representation that Brill de Ramirez discusses. For example,

the pioneering work of Dell Hymes, Dennis Tedlock, and Brian Swann, among others, attempt in different ways to remain faithful to the stylistic devices and symbolic representations conveyed in and through oral literature. They also focus on the complex issues of translation from indigenous languages into English. Dyk himself was not a speaker of the Navajo language and, therefore, worked through interpreters. Although Brill de Ramirez comments on the loss of meaning that this necessarily engendered, she could have stressed more the difficulties of any ethnographic work carried out by a researcher who cannot converse directly with people in the community.

Some of the most intriguing sections of *Native American Life-History Narratives* are those in which Brill de Ramirez dissects episodes recounted by Left-Handed that she says are unlikely to be factually accurate about the life of a Navajo man. In particular, Left-Handed narrates events in the story of a young man who disrespects his elders, including elder Navajo women, has difficulty saddling horses, has never seen deer tracks, and lacks fundamental knowledge about Navajo customs. Significantly, Left-Handed does not give his central character's clan membership, the usual Navajo greeting and self identification. Taken together, these attitudes and behaviors make reading *Son of Old Man Hat* as an autobiography quite suspect. However, Brill de Ramirez does not simply dismiss the book as Dyk's distortion of Left-Handed's narrative. Instead, she interprets the work as a subtle form of resistance on the part of Left-Handed to the colonizing relationship between the researcher and the "informant." In her view, the central character of *Son of Old Man Hat* is not a Navajo man but, rather, is a character cleverly created by Left-Handed to comment on the inappropriateness of non-Navajo observers ignorant of basic Navajo mores and values. As Brill de Ramirez summarizes, the central character "demonstrates his incapacities with the Navajo language, and . . . is repeatedly depicted as demonstrating an attitude of superiority, often asserting that his knowledge about the Navajos is more correct than that of the Navajos around him. Left-Handed shows him obstinately refusing to be corrected by Navajo elders, whom he judges to be wrong and foolish" (p. 119). These, then, are "coded stories" understood within the context of specific storytelling encounters that use narrative devices to

comment on and to reconstruct relationships imposed by colonizing powers and agents who invade and attempt to control Navajo people. But *Left-Handed* is far from passive in these encounters. Indeed, Brill de Ramirez interprets his narratives as forms of resistance, played out with trickster-like finesse.

Brill de Ramirez concludes her work with a discussion of ethnographies of Navajo life that she says are “more reliable and meaningful records of indigenous knowledge” because they are developed out of “enduring interpersonal relationships between Navajos storytellers and their anthropologists” (p. 170). She also urges researchers to respect indigenous conversive storytelling practices and conventions in their retellings of these encounters. *Native American Life-History Narratives* helps readers revisit a familiar classic in the field and encourages researchers to understand and participate in the conversive strategies of the people with whom they work to uncover the people’s knowledge and meanings.

Reference cited

Dyk, Walter
1967[1938] *Son of Old Man Hat, a Navajo Autobiography*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Mediating Knowledges: Origins of a Zuni Tribal Museum.
Gwyneira Isaac. Jim Enote, foreword. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007. xiv + 207 pp., photographs, appendix, notes, bibliography, index.

PATRICIA H. PARTNOW
Alaska Native Heritage Center

For many Native Americans, a museum—indeed, the word museum itself—is a reminder of the colonial past that damaged or appropriated cultural practices, knowledge, and objects. According to anthropologist Gwyneira Isaac, the Zuni people shared this attitude when, in the 1970s, they began planning a tribal museum.

In 1996 and 1997, Isaac, a non-Zuni, conducted interviews and field research into the origins of the A:shiwi A:wam Museum and Heritage Center to learn how a widespread antipathy to museums was redirected into the resulting ecomuseum—a place-based institution supported by the local community that acknowledges the people, rather than objects, as its most important asset. She has written a well researched and readable account of the museum’s struggles to find its identity.

Isaac’s story is not about masonry and construction but, rather, about the concepts and values that drove the museum’s development and still direct its programs and exhibits. Her research uncovered two issues that shaped discussions about the proposed museum. The first is the nature of knowledge. Isaac devotes a chapter to Zuni cosmology and epistemology, contrasting them with Western ideology, with which the community had become well acquainted during decades of hosting anthropologists. The second question derives from the first: how do the Zuni mediate—negotiate, compromise, and adapt—to the contradictions that a museum, as an institution spawned by Western ideology, imposes?

Despite their reservations about museums, the community leaders had good reasons for wanting one. First, archaeological fieldwork had yielded a large collection of artifacts that needed a home. The Smithsonian Institution had given the tribe an extensive collection of photographs of the pueblo taken by Bureau of American Ethnology anthropologists. Elders worried that some youngsters were not learning the old ways at home, so they looked to tribal institutions to fill the gaps. Finally, community members found the influx of non-Zuni tourists disruptive to their religious practices, threatening to turn them into spectacles. The Zuni reasoned that a visitor center could teach cultural sensitivity while satisfying the curiosity of onlookers.

Isaac’s most intriguing discussion concerns the relationship between knowledge and power. For the Zuni, the dissemination of knowledge is, ideally, controlled. Isaac calls theirs a “need to know” system—far different from the way knowledge is understood and used in the Anglo-American world, where it is exemplified by the Internet, the repository of disembodied information that is always available. In Zuni society, a child learns something when he or she needs to know it and exhibits an interest in learning it. Similarly, elders determine with whom, when, what type, and how much information should be shared. An essential part of this system is the relationship between the knowledge bearer and the learner. Zuni adults understand the dangers of severing that relationship—for instance, of providing information in written form so students can read it whenever they want. Not only would social relationships be weakened but also the learner would not be taught the responsibilities that inhere in privileged knowledge.

Isaac makes an important distinction between the Zuni and Anglo-American attitudes toward the power of knowledge. According to the latter, knowledge is powerful because it is restricted. The Zuni view is that knowledge is restricted because it is powerful. This power extends not just to ideas but to physical representations, photographs, and models of those ideas, rendering Western-style exhibits that are based on such representations problematic.

Because of Zuni restrictions on sharing information, the community determined that the museum is the appropriate venue for the storage and dissemination of only a portion of cultural knowledge—the quotidian “familial knowledge” that can be easily observed by anyone and that is not the property of a particular family or religious society. The dissemination of “privileged knowledge” is left to the societies.

To the Zuni, knowledge is more valuable than tangible objects. It follows that the museum’s biggest value to the community is not its physical collection, nor its story of the past, but, rather, its potential to transmit cultural knowledge from generation to generation. The community wants a museum that is a locus of self-exploration and the reaffirmation of Zuni cultural values. One challenge this stance presents is to win for the museum—an essentially alien institution—the community’s confidence in its ability to teach tradition in an appropriate manner.

Isaac’s discussion of the difficulties of mediation is as rich as her exploration of epistemology. Ethnographic museums, she explains, arose because European scientists believed that they could organize and unify knowledge into a single system if they could gather it in one place. In distinction to the Zuni imperative of controlling information, secrecy and control are anathema to the Western scientific ideology (although, tellingly, Isaac found American anthropologists unwilling to share experiences related to her research, thereby hoarding professional power by practicing secrecy).

Isaac explains that the process of mediation is unending: for instance, the museum either focuses inwardly, serving the community, specifically the young people, or outwardly, welcoming tourists who bring income into the community and stand to benefit from instruction on cultural protocol. Museum staff and boards must deal with the potential reification and codification of culture that can derive from exhibits and programs that provide only a partial context. And the search continues for a balance between public and private knowledge, older tradition bearers with concerns about culturally appropriate means of teaching and younger Zuni who complain that they are excluded from some vital cultural traditions.

Isaac returned to the culture center in 2006 and found it a different institution, but her description of the changes leaves much unclear. This reader wondered: has the center opened its doors to more tourists? With what results? Has the museum begun to amass a collection, in spite of plans not to do so? Do exhibitions now deal with material culture? What happened to the archaeological collection? Do young Zuni consider the culture center a Zuni place? In short, has the promise of the ecomuseum been realized? The field would be well served by a second edition dealing with these questions.

The Violence of Liberation: Gender and Tibetan Buddhist Revival in Post-Mao China. *Charlene M. Makley.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007. 374 pp.

PETER K. MORAN

Fulbright Commission in Nepal

This dense, detailed, and yet wide-ranging study is based on fieldwork conducted during four visits, over a 15-year span, to the famous monastery and town of Labrang in today’s Qinghai province of China. It is one of the few book-length ethnographic accounts of Amdo (as much of Qinghai was previously called by Tibetan speakers) Tibetans ever written, and the first in many decades; indeed, it is one of the few recent field-based studies conducted among any Tibetan populations of China. As such, it offers fresh and complex perspectives on contemporary life in Labrang for its Tibetan inhabitants—who make up only a part of the population there. But this study also makes important reading for comparison with other parts of Tibetan China, including large swaths of Sichuan and the Tibetan Autonomous Region itself. Charlene Makley’s nuanced work is useful in understanding the “Tibetan Buddhist revival” as it occurs not only in Amdo but also throughout the plateau. It is also a highly theorized look at gender in a particular Tibetan locality, accomplished through a primary concern with “participation frameworks,” following Goffman, as well as recent linguistic theory. Finally, this is a detailed exposition of the articulation between changing State policies and local concerns in the Labrang area over the last few decades.

It is obvious to remark on the politics of opposition, and national–religious identity (re)construction, happening throughout Tibetan areas under Chinese governance. What makes this work powerful is its attention to the way that history is quite literally struggled with by local agents. For one example: Makley examines the Labrang Tibetan narratives she hears about Apa Gongjia, “Father State”—none other than the Chinese state anthropomorphized—in dialogue with the work of many other recent anthropologists of China who have drawn our attention to state–local articulations. Yet she also particularizes the genius of this local representation. “Father State” is a crucial figure in opposition to pre-Maoist Labrang’s gendered participant networks, which were also, although very differently, patrilineal. Of course the author elucidates the centrality of the monastery in the genesis and maintenance of Labrang’s sociopolitical (not to mention religious) “mandala.” Yet she also describes the lay worlds organized by patrilineages and powerful men that existed in a subordinate complementarity with the monastic presence, a “mandala” now in tension with translocal, often “Chinese,” modernities.

Makley makes plain the relative visibility, economic independence, and decision-making power of Labrang's Tibetan women vis-à-vis Han or Hui women before (and sometimes well after) the Maoist years. But she also reminds readers that "relative" power is still relative and traces the ways in which Tibetan women's agency and access to currents of power was restricted in most areas by patriarchal structures and Buddhist monastic ideals. Her work's central thesis is that the changes at the heart of traditional Tibetan structures and epistemologies since the advent of the Chinese state have been changes in gender regimes. Much of this has been because of PRC policy—as during the Great Leap and Cultural Revolution years—that targeted citizen women as agents of "progress" and (re)production. Yet change has also come in the wake of important economic campaigns, the latest of which have opened Labrang to translocal forces including nomad settlers, Chinese businessmen, and of course foreign and Han tourists, too. Tibetan women's gendered performances—their recognition as "Tibetan women"—proceed from radically different pressures and pulls: to the home and to tradition (Buddhist, Amdo Tibetan, local practices) and to the wider world (Chinese, contemporary, capitalist).

Yet this is a study of gender and transformations—not a study of Tibetan women. Makley devotes chapters to lay masculinities and to a "third" gender, a "disciplined masculinity" that is (male) monastic. This is important work that allows the author to undertake discussion of the wider dialogical processes and participant frameworks of gender in Labrang. For many readers in Tibetan studies, this book will unsettle usual understandings of Tibetan Buddhist social regimes. Makley consistently remarks, for example, on the "masculine prowess" at the heart of Tibetan rituals and soteriology, hence one reading of the "violence of liberation" in the book's subtitle. This reader does not always agree with this interpretation: were the elite Tibetan boys and men recognized as the rebirths of previous Buddhist masters (*tulku*) "emasculated" by Maoist interventions (and later Dengist reforms) in Labrang in the eyes of local Tibetans? Her interpretations of tantric ritual seem idiosyncratic at times, albeit often thought provoking, and her brief discussion of nuns seems too particular to Labrang as a huge Gelug stronghold to hold up as a model for other Tibetan areas in the PRC. This also may be true of Makley's interpretations of the importance and completely off-limits (to women) nature of the protectors' chapel of Labrang. For a minor example, in monastic sites that I have visited in central Tibet—including the Three Seats of the Lhasa area—entry to protector chapels was variously restricted: sometimes because of gender, sometimes because of perceptions that a person was not a Buddhist (i.e., a tourist), or because one was not seen as an "initiate" in that monastery's protector cult.

Because of the nature of its analysis, this is an important, provocative book for specialists in Tibetan–Chinese anthropology. It invites us to examine the particularities of social worlds and their histories in Tibetan regions (and far beyond), and underscores the complexity of the task. More broadly, the author is persuasive in reminding us throughout this work of the centrality of gender in the creation and maintenance of all social worlds, and the processes through which gender assumptions and practices are embodied.

The Latino Threat: Constructing Immigrants, Citizens, and the Nation. *Leo R. Chavez.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008. ix + 256 pp., tables, figures, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index.

JONATHAN XAVIER INDA

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

On February 22, 2003, Jesica Santillan, a 17-year-old undocumented immigrant from Mexico, died following a botched heart and lung transplant. Surgeons apparently noticed too late that the donated organs were not compatible with the young woman's blood type. While Jesica's death was unquestionably tragic, just as disturbing was the mass-mediated public reaction to her misfortune. There were certainly commentators who decried the incompetence of the doctors. But there were also many voices that questioned the legitimacy of transplanting American organs into an illegal alien body. How could an undocumented immigrant, critics asked indignantly, receive an organ transplant in the first place? Shouldn't donated American organs be reserved for citizen bodies? Ultimately, Jesica came to be represented as a prototypical illegal alien who only comes to the United States to take things, in this case organs, which belong to proper American citizens.

Jesica's story and similar mass-mediated spectacles of animosity targeting Latinos, mainly Mexican immigrants and their offspring, are at the heart of Leo Chavez's stimulating new book *The Latino Threat*. Chavez's basic and compelling argument is that what he terms the "Latino Threat Narrative" underpins contemporary anti-Latino politics in the United States. Developed over the last four decades and disseminated through the mass media, this narrative essentially posits that Latinos are quite unlike previous immigrant groups, who managed to become part of the national body. As Chavez puts it: "The Latino Threat Narrative characterizes Latinos as unable or unwilling to integrate into the social and cultural life of the United States. Allegedly, they

do not learn English, and they seal themselves off from the larger society, reproducing cultural beliefs and behaviors antithetical to a modern life, such as pathologically high fertility levels that reduce the demographic presence of white Americans” (p. 177). Furthermore, the narrative presumes Latinos to be criminals (“illegals”) who are undermining social institutions such as education, health care, and social services. In the end, this group is constructed as “part of an invading force from south of the border that is bent on reconquering land that was formerly theirs (the U.S. Southwest) and destroying the American way of life” (p. 2).

Significantly, Chavez connects the Latino threat narrative to the crisis in the meaning of citizenship in the United States. He argues that global processes such as immigration have disrupted the presumed isomorphism between citizenship and rights. For many people, aliens are supposed to be distinguished from citizens by the rights and privileges afforded to the latter. However, immigrants in the United States, both legal and undocumented, have come to be granted a number of citizenship benefits, including the rights to fair labor standards and practices, juridical due process, emergency medical care, and education. This granting of rights to noncitizens has been interpreted (by some) as a dilution and devaluation of citizenship. In this context, the Latino threat narrative functions to render Latinos as unsuitable members of society. That is, to the extent that Latinos are constructed in the mass media and public discourse as societal threats, they are not seen as having proper claims of belonging to the U.S. national community and the right to partake in the benefits associated with this membership. The Santillan case is instructive here. In the eyes of many, Jessica’s illegality made her an illegitimate part of U.S. society and hence an unworthy recipient of donated organs. This connection of the Latino threat narrative with citizenship is also examined in relation to the politics of Latina reproduction, immigrant rights marches, and border vigilantes.

Beyond elucidating the workings of the Latino threat narrative, Chavez also takes on the important task of interrogating the veracity of its claims. Drawing on empirical data from his research in Orange County, California, as well as from the studies of others, he persuasively challenges the main tenets of the narrative. Chavez argues, for example, that Latinas simply do not have pathologically high levels of fertility. In one of his studies, he found that, on average, Latinas only give birth to 2.08 children over the course of their lives. Such a rate contributes minimally to population growth. Furthermore, Chavez shows that as Latinos become generationally more removed from the immigrant experience, they increasingly utilize English in daily life, have non-Latino friends, intermarry with non-Latinos, and grow progressively more integrated in terms of levels of education, income, and political engagement. Importantly, this should not be taken to suggest that Latinos are free from

obstacles to social and economic mobility. In fact, Chavez argues that Latinos suffer from unequal access to education and the job market. But despite these barriers, Latinos have managed to become meaningfully integrated into U.S. society. Chavez’s point, then, is that Latinos are not a “socially secluded” mass just “waiting for the day when they can muster a Quebec-like takeover of the U.S. Southwest” (p. 68). It should also be noted that while Latinos may be integrating into the United States, this does not mean that they are undergoing a linear, one-way process of assimilation into American culture. Rather, Chavez argues that, like immigrant groups before them, Latinos are making important contributions to the ever-changing nature U.S. culture and to what it means to be American.

Overall, Leo Chavez has produced a superb, well-argued, and thought-provoking book. Tackling subjects such as the Minutemen in Arizona, immigrant marches, Latino reproduction, and organ transplants, the book not only sheds a critical light on how, through the mass media, Latinos have been constructed as illegitimate members of society, but it also provides powerful evidence to undermine the taken-for-granted truths marshaled to marginalize this population. *The Latino Threat* should be required reading for anyone wishing to gain a critical perspective on immigration, citizenship, and the politics of antipathy.

Excursions. *Michael Jackson.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008. xxvii + 295 pp.

MICHAEL CARRITHERS

Durham University

Excursions is a collection of essays, each of which is a skein of thought, complete in itself, comprising particular ideas, images, people, and places that are tied together around some difficult feature of human existence. I did not find it easy to read much more than one essay at a time, for the same reason that it is hard to view many paintings, or read much philosophy, at once: for all the fluency of Jackson’s writing, each piece needs, and deserves, concentration. In their contemplative tone, these *Excursions* could as well have been titled *Meditations*, or *Essays*, to echo the essays of Michel de Montaigne, with their expansive view across human life in its variety and vicissitudes. The “we” that emerges in the writing is sometimes the “we” of the anthropologists’ guild, or of the intellectuals’, but often it is the “we” of the common universal human plight. Jackson’s tendency in each essay is to move to a summary understanding *sub specie aeternitatis*, but the distance implied in this phrase is not cold but always mixed with human sympathy.

Duke University Press has printed, inconspicuously on the back cover, the locations where the book might belong in their catalogue or in a bookstore: anthropology/philosophy/travel writing. And to this they might have added “poetry,” not because of the genre of writing but, rather, because of the genre of thought, as Jackson points out in his preface: “it is a way of keeping alive a sense of what it means to live in the world one struggles to understand,” and it is “neither focused on one’s own subjectivity nor on the objectivity of the world, but on what emerges in the space between” (p. xii). There is an egalitarian spirit running through the essays, mixing the thought of Adorno, Arendt, and Benjamin with that of Kuranko storytellers or Maori mythology, and these with Jackson’s first person narrative, such that each is brought to illuminate the other. Travel writing, yes, but travel writing reaching for universality. Anthropology, yes, but anthropology reaching for universality. To adapt a phrase from Agee and Evans’s *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*: the author is trying to deal with human existence not as an anthropologist, a sociologist, an entertainer, a humanitarian, a priest, or an artist, but seriously.

Still, though much of the work could be read as (perennial) philosophy or graceful self-reflection, the emphasis, for anthropologists anyway, must be laid on Jackson’s work on the very nature of anthropology as a way of understanding. A new fieldworker, or an old hand, could find much here to turn around in her mind and help her to see her work in other perspectives. Jackson’s thought concentrates on fertile uncertainties, aporias, rather than the sort of certainties that ordinarily put food on anthropologists’ tables. The axis around which he spins these aporias here is Arendt’s notion of “natality,” which she implicitly aimed against the dark side of Heidegger’s post-Catholic philosophy: with each birth, and each act, something new comes alive in the intersubjective world, calling for effects, reactions, and responses, which can never be predicted or fully rationalized. This is an idea whose implications Jackson has explored elsewhere, notably in his 2005 book, *Existential Anthropology*. One corollary he sets out in *Excursions* is this: “because our actions follow from a *need* to act before they follow from any conception of *how* to act, all action is to some extent magical, which is to say that no action can be entirely explained by reference to the models adduced in justification of it” (p. 152). Or to take this slippage between action and justification from a slightly different angle: “we imagine, as we live, beyond our means” (p. 134).

On the basis of such aphorisms one can be tempted to assign Jackson to some corner of the discipline, such as humanist, or indeed existentialist, anthropology—and, indeed, Jackson himself can sometimes seem to do so himself. But that, I think, would be wrong. There is a larger question being addressed in such remarks: how can we (anthropologists) do justice both to the endurance of key themes

in one society or another and, yet, to the constant mutability of those themes and of the society itself on the other hand? Some such question has lain at the heart of many social scientists’ work, such as that of Foucault, or our own Marshall Sahlins, and indeed of forebears such as Marx and Weber. For Jackson this comprehensive puzzle can best be answered in the fine grain of social life, and in a depiction as much of individuals’ narratives as of the circumstances in which they find themselves, under the banner of “no generalities but in particularities.” This is radical empiricism, as William James called it, a creed that agrees particularly well not only with Jackson’s own predilections but also with the basic cognitive style of sociocultural anthropology. Thus, in one essay Jackson links the self-redemptive remarks of a friend in Sierra Leone to a more general, and unexpected, resilience of Sierra Leoneans to the disasters of civil war; he links this resilience further to natality, the birth of something new in the intersubjective world; and he finally sets such natality against Bourdieu’s concept of “habitus,” “with its emphasis on engrained habits of thought and action that effectively bind us to the past” (p. 100). Now I personally think that Jackson, but also Bourdieu himself and many of his commentators, have missed out that element of improvisation that originally made “habitus” such an important idea. But however that may be, I still would stress that Jackson’s arguments, although borne lightly by a filigree of close observation of singular experiences, are as weighty as those of many illustrious forebears.

The Archaeology of Race and Racialization in Historic America. Charles E. Orser Jr. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007. 213 pp.

ELIZABETH M. SCOTT

Illinois State University

It is rare that an archaeologist publishes a book that so deepens our anthropological knowledge about American society that the book should be required reading for sociocultural anthropologists as well as archaeologists. Charles E. Orser Jr. is such an archaeologist, and this is such a book. Drawing on all of the sources available to historical archaeology (written records, oral histories, pictorial records, and archaeological remains), Orser shows us America’s past and America’s present, and, along the way, reveals the roots of American inequalities.

The book first provides an overview of historical archaeological scholarship on racialization (the process by which a society constructs a racial hierarchy) in America and also a discussion of why archaeologists should care

about race and racialization; most of this previous scholarship has concerned African Americans. Orser then describes his theoretical approach to the topic and provides two detailed case studies to illustrate that approach: the Irish in New York and the Chinese in California. He sets the task of historical archaeologists interested in racialization to be one of “seeing race in things” (p. 66): “to discover ways to observe racialized differences in the material culture generated during capitalism” (p. 69). However, the book should be read by anyone interested in the anthropology of North America, race and racialization, U.S. immigration history, and consumerism–consumption. Nonarchaeologists will be pleased to see how deftly Orser weaves his threads of evidence; material culture informs historical data and both inform theoretical reflection. Readers come away with a much greater awareness of the nuanced ways in which racial hierarchies have been formed and perpetuated in American society since its colonial beginnings.

Chapter 3, “Race, Class, and the Archaeology of the Modern World,” puts forth Orser’s theoretical approach, and it is an admirable example of interdisciplinary scholarship. Orser draws on social theorists in anthropology, sociology, geography, history, and critical race theory to build a theoretical framework that will later “frame” his case study examples. He first tackles the question of scale, viewing racism as a structural feature of our social system rather than a cognitive construct that is part of an individual’s belief system. He next addresses the question of class and especially the connection between race, class, and consumerism–consumption. Orser then discusses the six key concepts he uses to examine the historical manifestations of the process of racialization: “epochal structures” (drawing on Donald Donham, Fernand Braudel, Carlo Ginzburg, and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva); “network relations” (drawing on Alexander Lesser, Stanley Wasserman, and Katherine Faust); the “socio-spatial dialectic” (drawing on Henri Lefebvre, Nigel Thrift, and Edward Soja); and “habitus,” “capital,” and “field” (drawing on Pierre Bourdieu and Leslie McCall). Finally, he draws on the works of geographer Bobby Wilson and archaeologist Paul Mullins to address the relationship between racial categorization, the epochal structures of racial identification, and material consumption. These are all incredibly complex theoretical topics, but Orser renders them in lucid, accessible prose. This chapter alone would work very well as an assigned reading in an upper-division undergraduate or graduate class in anthropological theory.

The next two chapters are devoted to examples of racialization in 19th- and early-20th-century America. The first concerns the Irish who lived at the Pearl Street tenement in the historic Five Points area of Manhattan between 1850 and 1870. The second concerns the Chinese who lived and worked at the Channel Street laundry in Stockton, California, between 1894 and 1937. Each chapter

is structured in a similar fashion, following the theoretical framework put forth in chapter 3. Orser begins each chapter by providing a background for the particular site’s location. This is followed by a discussion of the habitus “at home” for each immigrant group in Ireland or China. Next comes a discussion of the epochal structures of racialization the immigrants faced in America, followed by a discussion of the learned habitus of race in Irish America or Chinese America. He closes each chapter by providing a detailed discussion of the spatial and material evidence from archaeological excavations at the sites in New York or California. Thus, these two case studies follow the multiscale approach for which Orser is well known; he begins with the particular immigrant community in America, situates those individuals in the broader culture from whence they came, situates them in the broader American culture to which they emigrated, and, in the end, comes back to the particular immigrant community to show how each group was racialized in the American hierarchy.

The short closing chapter ties together nicely the main points of the book and illustrates their relevance for present-day American society. Revealing how our society came to be the way that it is today is one of the most important contributions that historical archaeology can make to anthropology and to the public. That responsibility is admirably met in this book by one of the foremost scholars in the field. This book is highly recommended.

Vicarious Language: Gender and Linguistic Modernity in Japan. *Miyako Inoue.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006. 340 pp.

AMY BOROVVOY
Princeton University

No category in Japan appears to be as socially entrenched as gender. The “culture of separate spheres,” created by postwar corporate welfare, separated men’s and women’s worlds into mutually compatible but mutually exclusive spheres of men’s salaried labor and women’s reproduction of labor at home (or women’s separate trajectories at work) (White 1992). Women’s language, particularly its softness, politeness, and deference, came to be seen as an expressive aspect of their world. What visitor to Japan has not heard this distinctive form of speech in one form or another, from the secretary who answers the phone, to the young mother in the television advertisement, to the bubbly, high-pitched schoolgirls giggling on the train?

Miyako Inoue’s *Vicarious Language* is a brilliant and extensively researched, step-by-step historical deconstruction of the notion of women’s speech as emergent from

their social roles or as expressive of inner subjectivity. The book shows how language itself actively constructs the gendered reality that it claims to be representing. The story she tells is rife with irony. According to Inoue, proper “women’s language” originated in what was regarded as the “vulgar,” “shallow,” and “grating” (*mimizawarina*) speech overheard among Japanese schoolgirls of the late 19th century, a time of great cultural mixing owing to new initiatives of compulsory education and upward mobility. The schoolgirls’ own utterance endings (*teyo*, *dawa*, *koto-yo*, *wa*, *chatta*, and *noyo*) themselves originated in the seedy, lower-class neighborhoods of the pleasure quarters. When, in the 1980s, the Japanese government and language specialists mourned the deterioration of a pristine, historically continuous women’s language, they were, according to Inoue, mourning a past that had never existed.

What unfolds in *Vicarious Language* is a remarkable and well-told story that weaves together nation, gender, social class, and modernity as mutually constituted. Inoue tells how the re-signification of schoolgirl speech as the spoken language of middle-class women “made semiotically possible” a sense of gendered mass modernity in the early 20th century (p. 111). “Domestic novels” (*kateishōsetsu*) and popular young women’s magazines of this era gave voice to a new, modern Japanese woman through reader-contributed stories, advertisements featuring direct quotations, and readers’ letters, creating an imagined community of speakers that not only exceeded the presence of “real” women’s language but, in fact, invented an inner life for the subject that was being spoken for—hence, “vicarious” language (p. 122). Inoue describes her own impression, growing up in Japan, of women’s language as “TV language,” the language used to translate movie stars and, thus, the language she used when playing with her white, “Western” dolls (pp. 7–8): “Women’s language is language not to produce but only to consume, and not so much to hear as to *overhear*. It is inherently disembodied and vicarious as a tele-aural phenomenon, in which the copy precedes the original” (p. 9).

The book is deeply motivated by the poststructural and deconstructive projects of Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser, Judith Butler, and, perhaps most of all, Jacques Derrida. To be able to expose the constructed nature of something so seemingly “present” as gendered subjectivities and gendered voices is the book’s great innovation. The exclusive focus on women’s language as an invention may inhibit a more shaded recounting of historical shifts and continuities, a limitation that is felt in the last, ethnographic portion of the book, which treats contemporary women’s language as lived by women today.

By starting her story with the phenomenon of male intellectuals “overhearing” schoolgirls’ speech during the last decades of the 19th century, Inoue demonstrates the critical importance of language to understanding modern gen-

der identity: the modern Japanese woman “came into being as a culturally meaningful category in and through her imputed acoustic presence” (p. 39). Schoolgirl speech was particularly troubling in the context of Japan’s eager project of modernization in the late Meiji Era (1868–1912). Schoolgirls used Chinese and English words inflected with non-referential endings (*teyo-dawa* language), which evoked the demographic qualities of the margins and “lower classes.” In doing so they put forward an alternative modern voice that threatened the masculine modern project of situating Japan as an equal among Western European, white, First World counterparts. The phenomenon disappeared as a threat in the wake of Japan’s increasing confidence as a colonial power during the Fifteen Years War, and, so too, did critical commentaries on schoolgirl language.

The language resurfaced, though, in a different guise, in the context of mass capitalism and the growing circulation of print media such as magazines and newspapers in the early 20th century. The calls to modernize the Japanese language (the *genbun’itchi* movement’s call to “write-as-you-speak”) created new colloquial forms of written Japanese that drew on the schoolgirl utterance endings to invoke qualities of the human voice or the social attributes of participants. The new written style attempted to delete the context of the author-reader relationship (e.g., by replacing formal verb endings with the generic, plain utterance ending, *da*), allowing for language to be imagined as a direct reflection of the real world, an expression of authenticity. The schoolgirl speech was used to capture this sense of realism in various media, including translated European novels, *kateishōsetsu* (domestic novels) that documented the emergence of a new urban bourgeoisie, and ultimately in the serialized novels, advertisements, and diaries that appeared in young women’s magazines, which used schoolgirl speech to channel the voice of girls’ and women’s characters through first-person narratives, giving voice to their “inner thoughts.” Inoue does a compelling job of analyzing the use of language in a number of entertaining early 20th-century print ads for women’s products, revealing the ways in which commodity capitalism, together with the new realism in written language, brought to life the new woman through first-person narratives and “slice of life” conversations that hailed the readers as modern, gendered consumers (p. 145). In short, “women’s language” had little to do with most women’s experience when it was invented in late Meiji, particularly for women outside urban areas (p. 103); in Inoue’s words, there was “no original or authentic speaking body that uttered women’s language. It is *no one’s language*” (p. 105).

When the book arrives at its final, ethnographic section analyzing contemporary women’s language at a Japanese foreign-affiliated firm in Tokyo between 1991 and 1993, one feels that perhaps a stronger bridge between historical

production and contemporary experience could have been created to allow us to understand these women's predicament. Nonetheless, Inoue's analysis here, too, is powerful and persuasive. We meet Yoshida Kiwako, a savvy, internal manager who negotiates the issue of gender discrimination by using the polite—but not honorific—forms of all verbs (*desu, masu*). “Staying in the middle,” as Yoshida refers to her strategy, allows her to remain within the confines of proper women's speech but also to avoid locating herself in a hierarchy that would diminish her status (by subordinating herself to male inferiors) or awkwardly imposing her seniority over male (or female) colleagues. Even today, as many women seek broader social integration, language continues to be an emblem of inequality and barrier to the achievement of professionalism. How shall we integrate Inoue's persuasive story of invention with the lived experiences of these women? What aspects of women's language (which has been present in some form in Japan for many centuries) have historical underpinnings, and which are more recent inventions or appropriations? Inoue's story focuses intensely on the moment of “invention” in late Meiji and the appropriation of school-girl language, and, perhaps because of its predominant concern with utterance endings, readers have less sense of the historical shifts and continuities that shaped those elements that one associates with women's language today: honorifics, pitch, self-address forms, intonation, and pronoun choice—all elements that make women's language perceived as more refined, euphemistic, and indirect than men's.

With Inoue's *Vicarious Language*, we have come a long way from the fetishization of women's language as a window into Japanese women's differentness and subordination—the long held assumption that Janet S. Shibamoto once described as “female speaker equals powerless social role equals feminine speech forms” (Shibamoto 1985:4). *Vicarious Language* is a major accomplishment that will no doubt change the landscape of conversations about both gender and language in Japan. It is accessible and could be used not only in graduate courses but also in undergraduate courses on gender and nation formation in modern Japan, as well as courses on language in society, mass culture, and gender and capitalism.

References cited

- Shibamoto, Janet S.
1985 *Japanese Women's Language*. New York: Academic Press.
- White, Merry
1992 Home Truths: Women and Social Change in Japan. *Daedalus* (fall): 61–82.

Subfloor Pits and the Archaeology of Slavery in Colonial Virginia. *Patricia M. Samford*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2007. 232 pp.

JACK GARY

Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest

Archaeological features referred to as subfloor pits have become one of the most recognized indicators of slave housing in mid-Atlantic North America. These often square or rectangular holes dug into the dirt floors or the soil underlying the wooden floors of cabins are frequently the only physical remains of the impermanent structures once inhabited by enslaved laborers. The fill soils of these features most often contain a wealth of artifacts, and faunal and botanical remains that give archaeologists considerable insight into many undocumented aspects of slaves' lives. While it has almost become de facto that subfloor pits are associated with slave dwellings, archaeologists continue to speculate about the actual uses and origins of these features. Suggestions for their functions have included borrow pits for clay chinking, food storage, holes to hide stolen and valuable objects, personal storage spaces, and West African spiritual shrines.

Patricia Samford systematically studies 103 subfloor pits from slave quarters excavated at three 18th-century Virginia Tidewater plantations to address these possible uses. Through a combination of archaeological, ethnographic, and historical analyses, Samford suggests that subfloor pits found in the Virginia Chesapeake functioned in ways that drew on retained and creolized West African traditions, as well as the practical need for storage, as slaves attempted to exert some control over their lives within socially marginalized contexts. Samford proposes that subfloor pits in Virginia served three functions, including storage of root crops, use as personal storage space, and use as shrines. To come to these conclusions, Samford undertook careful analysis of the artifacts and morphology of the pits in her study group, developing patterns that were compared to West African and Igbo ethnohistorical data.

Samford rightfully stresses the need for archaeologists studying slavery to reference the unique African cultures from which individuals were uprooted and brought to North America. In the case of Virginia, the largest importations of slaves in the 18th century consisted of individuals from a specific region of West Africa referred to as Igboland. Understanding the lives of Virginia's enslaved laborers requires understanding aspects of Igbo culture that survived the Middle Passage, such as notions of spirituality, identity, and gender roles. However, these cultural traditions were not directly replicated on North American plantations, and the physical manifestations of traditional African cultural practices were modified through interactions with “new

environments, different social groups, and altered power structures” (p. 16), as well as new material culture in the form of European produced objects. Samford argues that recognizing these manifestations, specifically through an examination of subfloor pits, requires a framework that examines West African and Igbo cultural practices in the context of colonialism, European material culture, and the power struggles inherent in plantation settings.

Samford uses this framework to greatest effect when identifying pits that may have been used as shrines with West African antecedents. Samford identifies four likely shrines and three possible shrines from her study group. Through quantitative analysis of artifact size and completeness, she isolated pits containing deposits believed to be intact from the time of their original deposition. Samford then examined the physical characteristics and placement of the artifacts within the subfloor pits to compare with ethnohistorical and ethnographic data on Igbo shrines and spiritual practices. One pit contained an assemblage of fossilized scallop shells, cow bones, and white kaolin tobacco pipes placed on a raised platform in the base of the pit. Samford connects these objects to Igbo spiritual symbolism and traditions, such as the association of water with the dead, burying spiritual leaders with tobacco pipes, and considering bulls to be sacred animals. Pollen analysis from this feature also revealed a concentration of grape pollen within the fill, possibly suggesting wine poured as a libation, a practice documented in the colonial southeast as part of African American conjuration practices. Samford also connects the characteristics of this assemblage specifically to Idemili, an Igbo deity associated with water and the color white. Other possible shrines contained everyday European-produced objects that were placed within pits in anomalous ways, such as a copper frying pan filled with an intact wine bottle, a cowry shell, animal bones, and tobacco pipes—a configuration that Samford connects to Igbo ancestral shrines.

While Samford makes the argument that other types of subfloor pits were used for storage, it is through the discussion of shrines that Samford best addresses the ways African and African American individuals coped with enslavement through identity formation, resistance, the reliance on families, and the supplication of ancestors and deities. By continuing Igbo spiritual traditions, albeit altered to use predominantly non-African materials and spaces, Samford suggests that individuals tapped into “a cultural precedent that allowed enslaved Igbos and their descendents in Virginia the knowledge that they were not completely powerless in the face of the stronger forces confronting them” (p. 187).

Identity, ethnicity, and individual agency have been aspects of particular focus for historical archeologists in the last decade, and Samford does an excellent job of addressing these topics within the context of colonial Virginia. However, identifying the physical manifestations of these

issues remains one of the biggest challenges for archaeologists. This requires extremely careful and intensive excavation techniques to identify deposits that can be connected to individual or personal practices. Although Samford acknowledges this fact and expends considerable effort on the careful study of artifact sizes and excavation notes, she also contradicts herself by using two sites that were excavated without screening for artifacts, one site with missing excavation notes and another site with excavation notes that lacked enough detail to be helpful. This does not negate Samford’s approach, however, and her framework of contextual analysis that examines features and artifacts with reference to traditional Igbo practices should be applied to other sites with more rigorously excavated subfloor pits.

Samford’s book deserves considerable praise for being the first to approach subfloor pits in a systematic way that draws heavily on ethnographic data. This contextual approach created much richer interpretations than has been presented in the past and should spur other historical archaeologists to take similar approaches to their data while implementing rigorous excavation and sampling practices for sites associated with enslaved individuals. As Samford suggests, the next step for the study of these important features should be a broader geographical approach that examines subfloor pits found outside of the Virginia Tidewater region.

We Are Now a Nation: Croats between “Home” and “Homeland.” *Daphne N. Winland.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007. 224 pp.

VICTORIA BERNAL

University of California, Irvine

The book is a study of diaspora focused on the Croatian diaspora in Canada. It explores the ways that what it means to be Croatian is defined locally among Croatians in Toronto, transnationally through ties that connect the diaspora to Croatians in Croatia, and nationally by Croatians who remained in Croatia and who define returnees from the diaspora as outsiders who can never fully belong. The exploration of diaspora and national belonging presented here charts the complexities and variation arising from differences in the perspectives of different generations of Croats in diaspora, and from the shifting relations between the diaspora and the nation in different historical moments. This temporally shifting and multifaceted perspective on diaspora, belonging, and national identities reveals the power and durability of diaspora identity and national loyalty to define people’s lives and shape the course

of their actions even as what it means to be Croatian is shown to be contested and elusive. Daphne Winland's subtitle "Croats between 'Home' and 'Homeland'" is apt. *Home* and *homeland*, as indicated by the quotation marks, refer not so much to actual places as to relationships to places. What Winland is attempting to study in many ways is the "between"; the unresolved position of the diaspora. She writes that "'home' and 'homeland' are conceptual or discursive spaces of identification" (p. 9). Working largely through archival research and interviews with Croats in Toronto and in Croatia, Winland explores the relationship of a diaspora to the nation and those who remained behind.

In the process, Winland offers valuable insights about the ways Croats in diaspora understand themselves that are clearly relevant to the analysis of identity and national loyalty more generally. Winland makes clear that Croatian diaspora identity does not consist of allegiance to a fixed identity but, rather, is best understood as a quest to define and claim an identity. This sheds light on how intra-group tension and conflict can so easily coexist with powerful group loyalties and communal animosity toward rival ethnic-national groups. Throughout the book, one finds interesting perspectives expressed in memorable phrases. For example, Winland states that the war resonated "deeply for many Croats, regardless of their proximity to Croatia geographically, temporally, or experientially" (p. 22). And "Diaspora is not simply a signifier of transnationality and movement, but of settlement, dwelling, and the struggles to define the local" (p. 33). She writes that the political is reflected in the everyday in the "personal and the private, the nostalgic and emotional, the commemorative and consumerist" (p. 44). These are poetic, vivid, and illuminating statements. One wishes, though, that they were more fully fleshed out with ethnographic reality. Winland's insights into the condition of diaspora are convincing, but because they are not sufficiently grounded in observations of social behavior, they remain for the most part abstract generalizations. Some of the limitations of the ethnographic material presented here stem from the wide scope the author uses to explore diaspora across space and time and her careful attention to variation and diversity. At times, however, the presentation of the historical, regional, linguistic, generational, and other divisions among Croats becomes too encyclopedic.

The book is held together by coherent themes that relate to the paradoxes of global connections and parochial loyalties. One wishes, however, that the central arguments of the book unfolded progressively through the book from beginning to end, deepening with each chapter. Although the first few chapters might be expected to lay out a vast terrain and draw our attention to key features of its contours, in subsequent chapters one wants the analysis to move in closer to bring into focus people's everyday lives and the ways that cultural understandings are produced and experienced. But the scope of the author's focus and the level

of analysis remain consistently broad from one chapter to the next. This may be in part because most of the book was published previously as articles, so that each chapter can stand more or less on its own. The text becomes repetitive at times because points of information and analysis, rather than being established as a basis on which to present further insights in later chapters, are repeated.

The book points up the fact that researching transnationalism and diaspora present methodological problems for ethnography because they are not located in a clearly demarcated space or even easily reconciled with multisited ethnographic methods. Certain spaces, however, do seem to be particularly important to the Croatian diaspora, such as churches, and if the author had grounded the ethnography more in some such communal space it would have been enriched. This would have provided a crucial middle ground between the great swaths of history and territory Winland covers and the quotes from individual interviews she uses to illustrate some of the issues she addresses. If we understand that identity is produced and performed socially, and is not a feature of individuals, but relational (a perspective her study supports), then something is lost in the method used here.

Another issue raised by this research is the problem of politics. Winland describes a highly charged political field of Croat relations, and she states that she is attempting to produce a "balanced picture." That statement may reflect the kinds of pressures scholars face in highly politicized environments where the people we study are keenly aware of the politics of knowledge production. On such intellectual terrain it can be difficult to make a strong argument without alienating or offending some people. In Winland's case she is perhaps too cautious, carefully qualifying her assertions and including the exceptions to whatever generalization she might make. In chapter 4 she states, "A central finding of this book is that tension and ambivalence continue to characterize relations not only among and between Toronto Croats but also between Toronto and homeland Croats" (p. 108). This ambivalence and complexity comes across in the book, but is ambivalence really a finding? Isn't it an existential given?

I was drawn to the book as someone engaged in research on transnationalism, nationalism, and diaspora, but with little knowledge of Croatia. A reader with concerns related to the region would certainly find other things here to like and to critique. From my reading, I think Winland succeeds in complicating our understanding of diaspora and national belonging through her focus on ambivalence and tension. Diasporas arise from conditions of conflict, and even when a particular conflict ends, the condition of diaspora remains fraught and unresolved, positioned as Winland writes "Between 'Home' and 'Homeland.'" This study is thought provoking and clearly written and could be used in interdisciplinary courses on transnationalism, migration, ethnicity, and diaspora.

Transborder Lives: Indigenous Oaxacans in Mexico, California, and Oregon. Lynn Stephen. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007. 375 pp.

PAUL ALLATSON

University of Technology Sydney

The latest study by Lynn Stephen joins her previous work, *Women and Social Movements in Latin America: Power from Below* (1997), *Zapata Lives! Histories and Cultural Politics in Southern Mexico* (2002), and the revised edition of *Zapotec Women: Gender, Class, and Ethnicity in Globalized Oaxaca* (2005), as well as a number of edited books that have deepened our understanding of indigenous Mexican lived experiences, material aspirations, and collective imaginations, in what many observers call a transnational epoch. In fact, there is a direct lineage between one of these studies and *Transborder Lives*. This publication extends from the ethnographic insights about Oaxacan indigenous women's involvement in weaving cooperatives presented in the earlier *Zapotec Women*. Stephens reframes those insights here in the light of new ethnographic findings about two indigenous communities, Mixtecs from the town of San Agustín Atenango and Zapotecs from Teotitlán del Valle, and their differential migratory experiences in Mexico and in the U.S. states of Oregon and California.

Transborder Lives confirms Stephen's reputation as a leading contributor to North American transnational and migration studies. Stephen's nuanced, empathetic—and, I would add, physically and temporally demanding—ethnographic work undergirds the study's elegantly narrated exploration of how indigenous Oaxacans articulate and understand their own individual and collective experiences of daily routines characterized by “the ability to construct space, time, and social relations in more than one place simultaneously” (p. 5). Stephen argues that indigenous Mexican migrants, and the communities they represent, do not emerge into meaningful view simply by crossing national borders. Nor do these migrants regard such borders as the definitional key to their sense of individual and collective place. Rather, they are involved in crossing, and adapting to, a veritable matrix of regional, ethnic, racial, class, colonial, cultural, and linguistic limits, and, thus, a range of hierarchized power systems, in and between two states. Stephen proposes that the term *transborder*, and not *transnational*, best designates these realities.

Transborder is an important contribution to current ethnographic critical vocabulary. As Stephen's Mixtec and Zapotec respondents iterate throughout her study, their lived experiences and aspirations are reconfigured constantly by routines of travel, shifting residency and evolving communal connections involving numerous states and regions in Mexico and the United States. The innovative use of “transborder” to describe those complexities liber-

ates Stephen from regarding the U.S.–Mexico border as the most meaningful line of demarcation and differentiation with which indigenous immigrants must contend. Indigenous migrants inevitably move through distinct, and often contradictory, Mexican, Mexican diasporic, and U.S. racialized immigration regimes. In turn, mobile and multisituated Oaxacans are confronted by the discursive influence of those regimes on policies directed at indigenous communities in Mexico and the United States. Hierarchies of racialized reception, in home and host countries, define the transborder labor those communities represent, the socioeconomic influence and visibility they have, and the citizenship options available to them. U.S. and Mexican border policing generates further pressures of negotiation for indigenous communities, as do the gendered labor demands of the low-wage and often seasonal U.S. domestic, service, landscaping, and agricultural sectors in which many Oaxacans are employed.

Yet those largely unfavorable and exploitative transborder forces do not in themselves overdetermine the experiences of Stephen's respondents; creative and pragmatic modes of communal affiliation and adaptation are also evident in the transborder lives that she discusses. Digital technologies enable communal connections and networked communications between dispersed individuals, families, and kinship groups. Oaxacans found hometown associations and other organizations—the four Stephen details are a farm working union in Oregon, a women's organization, the Organization of Oaxacan Indigenous Migrant Communities, and the San Agustín Transborder Public Works Committee—to improve work conditions, raise awareness of migrant worker and gender issues, and provide a means for dispersed community members to contribute to public works and have a say in local government in the Mexican and diasporic communities alike. New leadership, activist, and education opportunities for women also open with transborder migration.

Stephen's transborder focus enables her to move beyond orthodox explanations of transnational Mexican community formation, which have tended to regard such formations as conforming to a relatively recent dialectical process of de- and reterritorialization as defined by residency on either side of the U.S.–Mexico divide. A notable feature of Stephen's approach is her plotting of indigenous Mexican transborder community constructions in a longer colonial and postcolonial history of local and regional demographic movements, and treatments of indigenous Mexicans, that can be traced back to the 16th century. Indigenous Oaxacan mobility is not a new phenomenon. Thus, Stephen cautions, ethnographers have an obligation to historicize their fieldwork and narratives to better explain why longstanding processes of community dispersal and spatial connectedness have accelerated and intensified over the last few decades (p. 313).

Perhaps the most productive, and it is to be hoped, influential proposal for ethnographic practice in this study is Stephen's elaboration in her epilogue of what she calls "collaborative activist ethnography." By this she means questioning "the politics of location, which implies not only an interrogation of the location of the anthropologist, but also of collaborating institutions and actors" (p. 322). As Stephen notes, the complex quotidian norm by which many indigenous Mexicans live "in multiple localities and discontinuous social, economic and cultural spaces" (p. 9) presents formidable challenges to the anthropologist. How does one develop an ethnography adequate and flexible enough for conveying the multivalent and multispatial realities of indigenous Mexican communities, given that transborder lives are neither reducible nor explicable in linear relation to a single geographical point of origin, let alone a traditional idea of home? And how might ethnographic practice make a viable contribution to the specific sociopolitical aspirations of the actors who occupy its investigative center? A collaborative activist ethnography responds to these questions in a number of ways. It heeds how conflict, disagreement, divergent interests, and power differentials characterize the production of the ethnographic project, and incorporates those disjunctions into its findings and outputs. It acknowledges that the actors involved in the ethnographic project are deeply interested contributors to the knowledge published about them, which thus behooves the anthropologist to resist merely speaking for, and benefiting from, her respondents' lives and aspirations. And a collaborative activist ethnography presents its findings not simply in accepted academic venues, but in new forms that are "useful to those they [anthropologists] work with" (p. 325), for instance by influencing policy change and public opinion alike.

References cited

- Stephen, Lynn
 1997 *Women and Social Movements in Latin America: Power from Below*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
 2002 *Zapata Lives! Histories and Cultural Politics in Southern Mexico*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
 2005 *Zapotec Women: Gender, Class, and Ethnicity in Globalized Oaxaca*. 2nd edition. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

In Search of Providence: Transnational Mayan Identities.

Patricia Foxen. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2007. 358 pp.

TRACY DUVALL

Georgia Gwinnett College

The title puns on one of Foxen's field sites—Providence, Rhode Island. In the late 1990s, the author studied how

migration between a municipality that she calls "Xinxuc" and Providence related, above all, to Guatemala's history of violent subjugation of Mayan peoples. Foxen ably connects her research to the sizable ethnographic literature on the K'iche' to show how individuals' participation in the war and migration sprang in part from historically developed patterns of expectations and practices. She neatly points out that many K'iche' had long migrated within Guatemala for mostly economic reasons. Such travels had helped them to maintain their *milpas* (cornfields) and, for some, provided the foundation for participation in local festivities and hierarchical organizations. Traveling to the United States has built on this pattern, and migrants in Providence dream of returning to Xinxuc to realize their improved status and to live with a reunited family. But legal obstacles, distance, and diverse forms of entrenchment make return much less likely.

The particular character of the war in the 1980s and 1990s continued to shape this migration after the fighting had mostly ended. For example, all sorts of people have migrated to Providence, including Ladinos (non-Indians). The K'iche' migrants include former rebels and individuals who, often to save their own lives, joined the government efforts to eradicate them. Almost everyone in Xinxuc and Providence had experienced horror, and many had inflicted it. Each had to live with these traumas and, in the face of such ruptured relations and expectations, to interact with and even depend on those others. In contrast to the documentary efforts of international groups, many K'iche' preferred to avoid both reference to the war and efforts to affix judgment publicly.

The major strength of Foxen's work is its explication of the complex production and experience of this migration. Diversity abounds: because of Xinxuc's particular history, its inhabitants have less sense of local tradition and cohesion compared to nearby municipalities; the larger towns in each municipality experience less devastation than did the outlying hamlets during the war; Ladinos and K'iche' face different pressures and opportunities; and K'iche' families and individuals likewise forge unique lives, for example in their religious practices and attitudes toward pan-Mayan ideologies. Interviews help to demonstrate these complex and conflicting influences.

Unfortunately, the analysis is considerably thicker than the description. Perhaps it is Foxen's holistic approach that keeps her from fully exploiting the unique advantages of having done fieldwork. But the text would be much more involving and the analysis clearer with more examples of mundane interactions, whether in Guatemala or Providence, even if this were to entail forcing aside some discussions of the secondary literature, such as the Menchú–Stoll debate. In short, the work is holistic in a way that makes it difficult to discern the whole.

Nonetheless, this volume should prove useful to researchers with interest in a sophisticated case study of transnational migration. Likewise, it makes a significant contribution to the literature on Guatemala since the 1996 peace agreement. However, its focus is tightly on Guatemala and, especially, Mayan speakers; Latin Americanists or others will, for the most part, have to draw their own comparisons. Also, this work's academic concerns and prose—no figures—will curtail its appeal to general readers. Still, it is worth noting that this account has nicely complicated my understanding, or lack thereof, of the many migrants I encounter daily.

Our Wealth Is Loving Each Other: Self and Society in Fiji.

Karen J. Brison. New York: Lexington, 2007. xix + 151 pp.

ANDREW ARNO

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Karen J. Brison's sharply focused study of Fijian ideologies of culture and the techniques and strategies of identity formation among villagers in Rakiraki, Ra Province, Fiji, is a valuable contribution to Fiji ethnography, the anthropology of women's lives, and anthropological theory. Through engaging ethnographic accounts, she explores the dynamic, contestable boundary between self and community as it is constructed in language, ritual, religion, and in increasingly globalized praxis. Brison's concise and stimulating discussion, in the preface and opening chapter, of the sociocentric self concept in anthropology and the social sciences provides a strong logical structure for the sequence of ethnographic chapters that follows.

As in villages and towns throughout Fiji, the people of Rakiraki frequently perform rituals of the pan-Fijian grand tradition such as the *isevusevu*, in which a presentation of kava celebrates in ceremonial speech and gesture a sense of the power of enduring custom that sustains a sacred land-polity, the Fijian *vanua*. In an analysis of ceremonial rhetoric as a resource for articulating and sanctioning nuanced variations of the relationship between individual and group, Brison shows how Rakiraki villagers use details such as dialect choice and topical references within the ritual to index a gradient of inside-outside relations that evoke modulated definitions of the Fijian self in relation, for example, to foreign tourists; Indo Fijian fellow citizens; and Fijians from other communities, urban and rural, within the complex regional politics of the nation. Brison also looks at church ideologies and personal religious narratives that offer differences among the available options—from the

de facto national denomination, Wesleyan, to a number of more recently arrived Christian evangelical churches—in the way social and psychological conflicts created by tensions between individual and group interests are spoken of and managed.

These analytical arguments are brought to life in a number of life histories in which Fijians—especially women, who have not been heard from adequately in the ethnographic literature—talk about the complex ways they parse and recombine elements of the orthodox grand tradition, *itovo vakavanua*, theological doctrines, and pragmatic realities of modern life to understand and justify their individual and group identities. A methodological aspect of the study is also of interest. Brison and Stephen Leavitt, her husband, who was also engaged in anthropological research in Rakiraki, supervised students in a field research study abroad program, and as a result Brison can draw on data from interviews and participant observation carried out in distinct, somewhat closed subcommunities—men, women, and youths. Brison also studied children in Rakiraki, exploring topics such as gender, language ideology, and language use in the way children constructed and managed their identities in the context of play.

Fijian and foreign anthropologists have consistently represented Fijian culture as a culture with a very strong sense of itself. That is, Fijian culture includes a well-developed ideology of culture, a positively expressed formulation of the power and importance of culture itself, *itovo*, or *ivakarau vakavanua*. As Brison emphasizes in her title, Fijians characteristically express pride in their culture and say that it makes them the equal of, or superior to, peoples who have more money, such as foreign tourists and, according to the prevalent stereotype, the Indo Fijian community. This sentiment is reinforced by the fact that tourists generally feel and express a romantic admiration for the warm communalism and precise formal etiquette presented by village Fiji. Central elements of the ideal Fijian culture emphasize the practical efficacy of humility, submission to social hierarchy, and the subordination of individual interests to the good of the group. As such, this representation of Fijian culture reinforces one of the most powerful but most abused concepts in cross-cultural comparison, that of the sociocentric self. Ironically, the genuine power of the concept in articulating key differences between Euro-American societies and many others lends itself to oversimplification and use as an essentialized variable in mechanical, trait-based versions of intercultural analysis. As Brison's own research and discussion of the literature demonstrate, however, anthropologists have explored the complexities of the sociocentric self with considerable subtlety and theoretical nuance. Brison's book, because it is well written and focused on human stories that will appeal to students, general readers, and researchers from other methodological traditions, has the potential to counter the

too easy dichotomy of the “individualist” versus the “collectivist” societies in development and intercultural relations discourse.

In her concluding chapter Brison addresses the political and economic development importance of self-group identity boundaries in what some have called a postcultural world. There is a long history in Fiji, in colonial and post-colonial government policy as well as in everyday village talk around the kava bowl, of debating the strengths and weaknesses of indigenous communalism in the context of contemporary political and economic realities. What Brison demonstrates is that in Rakiraki the cultural ideology of the sacred vanua has not been displaced by globalism and remains a powerful constraint on the individual's identity formation options. Rather than being erased by globalism, the indigenous Fijian sacred vanua might in some sense be energized by new interpretations inspired by new forms of experience to accommodate a wider range of cultural creativity.

Salt in the Sand: Memory, Violence, and the Nation-State in Chile, 1890 to the Present. *Lessie Jo Frazier.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007. 388 pp.

BRIAN LOVEMAN

San Diego State University

Salt in the Sand melds ethnographic research with historical inquiry to investigate the trajectory of elite and subaltern contestation over historical “memory” in Chile and “to forge a historical ethnography of nation-state formation and cultural transformation” from 1890 to 2007 (pp. 4–5). Lessie Jo Frazier argues that nation-states are in continuous, ongoing formation, and that “memory work—by which temporal demarcation is effected within a historical narrative to ground the idea of the nation state as a processually emerging, autochthonous and coherent entity is a crucial component of nation-state formation” (p. 6).

Frazier's work focuses on Tarapacá, Chile's northernmost region. It relies on participant-observation, interviews, documentary sources, well-known Chilean poetry and literature, and also on popular culture—songs, poetry, theater, testimonials, and much more. The interview material is fascinating; Frazier emotively details microhistory, the “fragmented history of a single place,” such as Pisagua, a site of prisoner camps in 1948 and 1973, and where a mass grave of executed prisoners uncovered in 1990 became emblematic of the horrors of military dictatorship after 1973.

Frazier is at her best in relating the ethnographic materials; she has become a part of Chile as much as Chile has become a part of her life. She tells the reader that this book has been a 17-year project.

To frame the history of memory and state formation after 1890, Frazier proposes three modes of memory: cathartic, empathetic, and sympathetic, and then a post-1990 dynamic of “melancholy-nostalgia” (p. 191). Frazier's definitions of these modes of memory, even with the benefit of numerous illustrations—protest songs, poetry, dance, theater, and so on—are not, for me, easily intelligible or clearly distinctive. Very roughly, they correspond to denunciation of repression and creation of “heroic” remembrances as “shared remembrances with past struggles” (p. 188); organization of the nonelites in cross-class alliances to mobilize and discipline the subalterns within the national political system, where the past injustice is recalled to mobilize for present objectives; and a “call to discursive witnessing” and to solidarity through truth-telling and reconciliation—which allow for a rupture with the past. According to Frazier, these modes of memory correspond to Chilean history from 1890–1930, 1930–90 (pp. 58–80), and then to the years after 1990.

I make no claim to expertise on modes of memory or memory work, but these concepts do not help me better understand the history of struggles against state violence and injustice in 19th-century Chile, or what happened from 1890 to 2007. To the extent that these three “modes of memory” are useful as analytic concepts (and not as psychiatric or psychological metaphors that evoke personal modes of memory rather than help explain collective social phenomena), I find examples of each in historical accounts and literature treating resistance to state violence and authoritarian practices in Chile from 1814–17 (the *reconquista*) to the present. Chilean “memory battles” did not begin with Tarapacá; and the modes of memory, if these ambiguous concepts are to overlay Chilean history, always operated simultaneously and even reciprocally from independence in 1818. Yet, for the pre-1890 period, Frazier falls back, mostly uncritically, on conventional interpretations of Chilean exceptionalism and elite consensus (p. 33)—notwithstanding three civil wars between 1828 and 1859, and government under state of siege or other regime of exception for almost half the years from 1831–61. This consensus on Chilean exceptionalism and the “Chilean national family” is the stuff of elite mythology—and it is not consistent with Frazier's own more critical and innovative analysis of ongoing state formation in Chile after 1890.

Of course, *Salt in the Sand* is defined thematically, spatially, and temporally as a treatment of memory, violence, and nation-state in Tarapacá from 1890 to the present (2007). That decision is entirely legitimate; it would not be consequential except for Frazier's own insistence on

the centrality of “longer-range processes as fundamental to nation-state building” (p. 10). Thus, while Frazier convincingly reminds the reader that the 1973 coup was not a blip or historical aberration in the history of state violence in Chile, the text elides seven decades of state violence and state formation before the struggles of the nitrate workers became a piece, albeit a crucial one, of a much bigger story. I do not mean by this that Frazier should have written a different book—that it need “begin” in 1818. Rather, if I understand properly Frazier’s argument (“Subjectivities, in turn, are always highly located, situated both metaphorically, as intersecting vectors of possible subject positions, and more literally in time and space,” p. 256), then such “subjectivities” require taking more seriously revisionist history on pre-1890 Chile and also on the period from 1890 to 1964.

In the end, Frazier decides not to resolve two tensions that the book honestly and directly confronts: whether to privilege the theoretical over the political (or vice versa); and whether to privilege the interview material and ethnographic richness of the research or the very complicated “elusive and emergent dialectical relation between the theoretical and the empirical known as praxis” (p. 366, n. 2). Moreover, the ragged suture of Tarapacá to Chile, both in Chilean history and in Frazier’s account, neglects the deep history of what becomes the politicocultural target of Frazier’s criticism: the post-military dictatorship project of “national reconciliation” (pp. 195–197; 202–214). What Frazier calls the “homogenizing project of national reconciliation” (p. 81) was nothing new, nor was it post-1990 “melancholy-nostalgia.” After civil wars and political violence from 1818 to 1964, virtually identical reconciliation projects and discourse (including amnesties and resistance to them) characterized the ongoing process of state formation in Chile that is a central focus of *Salt in the Sand*.

Thus, Frazier’s creative insight into memory battles in Tarapacá sometimes loses sight of the political violence and *politics* of reconciliation that repeatedly shaped the ongoing “tugs and pulls” of hegemony (pp. 254–255) and the multiple subjectivities that come into play when trying to answer the question of who makes, who owns, and who silences a nation’s history (p. 257). In seeking to reconfigure Chile’s political life after 1990, the “political class” drew on a well-practiced and stylized repertoire of political reconciliation policies and discourse. What made the post-1990 episode different were both the multiple types and voices of resistance to impunity for human rights violations within Chile and the overlay of the international human rights movement that adopted Chile as an emblematic case—making impunity no longer entirely negotiable by the local political elites who had always “turned the page on the past” in the name of “social peace” and “reunification of the Chilean national family” after past conflicts.

Communities of the Converted: Ukrainians and Global Evangelism. *Catherine Wanner.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007. 305 pp.

STEPHEN OFFUTT

Boston University

Catherine Wanner writes about Ukraine, a state that is undergoing an intense cultural, political, and economic transition. The high barriers to foreign cultural influence maintained during the Soviet era have given way to significant inflows of cultural radiation, much of which emanates from the United States. It is thus not surprising that a Pentecostal evangelicalism is a driving force behind the country’s changing cultural landscape. Wanner is quick to point out, however, that Ukraine is still Ukraine, and it has adjusted “foreign” religion to its own context and its own needs.

The Ukrainian case is well suited for Wanner’s principal themes, which include moral order and agency, the current spread of global Christianity, and secularization. Morality, Wanner argues, hinges on high levels of commitment to particular practices and beliefs. Religious communities are the places in which those practices and beliefs are often selected. One such community is global Christianity, the Ukrainian manifestation of which has been shaped by the twin processes of evangelization and displacement through migration.

The research strategies Wanner uses to explore these themes are among the most innovative aspects of the project. She immersed herself in denominational and congregational archives to understand Ukrainian evangelical history while also pursuing ethnographic and interview data in Ukraine and the United States. The intensive, multipronged, and multisite strategy allows her to speak to empirical and theoretical questions with authority.

Wanner engages secularization theory by first sketching the history of the Ukrainian evangelical community before 1989. Evangelicals, like many other groups that were marginalized in tsarist Russia, rejoiced when the communist revolution succeeded in 1917. In the early years, evangelicals benefited from the Bolshevik preoccupation with the more powerful Orthodox Church as well as from some surprising points of agreement with the Bolsheviks. Life in the years after the revolution was so positive that the Baptists opened their 1927 conference by commemorating ten years of freedom in the Soviet Union.

The 1929 Law of Religious Associations brought an end to this religious opening and began the first serious cycle of evangelical oppression. The new law led to the closure of prayer houses and the incarceration of evangelical leaders. Persecution resulted in a rapid decrease of the evangelical population in the 1930s, but their numbers bounced

back when Germany attacked the Soviet Union in 1941 and oppressive religious policies were relaxed. However, Khrushchev launched a new antireligion campaign from 1959–64, which ended the evangelical resurgence. Subsequent state regulation and oppression lasted into the 1980s.

Wanner argues that within this context the Soviet Union was able to weaken religious institutions and remove much of religion from the public sphere. It also had some success in “breaking the memory chain” of religion by hindering religious educational efforts. However, Soviet ideology was not able to address the subjective needs of citizens in the midst of unsettling periods of social upheaval, and individuals restored meaning to their lives through private religious traditions and identities.

Evangelicals, for their part, engaged in what Wanner calls “defiant compliance.” Within this rubric, evangelicals accepted much of the Soviet moral code and obeyed Soviet law where it did not conflict with their faith. Where they felt contradictions existed, evangelicals quietly circumvented government policies. Often their subtle resistance was merely grumbled at or overlooked by government, but at other times evangelicals landed in prison camps because of their faith. The situation was made famous by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s work, which Wanner utilizes as she explains the religious symbolic resources evangelicalism made available to its adherents. Wanner argues that evangelicals in these situations turned suffering into joy and, in many cases, achieved martyrdom rather than senseless death.

Since the end of the Cold War, emigration has helped to reshape the Ukrainian identity. Wanner engages the transnationalism literature to show how these trends have hastened social change, both for migrants and for those still in Ukraine. The lifestyle evangelicals developed under Soviet oppression was highly separatist, and immigrants brought those cultural strategies to the United States. But second-generation immigrants are changing the nature of their transnational faith communities by assimilating into mainstream America and by sharing their new experiences with coreligionists back home. Their message is reinforced by a remarkable inflow of U.S. (often Southern Baptist) missionaries and financial resources. By utilizing these transnational resources to respond to a fast changing political economy, Wanner argues that evangelical congregations in Ukraine have become major sites of cultural innovation.

Not all evangelical congregations look the same, and Wanner captures the relevant differences by investigating five Ukrainian evangelical congregations. Although weakened by emigration and the passage of time, Soviet-style evangelical churches still exist. Wanner contrasts two such congregations with their larger daughter churches, whose attire, forms of worship, and outreach strategies are all much better suited to today’s Ukraine than the fading cultural ethos in the mother churches.

Wanner also provides a case study of Ukraine’s most important Pentecostal evangelical church. Founded in 1994, the Embassy of God is already the largest church in Europe. Whereas Soviet-era evangelical congregations served as a refuge from the world, the Embassy of God seeks to reshape Ukraine and the world in its own image. New evangelical political engagement was evidenced by the prominent place of the Embassy of God in the 2004 Orange Revolution, and social engagement includes ministries to HIV/AIDS victims and drug and alcohol abusers. Evangelicals are also trying to reform Ukrainian business practices, but in this area they have experienced limited success.

In the end, *Communities of the Converted* is a surprisingly sympathetic account of the evangelical movement. One is left with the impression that Soviet-era evangelicals never deviated from their cultural scripts. It is not until we are introduced to present-day evangelicals that we see any kind of delinking between beliefs and practices. This, of course, could reflect tighter adherence to rules by a persecuted community, but, even so, the point is overstated. Still, Wanner deepens our understanding of global Christianity’s intersection with morality. She is able to show through her innovative research agenda the way this religious community affects moral change, especially in transitioning economies and states.

Fracturing Resemblances: Identity and Mimetic Conflict in Melanesia and the West. *Simon Harrison.* Herndon, VA: Berghahn, 2005. 182 pp.

ALEX GOLUB

University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

In *Fracturing Resemblances*, Simon Harrison has given us one of the most fascinating and sophisticated works of anthropology to appear in recent years. Ethnographically detailed, comparative in scope, solidly conceptualized, clearly written, and economical in size, it deserves a wide readership amongst anthropologists in many subfields.

In this volume Harrison takes issue with the traditional social scientific commonplace that solidarity and shared identity are the building blocks out of which societies are built. In opposition to this “Durkheimian” tradition (as he calls it), Harrison draws from the work of Simmel, Bateson, and Girard to argue that similarity is a source of conflict, rather than solidarity, between social units. Although he is not explicit on this point, it is also clear that Harrison draws on the work of Marilyn Strathern as well. Both Strathern’s critique of Durkheim, as well as this alternate tradition, become a starting point for Harrison’s exploration of the idea of “mimetic conflict”—the opposition between two groups that both aspire to the same identity.

The idea that contrast or opposition must be grounded in a deeper more embracing similarity is an old one, and the strength of Harrison's volume is his ability to elaborate and contextualize this theme. At first blush, *Fracturing Resemblances* seems like a work of political anthropology because it examines topics such as nationalism and ethnicity, but the real power of Harrison's viewpoint can be seen in the way that he connects political anthropology and the notion of mimetic conflict to other more seemingly remote areas. Legal anthropology and theories of intellectual property quickly become central to Harrison's argument, as does the literature of taboo and pollution. In Harrison's hands these three seemingly disparate fields are synthesized and put in the service of a larger project that seeks to understand how identities (whether in trademark law or ethnic conflict) are used to create boundaries that both define and connect groups through differentiating them.

The book, less than 200 pages overall, is broken down into a series of ten short chapters, each of which develops the theme of mimetic conflict in a different way. Harrison's ethnography is thus brief, comparative, and illustrative rather than an exhaustive and detailed study of a particular case. While it is true that Harrison is firmly grounded in the ethnography of Melanesia, his area of specialty, and many Melanesianists will be impressed by his mastery of this material, the book also strays broadly across space and time to make its case, touching on the politics of religious conflict in Northern Ireland, Sikh identity in India, and the social organization of ancient Rome. Despite these wide-ranging excursions, Harrison avoids the trap of glib generalization, and his focus on Melanesia never reads as excessively pedantic or narrowly specialized.

In sum, Harrison has written a superb and thought-provoking volume that opens new intellectual horizons in the best anthropological fashion: by developing a widespread theme in the literature and contextualizing it ethnographically. This slim volume deserves a wider readership and will be relevant for scholars in a wide variety of subdisciplines, ranging from ethnic studies and political anthropology to the legal anthropology of intellectual property.

The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories. *Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. 288 pp.

OSKAR VERKAAIK

University of Amsterdam

What we usually call an unprecedented example of mass migration following the independence of India and Pakistan

in August 1947 was, in fact, the sum of millions of disrupted personal lives of people traveling to and fro both sides of the new border in incredibly messy, unplanned, and unpredictable flows of individuals and families following decisions based on expectations and rumors that would leave many families divided and many individuals stateless. Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar, in a well-researched historical account of what she calls "the long partition," highlights the efforts of both the new Indian and Pakistani state to control this hectic travel and to establish who was and who was not entitled to citizenship. Focusing on the period between 1947 and 1953, she shows the impact of regulating devices as permits and passports on the lives of men and women who suddenly found that decisions based on impulses—to visit family members, to find refuge, to see what the other side looked like—had irrevocable repercussions. From the various individual stories Zamindar presents emerges a picture of new states discovering their power while dealing with these millions of people crossing the border in search of a postpartition life and logic.

The study focuses on two cities—Karachi and Delhi—that in a tragic sense can be called twin cities. It is well known that Karachi virtually became a city of Muhajirs or migrants from India, many of them from Delhi, whereas Hindus had made up almost half of its population. But Delhi, too, experienced a large exchange of its population, accommodating many displaced Sikhs and Hindus from the Punjab in property owned by Muslims. Zamindar divides this history in three phases: the first year when travel was largely unregulated; the period between the summer of 1948 and 1952 when both states introduced travel permits; and the time after 1952 when both governments began to issue passports. Each shift made it more difficult to travel, pinpointed people to the place where they happened to be at the time of introducing the new device, and sharpened the boundaries of citizenship.

In the first phase, both governments found themselves caught between two conflicting responsibilities. There was the duty to protect the property of its existing population and the fear to be flooded by more and more refugees. However, one also felt responsible to the large numbers of refugees already arriving in its capital cities. Who, in other words, did the new states consider "their own people" first: the religious minorities living on its territory or the arriving refugees demanding compensation on the basis of religious and national solidarity? Both governments opted for the latter, in effect nationalizing individual property of religious minorities to house the refugees. In both cities there was strong pressure on religious minorities, increasingly labeled as "evacuees," to leave, although in Karachi matters were complicated by the fact that the municipal government included many Sindhi politicians who feared the influx of many non-Sindhies into its main city. This,

however, did not stop the exodus of almost all Hindus from Karachi.

In 1948 the Indian state introduced travel permits, partly to stop the growing numbers of Muslims coming from Karachi “to go home.” Some felt disappointed about the lukewarm reception in Karachi; others had only temporarily settled in Pakistan as refugees during a time of violence and uncertainty. In India, however, they were suspected to be spies for the Pakistani government. If they received a permit at all, this was mostly on a temporary basis, meaning that their citizenship remained dubious. With the introduction of passports in 1952, the citizenship status of religious minorities became questioned even more. If one family member had left India to go to Pakistan, for instance, the rest of the family was often considered “intended evacuees,” too. Years after partition, people became “internally displaced” as a result of the increasingly rigid categories the new states developed.

Zamindar vividly shows how the border separating both states came to be seen and treated as an international border only over time. The two-nation theory, arguing that Muslims and Hindus formed different nations, did not in itself stop people from crossing the border, just like, for that matter, the border separating Pakistan and Afghanistan is hardly recognized by the people living in the border region (a comparison Zamindar does not make). Only with the introduction of relatively new devices like permits and passports did the border become a fixed line separating two states and two nations.

This is an important study on how two new states sought to establish their sovereignty over an ill-defined population. The only reservation I have is that it does not realize all of its promises. The second part of the title—“the Making of Modern South Asia”—seems to give too much importance to the first years of independence. True, religious nationalism continues to be powerful in both India and Pakistan, as the author makes clear in the conclusion, but religious nationalism has a longer history than the years between 1947 and 1953. What this study does show, however, is how religious nationalism was institutionalized in new sovereign nation-states and how a nonterritorial ideology gained a territorial logic.

To what extent this book can be called a historical-ethnographic study, I am not sure. The addition of the word *ethnographic* suggests an emphasis on nonofficial sources and agency. Although the study does draw on oral history, the most convincing parts are based on court cases dug up from official archives. Zamindar is at her best describing an emerging state logic, citing from letters and memos, but she provides limited information on popular perceptions of migration, displacement, and increasingly regulated travel. Given her analytical talents and absorbing style of writing, we can only hope that she is planning a new book that includes the subaltern voice.

Performing Kinship: Narrative, Gender, and the Intimacies of Power in the Andes. Krista E. Van Vleet. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008. xiv + 273 pp.

JESSACA B. LEINAWEAVER

Brown University

In the last two decades, scholars have taken up kinship, that old anthropological totem, dusting it off and reenergizing it with a series of promising, in-depth ethnographies. If earlier scholars of kinship have been accused of concentrating narrowly on cataloging kin terms, or charting genealogical connections, this new body of work focuses more properly on the myriad of ways people make meaning of, and meaningful, connections to one another. Considering the processes through which this occurs, such as the structured narration of past experiences, and intersecting social fields, such as gender, sexuality, race, or class, these scholars are breathing new life into a topic critically important for understanding the shifts and continuities of contemporary life.

In *Performing Kinship*, Krista Van Vleet contributes a beautifully written and solidly theorized ethnography to this kinship renaissance. Reporting on long-term fieldwork in a Bolivian highland town, she teases out the significance of being a brother, a daughter, a mother-in-law, or a husband by reflecting on the ways that people narrate their lives. Her analysis also incorporates the relationships that she formed with the participants in her research; their evaluations of her ambiguous kinship status provided a further source of material on which to ground an understanding of relatedness. Her interpretation of gender is worked carefully into the text so that it is inextricable from her analysis of kinship, a move that only emphasizes the power of the “new kinship turn” in anthropology. For example, women’s lives are revealed to be deeply shaped by patrilocal practices—when they relocate to their husband’s communities on marriage, women are newly alone and unconnected, only developing relatedness and status there over time. Because of these social implications of marriage for women, Van Vleet shows, it is understandable that as some of them narrate the events that led to marriage, they deliberately downplay their own agency in the process and depict themselves as having been “carried” or even “stolen” away. This finding highlights the results made possible by Van Vleet’s close attention to how people themselves narrate their lives and past experiences: it is through talking about people, and telling stories, that relatedness is produced.

Throughout this study Van Vleet has uncovered what one might call a “native kinship theory”—an understanding of how her interlocutors themselves understand social connections to be produced, accessed through their talk but also through long-term participant-observation. This, she argues, is intimately connected to the Andean

keyword *ayni*, a Quechua term referring to reciprocal exchange within a pair of relative equals. *Ayni* can refer to numerous kinds of social obligations, but it is often explained in terms of agricultural labor—for example, a farmer works for a day in another's fields, and expects the effort to be returned in kind. Although such relationships are typically analyzed using a framework of economic rationality, Van Vleet suggests that the conceptual toolkit of kinship theory is more apt for describing the way that this routine exchange of labor also produces and actualizes a social relationship.

A second crucial component of this local kinship theory is the act of feeding, and its counterpart, receiving food. On one hand, feeding is how the Andeans Van Vleet worked with understood relatedness to be established. Feeding a child is an important part of the process of becoming kin to that child, and because siblings do not regularly feed one another they do not feel the same kind of closeness and may be more prone to tensions and conflicts as adults. On the other hand, through regular feeding, hierarchy is established—but so too are deeply felt sensations of dependence and connection. A feeling of debt is crucial to both kinds of interactions—owing someone a day's worth of labor or feeling grateful to a parent for having always provided food are both positions that imply social integration. Because of the significance of debt, glossed here both as *ayni* and as hierarchy, we cannot understand local interactions without considering the broader network in which a pair of siblings, or a married couple, is embedded.

One of the most striking ethnographic findings of the book has to do with domestic violence. First, Van Vleet problematizes common assumptions about domestic violence by showing that it is not always an issue of men dominating women. Her research shows that the relationship of affinity—in other words, the set of relationships created by marriage, including both spouses and in-laws—is more crucial an axis than is gender alone to understanding the origin of violent acts. Second, she complicates the stereotype (common throughout the Andes) of Indian men as drunk abusers and Indian women as willing victims, showing that while alcohol consumption is important in these instances of violence, so too are discourses of custom and evaluations of affines' behavior. Finally, locating her examination of domestic violence at the end of the book, following other related analyses—such as an evaluation of the discourses surrounding marriage, which include those offered in formal Catholic marriage courses and the ideas circulating along with marriage gifts and exchanges in local weddings—means that it can be considered not in a sensationalistic way but, rather, as one (highly politicized and contentious) aspect of affinity in the Bolivian Andes.

The theoretical framework that Van Vleet develops for analyzing her interlocutors' stories is ambitious and sweeping, drawing from the new kinship studies, feminist an-

thropology, and—perhaps most directly—theories of language as social action. And although the book's theoretical language and conceptual sophistication may present challenges to some undergraduate readers, I have found that Van Vleet's work has stimulated provocative classroom discussions on domestic violence, gender, and cultural imperialism. Overall, I believe that this book would fit very well into courses on gender, kinship, or Latin America, in addition to making a valuable addition to the bookshelf of scholars interested in these areas.

Getting By in Postsocialist Romania: Labor, the Body, and Working-Class Culture. David A. Kideckel. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008. 266 pp.

KAREN KAPUSTA-POFAHL

Washburn University

Since the dissolution of socialist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, heavy industry laborers have suffered a massive reversal of fortune. From their place as exemplary builders of socialism, workers have been shunted to the margins of postsocialist political priorities, with disastrous results. Through stirring narratives and vivid ethnographic description, David A. Kideckel “fleshes out” the lives of Romanian Jiu Valley coal miners and Făgăraș chemical workers. Throughout the text, Kideckel deftly weaves an analysis of social, economic, and political upheaval with workers' personal narratives to create a compelling set of arguments about the ways in which “postsocialism hurts” (p. 6). His central concern is with the ways in which workers express their understandings of themselves and their positions in postsocialist Romania through narratives of deteriorating physical and mental health.

In chapters 2 and 3, Kideckel details the means by which workers have lost their “symbolic capital” (p. 57), and the ramifications of this loss, in the wake of socialism's demise. He argues that mine and factory closures and labor contract buyouts, coupled with postsocialist media images of the new European as an individual consumer rather than a collectivized producer, have operated in tandem to propel the image of the heavy industry laborer as a member of a problem population into the imaginations of the national media, policymakers, and nonworker communities. Whereas once workers were able to mobilize collectively to assert their needs, they no longer have the symbolic, agential, or, in fact, material resources to do so. As a result, Kideckel writes, “In a little over a decade's time, Romania's once secure and even proud workers have been reduced to a marginal mass whose conditions barely figure

in the plans of the state and in the minds of its increasingly distant political and business leaders" (p. 63). In post-socialist times miners and factory workers have become casualties of anti-Communist sentiment. Workers have become identified with "the time of Ceaușescu" (p. 57) and, thus, marginalized from postsocialist political discourses. Workers themselves have begun to view the socialist era with rose-colored glasses and look to the future with dread. These processes are at the heart of this ethnography—what are the consequences of such an emphatic and pervasive reversal of fortune?

Kideckel employs the concept of "embodiment" to great effect in describing the relationships between workers' descriptions of their physical and mental states and their marginalized political status. He discusses the ways in which workers view their deteriorated relationship to the state in terms of bodies both as material beings and as political collectivities (ch. 4), and how they understand the upending of established gender regimes in physical terms (ch. 6). Through a relentless attention to actual workers' stresses, illnesses, and challenges, Kideckel prevents the reader from escaping into abstraction. For instance, after reading a passage in which the author describes from first-hand experience how miners often work naked to cope with searing temperatures in the underground, it is impossible for the reader to dismiss laborers as relics of a bygone era.

Running parallel to workers' narratives of bodily decline are stories of the loss of meaningful community both within and outside of the workplace. Kideckel is particularly attentive to the ways in which these spheres of "work" and "home" are not uniformly considered to be exclusive or binary arenas in the various worker communities (chs. 5, 6). For instance, Jiu Valley miners worked in largely sex-segregated domains, where the norm was that men worked in the mines and women managed the domestic sphere of home and family life. In this region, miners lament the loss of camaraderie in the mines and in the pubs. State decisions to downsize heavy industry has resulted in fewer workers working longer shifts, increased suspicion about the motives of their coworkers and bosses, and less money available to buy rounds of drinks for friends after work. Simultaneously, Jiu Valley women began to feel pressure to search for employment, often on the black market, to supplement what was once considered to be a breadwinner income. Among chemical workers, downsizing directly affected their previously integrated work and domestic relationships: "In the Făgăraș region before the revolution, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, friends and neighbors were appointed to work together as a matter of policy" (p. 88). However, as workers lost their jobs or accepted contract buyouts, they became increasingly estranged from these networks of social connectivity. In both regions, people can

no longer afford to participate in the community rituals that had provided a crucial sense of belonging that extended beyond the workplace. In response, Kideckel finds, some decide to emigrate and send home remittances, others attempt to become entrepreneurs, and still others find themselves alone in their homes worrying about their health and their family's futures. Throughout the text, Kideckel demonstrates how these and other factors have contributed to increased feelings of isolation, both physically and socially.

Kideckel's discussion of embodiment is not solely one of relationships to politics or community. He provides a stirring account of workers' physical and mental ailments, as well as the declining quality of their living conditions (chs. 5, 7). In the final chapter (ch. 8), Kideckel calls on policymakers, nongovernmental organizations, and the European Union to resist enacting superficial remedies. Romanian heavy industry workers have been isolated from one another and marginalized from politics and society, and are thus bearing the brunt of postsocialist upheavals.

Perhaps because the states of embodiment he describes are so all-encompassing, Kideckel refers to postsocialism in the singular and does not delve into a theoretical consideration of its nuanced or contradictory facets. Regardless, however, the text is wholly evocative, compellingly written, and clearly organized. *Getting By in Postsocialist Romania* should appeal to a wide range of audiences, including scholars of postsocialist studies, those interested in issues of economic policy and development, health, and gender studies, and to students at all levels.

Gossip, Markets, and Gender: How Dialogue Constructs Moral Value in Post-Socialist Kilimanjaro. *Tuulikki Pietilä.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007. i-xii + 241 pp.

ANNE S. LEWINSON

Berry College

Tuulikki Pietilä has written a highly readable and thought-provoking ethnographic analysis of economic activities, gender, and Chagga people's commentaries on others' conduct in the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania. While the title and initial chapters of her book focus on the market setting and discourses about its women vendors, the analytical reach goes beyond that specific domain. The ethnography's latter section explores the evaluation of men as businessmen, lineage members, and community participants and thereby provides space for considering the moral connotations of and deliberations over cash-based economic

activities in general. Pietilä analyzes commentaries on both men's and women's economic ventures, providing a well-rounded picture of how gendered personhood is socially and communally constructed in the Moshi Rural region on Mount Kilimanjaro.

The ethnography gives a vivid sense of how residents of a village in Vunjo area constituted the social standing of themselves, others, and economic activities at the time when economic liberalization was consolidating in Tanzania (the mid-1990s). While the local specifics have doubtlessly changed as the implications of liberalization have ramified in the decade since then, Pietilä's book offers deep insight into enduring social processes. Part of its strength derives from the wide range of data derived from close-hand observations, informal interviews, casual conversations, and life histories. Given that gossip is a ubiquitous activity and concern in Tanzanian society, Pietilä chose well to use this verbal form as a source of cultural insight. Interestingly, most conversations seem to have occurred in the national language of Kiswahili (based on the prevalence of Swahili in the quotations), even though one might expect the settings (rural markets, bars, life narrations, feasts, and villagers' gossip sessions) to evoke use of a local language. This pattern of using a lingua franca, the language of interaction with non-Chagga speakers, demonstrates the semipublic forum in which individuals' standing is socially constituted. The speakers assume a heterogeneous audience (even if only because of the presence of the researcher). This fact resonates particularly well with the topic of how wider economic patterns are integrated into a local setting through very specific cultural processes, such as segments of a community evaluating people's inner qualities as revealed in good or bad actions.

Pietilä's theoretical approach blends discourse analysis with the dynamics of gender power formations and cultural processes, yielding a rich exploration of the fluidity in 1990s Chagga society. The first two chapters incorporate a clear, insightful discussion of how anthropological theories have analyzed the social implications of economic transactions, as well as indicating those frameworks' limits; by emphasizing the linguistic processes, she seeks to move beyond those somewhat static, homogenous frameworks to a more fluid perspective. She largely succeeds, demonstrating that, indeed, "moral economy is a set of ideas, values, and practices that members of a given culture use and recognize as ways of forming and maintaining social relationships" (p. 61). By documenting processes that range from negotiating a sale in the market to semipublic evaluations of an urban-residing man's father's funeral, Pietilä shows that objects and events do not have fixed significances (at least not for the social standing of the individuals linked with them); rather, these "things" and actions surrounding them are integrated into communal negotiations about individ-

uals' status and the contextually based appropriateness of their actions.

Yet these strengths of Pietilä's monograph (the vividness of directly reported speech, salient topics revealed in discourse, presence of interlocutors in the text, and creative combination of linguistic with social analysis) bring along a potential methodological limitation: a portrayal of life on Kilimanjaro that skews toward the unusual or extraordinary. People seldom comment on mundane aspects of life, the everyday matters that comprise daily existence; those activities and patterns require no discussion. Only conduct and events falling out of the ordinary are likely to draw attention and debate (gossip) from onlookers. An analysis based primarily on verbal narratives therefore can obscure the unspoken, unremarkable cultural practices and daily actions. For example, when Pietilä analyzes narratives of the now-defunct practice of wife capture (ch. 4), this reader had to question how representative were these events (what percent of marriages involved capture?) and, therefore, whether we could gain much understanding of Moshi Rural marriage processes based on her analysis. How was character assessed for women who married through the "typical" process of negotiations and rituals, or for men who do dominate in their domestic relations? The discussed examples illuminate the prevailing cultural categories of respected conduct by women and men; however, they might not explain ordinary life as well.

Similarly, Pietilä discusses how urban-based men maneuver to retain active participation or enhance their standing in their home communities (ch. 5), as well as the gossip-based explanations for businessmen's rapid reversals of fortune (ch. 6). These analyses rest almost solely on negative evaluations, leaving one to wonder what types of men are evaluated as "good" (successful and properly behaved community members)? Are there any "good" businessmen or urban sons? Indeed, the extraordinary provides a useful foil for defining moral categories and revealing their dynamic transformations, as Pietilä tracks a chronological shift in reasons given for the evil-doing businessmen's initial successes and ultimate downfalls. The challenge, however, remains to fill in the dialogically invisible context—or at least to consider the limits of questions that can be answered by this type of data.

These concerns do not detract from the overall quality of Pietilä's monograph. This book highlights the importance of gossip as a process through which members of a community evaluate each other's conduct and create an ever-fluid social standing. It also augments theoretical understanding of how economic activities intersect with systems of socially constituted morality and gender, as well as how macrolevel economic changes are refracted into local contexts. Pietilä has written an ethnography with many valuable insights for Africanists, economic anthropologists, sociolinguists, and gender scholars.

Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America. Mae M. Ngai. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004. 377 pp.

SUSAN BIBLER COUTIN

University of California, Irvine

In *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, Mae M. Ngai traces the history through which illegal immigration and the illegal alien came to be the central immigration problem in the 20th, and, perhaps, the 21st, centuries. Her focus is the period 1924–65, when the national origins quota system was in effect. This system restricted immigration according to quotas based on the national origins of the U.S. population in 1790 and, thus, ensured that “desirable” Northern Europeans would be able to immigrate at rates that exceeded those of other groups. In examining this history, Ngai pays particular attention to the ways that numerical restrictions and hierarchies of racial and national desirability redefined territory and made illegal immigrants the alien other against which citizens were constituted. These foci result in a fascinating and theoretically nuanced account of the mutually constitutive relationship between illegality and law, immigration and the nation, and citizenship and its erasure. By identifying these relationships and examining how they were produced historically, Ngai succeeds in denaturalizing the very terms in which illegal immigration is construed.

Each chapter in *Impossible Subjects* takes up a key moment in the development, implementation, and revision of the quota system. Chapter 1 presents a fascinating discussion of the controversies over how to calculate the national origins of the U.S. population. Interestingly, even though the calculations were acknowledged to be inaccurate, they became law and acquired an aura of factuality. Chapter 2 focuses on the ways that numerical restrictions made deportation and border enforcement new priorities, as well as on administrative devices that permitted longtime European immigrants who were convicted of crimes to avoid deportation even as Mexican immigrants whose only crime was illegal entry were removed. Chapter 3 examines how U.S. territories acquired from Spain through the Spanish–American war were defined as something other than colonies and how Filipino migrants were ambiguously positioned as U.S. nationals and therefore neither citizen nor alien. Chapter 4 analyzes the “imported colonialism” (p. 129) that was established through immigration from Mexico. Chapter 5 takes up the WWII internment of Japanese Americans to consider how war time nationalism infused notions of citizenship and alienage. Chapter 6 considers the “confession” program through which Chinese immigrants were encouraged to admit to fraudulent kinship relations in exchange for le-

gal status. Chapter 7 challenges depictions of the 1965 immigration act, which eliminated national origins as a basis for quotas, as primarily progressive and, instead, argues that this law’s continued reliance on numerical restrictions on immigration may have “only hardened the distinction between citizens and aliens” (p. 229). The book concludes with a useful epilogue that takes up post-1965 events.

Ngai’s nuanced account provides numerous insights into the thinking of those who formulated immigration policies. She demonstrates that at times, such individuals were explicitly racist. For instance, she quotes former attorney general U. S. Webb as stating that the U.S. government was meant to be “of and for the white race” (p. 117). She also presents a detailed discussion of the relationship between science, immigration policies, and the limits of liberalism. Reports written by demographers, historians, and other scholars circulated among policy makers and influenced calculations of quotas, assumptions about assimilation, and so forth. Legal realism, which was both a scholarly and legal movement, contributed to the use of discretion within deportation policies, but only in relation to European immigrants. Ngai’s discussion of the relationship between scholarship and policy makes this book useful to scholars who are interested in the sociology and politics of science.

Impossible Subjects also presents countless examples of lawmakers’ and administrators’ manipulations of law. For instance, even before numerical quotas were applied to the Western hemisphere, administrative methods were used to limit legal migration from Mexico; the category of “unincorporated territory” was invented to make the Philippines a U.S. possession that was nonetheless considered external to the United States; and some European illegal immigrants were sent to Canada and then permitted to reenter the United States legally. Ngai shows that law is flexible in that it can authorize such inventions, but that law also must follow a certain logic: for example, the European illegal immigrants actually had to leave and reenter the United States to effect the legal magic of a change in status. The chapter on the Chinese confession program presents a fascinating account of the ways that a paper trail was elicited and authenticated by law. Because courts accepted uncontested oral testimony regarding family relationships, legal decisions in Chinese exclusion cases actually produced the documentation that became the basis for subsequent entries. Through accounts of this and other events, Ngai demonstrates that state control of immigration policy is contested and incomplete. Not only is the state itself fractured but, in addition, migrants themselves exert agency. Ngai points out that Mexican bracero workers resisted exploitation by quitting their jobs, Japanese American internees may well have had loyalties to both Japan and the United States, and Chinese family associations

challenged U.S. investigations of immigration fraud. Such attention to the complexity of individual actions, whether on the part of policy makers or immigrants themselves, is invaluable.

Finally, *Impossible Subjects* suggests ways that history may, in fact, repeat itself. As in the past, cities and states have attempted to bar illegal immigrants from obtaining licenses, immigrants are being made deportable for crimes that were not deportable offenses when they occurred, and the prisons are becoming a source of deportees. Ngai points out that in the formulation of immigration policies, “historians were not dispassionate interpreters of the past; rather, they intervened in the pressing politics of their day” (p. 263). Ngai’s own ethical project is to demonstrate that “sovereignty’s content and relationship to other legal and moral norms are contingent—and, therefore, also subject to change” (p. 12). By attending to the disjuncture between the social reality of illegal immigration and its legal impossibility, Ngai succeeds in demonstrating that the problem of illegal immigration may itself be constitutive of global realities.

Empathy and Healing: Essays in Medical and Narrative Anthropology. Vieda Skultans. New York: Berghahn, 2007. 282 pp.

ANN APPLETON

University Malaysia Sarawak

In this wonderfully insightful collection of essays, Skultans draws on long-term ethnographic studies in three locations—South Wales, Maharashtra, and post-Soviet Latvia, exploring the diverse relationships between suffering, empathy, and healing in each locale to argue for the quintessentially social nature of these phenomena. In the process she demonstrates that social, cultural, and historical factors not only make a difference, they also make a defining difference to the experience of suffering, to the meanings (including the medical diagnoses) attached to suffering, and to the empathy-generating opportunities available for healing. We see how multiple realities shape a variety of suffering and how the latter can become a means of understanding the former.

But beyond this the 15 chapters in *Empathy and Healing*, crafted over a time span of more than 30 years, are also a commentary on the “changing face” of anthropology. Fieldwork at home—Skultans’s earliest studies were undertaken in South Wales—was unusual in the mid-1960s. The author’s avowed “interest in individuals” (p. 1) was also at variance with the anthropological project of this period when

self-reflexivity was discouraged and the agency of individual informants was deliberately eclipsed from ethnographic accounts in the interests of structural–functionalist analyses. The early chapters in the collection reflect these influences although individual personalities are never entirely obscured.

In the later chapters, issues to do with subjectivity, narrative, and emotion play a pivotal role in the theoretical analyses, as much an indication of the paradigmatic changes that anthropology has undergone in the past generation as a reflection of the background and interests of the author.

Of the 15 chapters that make up the collection, 14 have been previously published; a useful guide at the front of the book lists the date and site of the original publications. An additional introductory chapter presents a synopsis of the collection, viewed through the lens of Skultans’s own developing theoretical focus within the discipline.

It is difficult to do justice to the scope of this collection in a brief review. Immensely rich in data as well as theoretically, historically, and culturally wide ranging, it takes the reader on an intellectual as well as an ethnographic journey, imparting new insights and drawing attention to new connections, an exemplification of Skultans’s own capacity for creating empathy with her readers. For example, her innovative use of the term *sociosomatic illness* (rather than *psychosomatic*) to describe “illness which does not have a basis in real pathology” (p. 16), which she introduces in the essay about spiritualist ritual in South Wales, has widespread application for indigenous systems of healing in non-Western contexts in which such conditions are often firmly located (and ritually reconciled) within the context of social relations.

Some classic themes in medical anthropology are raised in the course of these essays, including gender, trance states, medicalization, and religion. But central to Skultans’s analyses is the connection between empathy and issues of representation. That issues of representation are simultaneously issues of power is a recurring theme, but most apparent in the chapters that draw on her ethnographic fieldwork in Latvia.

Concerns with research ethics have intensified over the years as anthropologists have become increasingly aware of the influence of their own subjectivity on the research process, particularly when working with vulnerable groups. The relationship between psychiatry and anthropology sits uneasily in the context of these issues. The ideological entanglements and moral dilemmas this creates for anthropologists whose research involves working in a psychiatric environment are especially acute. How does the anthropologist reconcile her mixed allegiances in such situations without compromising anthropology’s ethical boundaries or the desire for transparency? In such circumstances, “Does this mean that anthropological

fieldwork necessarily involves betrayal, and if so, how can it be justified?" (p. 262). Skultans's focus on these tensions in the final chapter is timely and thought provoking. The way out of these dilemmas, she suggests: "is not to separate the ethnographic voice from the personal and emotional voice" in an attempt to be neutral, nor to stake a moral claim on ethics (p. 263). Rather, it is to write from a perspective "which includes the voices of both patients and psychiatrists and is both personal and critical" (p. 263). To do so is to locate a basis for empathy between all the actors in this encounter—psychiatrist, patient, and anthropologist—in a shared experience of vulnerability.

It is a pity this book was not more carefully proofread and edited. The title of chapter 5, for instance, contains a misspelling that does not appear in the original 1991 publication. (The same word is misspelled—in yet another variation—on the contents page.) I was also distracted by typos in a number of places, including incomplete sentences on page 247, resulting in the author of a quote going unidentified.

Preparing a collection of essays for publication, written over different time periods and locations, requires particular attention to aspects of continuity and the editorial formatting sometimes works against this. For example, the essay on "Women and Affliction in Maharashtra" opens with a paragraph that more resembles an abstract and coming after a chapter concerned with fieldwork in South Wales it is not clear whether the author is speaking generally or specifically until the final sentence. I wonder about the purpose of this paragraph because the chapter is properly introduced by the author in the section that follows.

These criticisms aside, I am delighted that the author has chosen to republish these essays in a single volume, not least because in the region of the world where I live and work, some of them would be difficult to access in the original. Of more importance, combining these essays in a single volume brings them into a temporal relationship that allows a valuable additional perspective to be brought to the analysis—definitely a case of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts.

Medical anthropologists will certainly find this collection valuable, both for the issues raised as well as the questions posed. The essays would also provide an ideal teaching resource because most of them offer a useful combination of ethnography and theory.

I feel the book deserves a wider readership. Researchers and academics with an interest in narrative theory and the politics of identity will find much of interest here, as will those working in fields such as social psychiatry. In the 21st century, disciplinary boundaries are no longer absolute and many of these essays demonstrate the fertility and creativity that can be derived from hanging out in the borderlands among and between different genres.

Debility and the Moral Imagination in Botswana. Julie Livingston. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2005. 310 pp.

JOHN M. JANZEN

University of Kansas

With a focus on the changing concepts and practices surrounding "debility," "disability," "able-bodiedness," "personhood," and the "moral imagination" of a caring society, Julie Livingston has created a sensitive, thorough, and original history of Tswana health and related social structures. The book contributes to African studies, history, and anthropology, but it especially makes a mark on the field of comparative studies of how societies deal with those in their midst who require long-term care for chronic afflictions, how such conditions are given meaning, and how the resources of society and the "moral imagination" are generated to be a society that takes care of such individuals in changing circumstances. *Debility* is a broader term than *disability*; it is used to understand multiple kinds of "frailties associated with chronic illness and aging and the impairments underlying the word disability" (p. 6). The latter term is more related to the social challenges or inability to perform socially expected tasks.

Livingston's work is general enough to provide a rich history of Tswana society—precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial—as a backdrop for the more specialized agenda of health, medicine, and care for the disabled. This makes the book useful both for the uninitiated general student or scholar interested in southern African society as well as the specialist interested in comparative study of debility and how personhood and society unfold in a dynamic history. This is particularly important in grasping the tremendous impact of labor migration to the mines of South Africa on early colonial history, and the growing presence in all Tswana communities of those returned miners who had been injured on the job and, thus, no longer qualify for this arduous work nor carry on productive lives at home. They were instead destined to lead the lives of home-bound invalids. The new category of the disabled (*bogole*, in Setswana) became the focus for an entire system of meaning-making and changing care structures. Over time it expanded to include other kinds of individuals, morphing in the postcolonial period into the disability framework promoted by the World Health Organization and the Botswana National Ministry of Health.

The unfolding history of transformations in the Tswana medical culture is another highly commendable feature of Livingston's work. The somewhat overlapping systems of knowledge and practice are identified as "public health,"

"*bongaka*" (Tswana medicine), "biomedicine," and "lay nursing care." Public health, the first of these systems, begins in the precolonial era as a complex set of institutions and practices through which chiefs and ritual experts including healers and rainmakers reinforced public morality and a right relationship to the environment and the ancestors. This traditional system of public health was largely undermined by colonial intrusions to chiefly roles and by Christian missions that provided a substitute moral order. Postcolonial government and Western public health initiatives provided a rather different public health system. Tswana medicine also lost some of its crucial features, as healers were deprived of some of their public roles such as rainmaking. However, many moved toward a more commoditized and individualized medicine and continued to provide divination services as a way of understanding plentiful misfortunes that befell people. Biomedicine of course became the dominant colonial medicine, as well as the medicine of the industrial world of mining. Anyone who wished to find employment in the mines needed to measure up to the pervasive health examinations that accompanied recruitment. Biomedicine came to be endorsed by postcolonial government and played an increasingly important role in people's lives, including Botswana's recent support of antiretroviral medications for all HIV/AIDS patients. Livingston's final medical system, lay nursing, became the network of care for the growing number of disabled and elderly. Each of these medical systems or domains has undergone significant change in the 20th century. Livingston's historian's touch provides nuanced reading of the sources of change and the consequences on individuals and communities.

The structure of the work unfolds deftly in five substantial chapters, between an introduction and a conclusion. Chapter 1, "Family Matters and Money Matters," introduces the reader to the three villages near the national capital Gaborone where fieldwork was carried out. The household and family setting of debility is graphically introduced, as are some case studies that accompany the reader throughout the work. Chapter 2, "Public Health and Developing Persons," provides a history of public health and how the far-reaching Tswana public domain was articulated in the hands of precolonial chiefs and ritual experts. Although many of the particular institutions such as rainmaking were abandoned, the moral framework survived in the way disabled individuals remain part of the community and are worthy of care. The notion of personhood in ablebodiedness and in debility is important for Tswana society and Livingston's analysis of care. Chapter 3, "Male Migration and the Pluralization of Medicine," outlines the far-reaching impact of labor migration and the mining economy of South Africa on Tswana society. Chapter 4, "Increasing Autonomy, Entangled Therapeutics, and Hidden Wombs," is to this re-

viewer the most interesting chapter of the book. It details a number of particular cases and categories of cases that illustrate the "entanglements" of these different domains. Chapter 5, "Postcolonial Development and Constrained Care," describes the current state of affairs with regard to debility and care giving in Botswana. Tswana people seek to continue to frame health issues not just in empirical and individual medical terms, but within broader questions of a larger moral framework provided by Tswana medicine and the public order, although a certain moral ambiguity now accompanies many of life's dilemmas and negotiations for many.

Julie Livingston's excellently written and carefully reasoned *Debility and the Moral Imagination in Botswana* offers one of the best recent examples of historical studies of health and medicine in Africanist scholarship. It demonstrates the application of rigorous standards in the historian's challenge of tracing categories of consciousness, related words, and behaviors back in time through a rich combination of methodologies that include prolonged fieldwork, archival research, and analytical reasoning through personal subjectivities.

Grassroots Struggles for Sustainability in Central America. Lynn R. Horton. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2007. xvii + 215 pp.

EVA KALNY

University of Vienna

How are rural communities in the global South dealing with the expansion of capitalism, what is their perception of sustainable development, and how can they make use of it for their survival?—Sociologist Lynn Horton tries to answer these questions by analyzing three communities in Central America and their efforts to survive under current neoliberal economic conditions.

On the theoretical level, the author focuses on contested visions on sustainability and parts from the idea that development discourses are the product of power relations, but also influence relations and distributions of social, political and discursive power. In this context, the concept of sustainable development holds very different meanings for Central American peasants and World Bank (WB) officials. By focusing in her empirical work on grassroots perspective and contextualized local histories, Lynn Horton's book facilitates a better understanding of the possibilities and the limitations of grassroots agency.

Discourses on sustainable development are built around the three key components: economic growth, social equity, and environmental conservation. For achieving sustainable development, all of the three should be maintained or improved over medium- or long-term periods. Strings of discourses on sustainable development differ in how they conceptualize the relationships of these goals, and are embedded within broader relations of power. The World Bank and other international financial institutions as well as USAID and mainstream NGOs not only define the dominant, market-focused discourse but also align their development policies and practices accordingly. Dating from the time before the current economic crisis, this dominant discourse was optimistic and insisted that, if a packet of neoliberal reforms was correctly and consistently applied, economic growth would follow, and its effects would trickle through to the poor.

In contrast, livelihood or people-centered discourses of sustainable development stress issues of social justice and empowerment of local communities. These positions have traditionally been advanced by activists in the South as well as grassroots organizations and NGOs. In the 1980s also the World Bank started to apply a similar terminology and acknowledged the high levels of inequality in Latin America as having negative impact on poverty reduction in the region. The WB decided to promote “empowerment” and “pro-poor” growth, and to stress education and health as key factors for improving the investment climate but has continued to exclude topics related to highly necessary land reforms, state subsidies, collective land management, or debt relief.

The third bundle of sustainable development discourses Horton identifies are ecocentric or deep ecological discourses: for their representatives who are mainly situated in the United States and in Europe, the greatest value is the natural world. Nature is not considered as socially constructed, but rather as having an intrinsic value in and of itself. The WB has shifted to a “light green” discourse, pointing out a mutual, potentially positive relationship between economic growth and environmental conservation.

The author herself is inspired by the livelihood model of sustainable development and considers empowerment as an intrinsically valuable process, understood as “pathways that reinforce the power, meaning and integrity of local settings” (p. 15). Based on 18 months of fieldwork in 2000 and 2001 and follow-up visits until 2006, she examines the conditions under which communities act as empowered agents of sustainability in Nicaragua, Panama, and Costa Rica. The selected communities are located in geographically isolated regions on the border of environmentally fragile zones and have a trajectory of resistance and mobilization.

Many of Nicaraguan Miraflores members have participated in land invasions and suffered political persecution under dictator Somoza. The former revolutionaries now struggle with the impact of the fall of cotton prices and engage in the production of nontraditional export like shrimp. Transnational and national companies dominate the production, processing, and sale of shrimp, and they control territories earlier accessible to the local population. For many, illegal firewood extraction becomes the only possible option for making a living. While NGO projects exist in Miraflores, the collected data suggests that the poorest families as well as most vulnerable groups of the population can hardly afford to participate in them.

Panamanian Ipetí is located in the semiautonomous indigenous territory Madungandi, and the Kuna authorities and activists consider the struggle for the recognition of Kuna land rights as the most important issue for the community. Road construction, migration of nonindigenous peoples into the territory as well as the flooding of 80 percent of Kuna territory in the context of the construction of the Bayano Hydroelectric Dam project in the 1970s have affected Kuna economy and social structure profoundly. After having been dispossessed of their most productive agricultural lands, the Kuna now engage in logging activities.

Costa Rica’s Puerto Jiménez is situated at the border of the Corcovado National Park, and exposed to projects of ecotourism as well as side-effects like land speculation and increasing drug use and prostitution. Neoliberal reforms have led to an increase of environmentally damaging activities like gold mining and logging in the protected areas, and even in the case of the Osa Peninsula, where ecotourism is not under the control of transnational cooperations, ecotourism has increased social stratification in the concerned communities.

In this detailed analysis, the author shows how “development” has been a disruptive process, perpetuating inequality in the concerned communities. Nevertheless, local residents are not necessarily anticapitalist but seek a more favorable inclusion in the neoliberal market economy. The example of the Kuna community Ipetí also shows that under certain conditions, collective groups can choose to limit economic growth in favor of other sociocultural priorities.

The book is recommended for everyone interested in economic and social processes at the grassroots level in rural communities affected by neoliberal reforms, as well as the possibilities and limitations of agency of community members. The theoretical framing gives a well-structured overview of sustainable development discourses, while the recollected data illustrate how community members and other actors can still differ in their positions.

***Juki Girls, Good Girls: Gender and Cultural Politics in Sri Lanka's Global Garment Industry.* Caitrin Lynch. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007. xiii + 281 pp.**

JEANNE MARECEK
Swarthmore College

By now, stories of women and girls who work in global factories are familiar. Whether in South Asia, the Caribbean, Mexico, or China, the “global assembly line” constitutes a mix of oppressions and opportunities. On offer to international entrepreneurs are the (purported) nimble fingers and docile temperaments of women from low-income countries. On offer to the women are wages better than they can otherwise earn and work in dead-end, menial jobs in workplaces where health and safety standards are minimal. However, the notion of a “global assembly line” conceals the diversity of conditions of work and social relations across locales and factories. It also pays little heed to the national politics and cultural struggles that precede and follow from these emerging industries. Caitrin Lynch’s fascinating and persuasive account of Sri Lanka’s garment industry during the 1980s and 1990s takes up both sets of issues. The opening chapters situate the proliferation of garment factories against the background of the country’s tumultuous Post-Independence politics and virulent ethnic nationalism. The second set of chapters take readers onto the shop floor and into workers’ lives.

Lynch opens her account by sketching the cultural struggles set in motion by the abrupt realignment of Sri Lanka’s economy when the government changed in 1977. As neoliberal economic policies swung open the door to foreign investment and export-oriented industries, the populace grappled with questions of how to reconcile this new version of “development” with cultural preservation. Moreover, escalating interethnic strife fostered a rising tide of Sinhala nationalism. Lynch argues that popular nationalisms, idealized fictions of authentic village traditions, and anxieties about shifting gender arrangements were harnessed to promote the government’s agenda of economic liberalization and to consolidate its popular support. The focal point of concern was the thousands of young women who had migrated from their villages to work in urban garment factories. These *Juki* girls (a derogatory name drawn from the Japanese-made sewing machines they used) were widely viewed as risking their sexual purity and respectability because they lived away from parental control and vigilant village eyes. Responding to these cross-cutting concerns, the government inaugurated its “200 Garment Factories Programme” (GFP) in 1992, an initiative designed to preserve unmarried girls’ morality (and further develop the lucrative industry) by instituting a network of rural garment

factories. The 200 GFP in effect created two classes of garment workers: morally dubious *Juki* girls and “good” girls who worked in factories close to home. The latter are the subjects of the fieldwork reported in the second half of the book.

Lynch’s fieldwork takes readers to the shop floor, bus halts, *kades* (small shops), and neighborhoods where girls, their parents, and neighbors congregated. As her intimate account of the workers’ lives shows, the presence of a multinational factory amidst paddy fields did far more than provide pay packets to supplement dwindling farm incomes. Workers adopted new consumption practices and new forms of dress, hygiene, and comportment, which served to mark them as members of a modern workforce. Their social horizons widened, even if economic opportunities remained stubbornly limited. Workers nonetheless exercised constant care to stay on the right side of the line separating respectable girls from disrespectable ones. Can a girl who sews sexy underwear and scanty tank tops for white women remain virtuous? Innocence, modesty, reticence, and, above all, virginity remained the crucial markers of female respectability.

Lynch is careful to accord agency to the workers at the same time that she documents constraints. Her text is punctuated by brief essays written by the workers; thus we hear in their own words how they perceive and respond to the conundrums and Catch-22s in their lives. Lynch also explores instances of identity work through which workers resist their devaluation by dominant groups. This identity work positions them somewhere between stay-at-home village girls and the tainted *Juki* girls. But these “Good girls of modernity” (the label that Lynch has given them), do not overthrow restrictive gender expectations. Indeed, by comparing themselves favorably to *Juki* girls, they shore up restrictive expectations. Further, as the final chapter of the book documents, the entailments of being “Good girls” sometimes set workers within a factory against one another. More importantly, those same entailments sometimes derailed collective actions that could lead to better treatment and improved working conditions.

Caitrin Lynch draws widely from scholarship in labor history, sociology of work, feminist studies, and anthropology to theorize the work processes in the factory and the social relations of garment girls, bosses, and families. This enables her to point out parallels to women workers’ experiences in other times and places. For example, echoing feminist scholars Aiwa Ong and Carla Freeman, Lynch offers a sympathetic reading of workers’ use of cosmetics, fashions, and hairstyles to signal their newly acquired “modern” identities. Moreover, she notes that charges of sexual immorality are regularly leveled against the women who break through gender barriers in the workplace or elsewhere.

Juki Girls is written in an engaging and accessible style. Peopled with vividly drawn characters, the narrative includes memorable and telling anecdotes from everyday life on the shop floor. Lynch does not presume that readers have prior knowledge of Sri Lanka. Although it is based on a doctoral dissertation, *Juki Girls* bears few of the deadening stylistic features so common to that genre. Geared for an undergraduate readership, the text has little jargon; when theoretical terms appear, they are succinctly defined.

A happy confluence of global factors enabled the Sri Lanka's garment industry to flourish for three decades. Now, however, the global environment is changing and business analysts predict that many factories will not survive into the next decade. But even if the outlying factories disappear, the significance of *Juki Girls* will not be diminished. Its many lessons about the local take-up of globalization, gendered power relations, and dilemmas of development reach far beyond rural Sri Lanka.

Little India: Diaspora, Time, and Ethnolinguistic Belonging in Hindu Mauritius. Patrick Eisenlohr. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006. xv + 328 pp., photographs, map, notes, references, index.

CHAISE LADOUZA

Hamilton College

How do languages play (or fail to play) a part in the mediation of group and nation such that a diaspora can be explored ethnographically? How do language practices serve to demonstrate the ideological processes necessary for understanding such mediation? Patrick Eisenlohr considers the case of Mauritius, where Hindi has come to serve as a particularly salient vehicle for the construction of ties between Mauritian Hindus and India. While Hindu Mauritians hardly agree about the significance of such ties as well as the relationship between Hindi and other language varieties, they have underpinning their linguistic practices a possibility that others lack: the minimization of a gap between the present and an ancestral past.

Eisenlohr's introduction presents his understanding of how two coherent and contrasting constructions of the Mauritian nation can be identified within Mauritius's social and sociolinguistic complexity. Eisenlohr identifies the two constructions via the notion of language ideology, an established but still developing realm of inquiry especially important for its ability to illuminate relationships between linguistic practice and processes of sociocultural formation. Drawing on the work of Michael Silverstein, Eisenlohr in-

vokes the notion of language ideology as metapragmatics and offers his own definition: "frames that organize the indexicality of microlevel interaction in such a way that indexical relationships . . . are recognizable as socially meaningful events and enable the reading of performative acts as indicative of particular socially locatable identities" (p. 18). Out of the organizing work of such frames emerge what Eisenlohr calls "Little India" and "Creole Island." "Little India," the focus of much of the book, is a name for the possibility that certain signifying practices collapse Indo-Mauritian descent with Hindu concerns and make possible the embodiment of an ancestral past within life in contemporary Mauritius. Metapragmatic effects are involved such as the understanding of Hindi as an ancestral language when the vast majority of those people who came to Mauritius from India were Bhojpuri speakers, a language not generally thought of as ancestral. "Creole island," in contrast, is a name for signifying practices that do not invoke and reinforce ancestral origins elsewhere and establishes Mauritius as the outer limit of political as well as ancestral affiliation. Whereas "Creole Island" has been a fleeting and largely unsuccessful basis for political formation and cultural creation, the signs of "Little India" can be found in abundance, and increasingly so.

Eisenlohr explores the metapragmatics of "Little India" ethnographically and historically within several realms including recorded conversations, changing state policies on education, television broadcasting, and an annual pilgrimage in worship of the Hindu god Shiva. Especially rich are Eisenlohr's analyses of talk, whether recorded by him or accessed through mass media. Through his analyses, he demonstrates that the label for previous understandings of interaction on Mauritius, "Creole-Bhojpuri bilingualism," fails to include the importance of other varieties and registers and their salience in discursive interaction. For example, Creole fransise should be considered a register wherein phonological, morphological, and lexical elements can be construed as French. Eisenlohr shows that the use of the register can index the education of the speaker while avoiding the disruption of interactional solidarity that a wholesale switch to French might introduce.

Such metapragmatic effects cannot be entirely presupposed, however. Eisenlohr is particularly careful to trace the relationships between variety and register distinctions, their invocation within discursive interaction, and the metapragmatic effects that seem to be at issue. For example, he shows that a shift from Creole to Bhojpuri in discursive interaction between an Indo-Mauritian speaker and addressee does not necessarily index solidarity. Such a switch, Eisenlohr demonstrates, can emerge in discursive interaction as an index of especially firm refusal. At the same time, the peppering of speech with Hindi phonological, morphological, and lexical items is complemented in broadcasting

media with an avoidance of lexical items of both Creole and Perso-Arabic origin. Such discursive shifts within the media have contributed significantly to a register of Bhojpuri that is associated with Hindu religious contexts, on the one hand, and an ancestral past rooted in Hinduism in India, on the other hand. They are also indicative of what Eisenlohr terms a “new ethnicization of Bhojpuri” that is rejected by non-Hindu speakers of the variety (p. 220). The growth in salience of the register through broadcast media, Eisenlohr explains, has the ironic consequence of a growth in language shift from Bhojpuri to Creole among non-Hindu speakers because they increasingly perceive Bhojpuri to be representative of someone else’s concerns.

A fascinating insight that emerges from Eisenlohr’s discussion of hypercorrection among Bhojpuri–Creole bilinguals illustrates the care with which the author considers the relationship between sociolinguistic variation and language ideology. However, there is the contrast that Mauritian speakers of Creole see between French and Creole, the first valued as sophisticated in relation to the second valued as simple. Mauritian speakers of Creole see a parallel distinction between Creole *fransise* for which the presence of an alveo-palatal fricative (ʃ) can serve as an index, and vernacular Creole for which the presence of alveolar fricatives (s) can serve as an index. Eisenlohr reports that many people explained to him that the “‘pointing,’ or slight fronting and tightening . . . of the lips” involved in the production of the alveo-palatal fricative “enables one to speak with more clarity and precision” (p. 137). In turn, the same contrast in sound is salient to the distinction between standard Hindi and Bhojpuri, the first appreciated as sophisticated, and the second, in contrast to the first, considered unrefined. Because the same sound distinction is salient to both pairs, Eisenlohr argues that for Bhojpuri–Creole bilinguals, the sound contrast is especially significant. In an effort to draw on the value indexed by an alveo-palatal fricative, speakers hypercorrect. Eisenlohr notes, “Frequent examples of these hypercorrections are: *en faš* instead of *en fas* (‘opposite’; French: *en face*), *šerf* for *serf* (‘deer’; French: *cerf*), *apprešie* for *appresie* (‘appreciate’; French: *apprécier*), *širtu* instead of *sirtu* (‘above all’; French: *surtout*), and even *morišyen* instead of *morisyen* (‘Mauritian’; French: *mauricien*)” (p. 138).

In sum, *Little India* has much to provide readers interested in a number of cultural processes including the formation of diasporic politics; the complex emergence of group, language ideology, and indexicality; and, more broadly, the relevance of spatial and temporal dynamics of constructions of state and nation. The ethnographic details and illustrations of changing policy are rich, and both are treated consistently with analytic precision. The book is well worth the effort.

Breast Cancer Genes and the Gendering of Knowledge: Science and Citizenship in the Cultural Context of the “New” Genetics. *Sahra Gibbon*. Hampshire, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007. 221 pp.

BARBARA L. LEY

University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

Breast Cancer Genes and the Gendering of Knowledge: Science and Citizenship in the Cultural Context of the “New” Genetics brings together two of the most culturally and politically significant health issues of the past two decades—the new genetics and breast cancer. In this book, Sahra Gibbon examines the cultural production of knowledge surrounding the so-called breast cancer genes, BRCA1 and BRCA2. Women with one or both of these genes have an increased risk of developing breast cancer at some point in their lifetime. As part of her research, Gibbon conducted ethnography in laboratory, clinical, and advocacy settings. She also interviewed professionals in these fields, as well as women receiving genetic counseling because of their personal or familial history with breast cancer. These research strategies enabled Gibbon to observe the complex entanglements among science, biomedicine, activism, and patients’ lived experiences that shape the making of genetic knowledge and practices. Moreover, the fact that Gibbon conducted her research in the United Kingdom contributes an important perspective to the scholarly literature on breast cancer culture, which tends to focus on the United States.

One of the book’s central arguments relates to the co-production of social and scientific realms, especially with regard to the relationship between genetic research and breast cancer advocacy. Like other recent accounts of breast cancer activism, Gibbon complicates conventional top-down understandings of scientific knowledge production and dissemination. While many of these accounts emphasize the ways in which breast cancer activists and other citizens influence treatment policy and research funding, Gibbon’s study also explores scientists’ engagements with advocacy groups. Particularly interesting is her discussion about the ways in which scientists feel pressure from breast cancer charities to construct themselves, their research practices, and their workspaces in particular ways to meet the scientific expectations of these organizations and subsequently receive research funds from them.

Similarly, Gibbon also argues that gendered values and norms are embedded within the scientific knowledge and biomedical practices surrounding the breast cancer genes. That is, the production of such knowledge and practices goes hand in hand with the (re)production of normative conceptions of femininity and womanhood. A particularly

dominant set of gendered norms that play out in contexts such as genetic testing protocols, research ethics and practices, activists' research fundraising campaigns, and women's personal dealings with genetic counseling relate to female nurturing and maternal caring for future generations. In other words, many scientists, clinicians, advocates, and patients construct the value of genetic research, testing, and knowledge not only in terms of protecting the health of adult women who carry or may carry the gene but also in terms of the future daughters and granddaughters who may be at risk of inheriting their mothers'—and even grandmothers'—risky genetic legacy.

An especially compelling facet of *Breast Cancer Genes and the Gendering of Knowledge* is Gibbon's use of "anticipatory patienthood" as a framework for understanding the subjectivity of women who carry the breast cancer gene (or who may be at risk for carrying the gene) but do not have breast cancer and may never develop it. This framework highlights how such women are constructed as patients or potential patients, sometimes by the health care profession and sometimes by themselves. It allows Gibbon to examine how these patients and clinicians grapple with notions of health, illness, and risk. It also enables her to explore the ethical and practical complexities with regard to predictive medicine, scientific research, and health advocacy when knowledge about breast cancer genes is still in the making and fraught with uncertainties.

Several facets of the book, however, warrant further development. For example, Gibbon partly situates the growing focus on breast cancer genes in the United Kingdom through the lens of contemporary health awareness campaigns emphasizing breast cancer prevention. Yet it is not always clear what she means by prevention. At some points, she seems to use the term *breast cancer prevention* to mean the identification and elimination of the causes of disease (primary prevention). At other times, she uses the term to refer to early detection (secondary prevention). This blurring obscures not only some of the public health and political debates over what constitutes the best approach for addressing the breast cancer problem but also some of the political and ethical aspects of the growing focus on genetics as an organizing principle for breast cancer research and care. Additionally, Gibbon presents a number of fascinating examples of the ways in which women grapple with the decision whether to be tested for the breast cancer genes—a decision that has potential physical health, psychological, interpersonal, and ethical implications. A more extensive discussion of women's decision-making processes, however, would be quite interesting. Such a discussion would add another perspective on how differently situated individuals make sense of and negotiate genetic testing and knowledge in various ways. It would also provide deeper insight into the lived experiences of women with breast cancer and women at risk (or potentially at risk) for the disease.

Breast Cancer Genes and the Gendering of Knowledge makes an important contribution to the growing body of literatures relating to the cultural dimensions of breast cancer and to the new genetics. It will be of interest to anthropologists and other researchers interested in these particular topics, as well as in the cultural and gendered aspects of science and biomedicine more generally.

The Singing of the New World: Indigenous Voice in the Era of European Contact. Gary Tomlinson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. 200 pp.

STEPHEN HOUSTON

Brown University

For an archaeologist, finding a Pre-Columbian whistle carries its own special thrill. Go ahead: clean the chamber, unclog the mouthpiece, blow, and presto!, out comes a piercing sound not heard for a thousand years. With finger holes, there is a further chance of scales or two-note trills, sounding as long as the breath lasts. The experience leads to reflections as to how this or that note links to others in melodic sequence or polyphonic texture, or how such sounds interweave with other instruments. Yet, for Tomlinson, author of *The Singing of the New World*, musings of this sort are neither interesting nor productive. "Performative reconstruction" is an impossibility given the loss of evidence, and "organological analyses" of ancient instruments will prove limited at best or dully "materialist [and] archaeological" (p. 7). Instead, Tomlinson urges attention to the "superperformative" features of "songwork," its cushioning in societal circumstance and its perceived efficacy and meaning. Song—the heightened voice, sometimes accompanied by other instruments—is his special focus, along with the distinct period, lasting decades, when Europeans encountered New World song, and when that vocalization was reciprocally churned, molded, and channeled by European thought and convention.

The book opens by addressing some of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's quainter notions. These include the view that song, a primordial cry of passion, predated speech (an idea since resuscitated by neo-Darwinists, contra Steven Pinker), along with the related claim that early languages were figurative rather than literal. Of course, by definition, song concurrent with speech cannot be the same as vocalization prior to the existence of language. Vast shifts in cognitive organization clearly occurred between these two states. Jacques Derrida—not, perhaps, the most lucid of writers—is then enlisted to comment on the vexed relation between speech, writing, and self. To Tomlinson, Derrida

did not go far enough, failing to see the role of song as a tandem, potentially wordless counterpart to speech and its embodiment in writing. In dashing riposte, Tomlinson aims to “rescue . . . singing in general from the logocentric prison-house guarded over by speech” (p. 11).

The chapter with greatest substance addresses the *cantares*, or sung performances, in Nahuatl, all recorded alphabetically in the 16th century. As others have pointed out before Tomlinson, *metaphor* does not fully describe the rich and allusive language of the texts. Instead, the *cantares* reveal the overlap and sharing of tangible essence—a process best labeled “consubstantiation,” with apologies to Martin Luther. Sharing or fusion exists between certain things, of which good examples might be song and flowers, the first being materialized in the second. Tomlinson pays due attention to the speech scrolls in Mexican imagery. Long known to scholarship, scrolls offer physical substance to speech, yet Tomlinson does not delve into preexisting literature on the subject (e.g., Houston and Taube 2000) or accept the possibility that such features are simply adjectival descriptions of certain kinds of speech and song. This last point has been made over the years with respect to Mixtec writing and its “flinty,” warlike speech scrolls or virgules. His insistence that the *cantares* and many books in indigenous script are colonial productions is doubtless true. By another light, however, their linkage to Pre-Columbian practice is likely to be stronger than an overstated insistence on detachment from earlier periods. The very difficulty of dating some of the Mexican screenfold “books” underscores the problem, as their colonial date remains subject to debate. The presence of vocables, non- or semilexical utterances described as “phonic crudescence[s]” in this book, is more persuasively identified as a feature marking the ends of strophes.

The book weakens in the following chapter, shifting to song and vocalizations among the Tupinamba of Brazil at the time of contact. Famously cannibalistic, as exemplified in the gruesome, 17th-century paintings of Albert Eckhout, the Tupinamba practiced acts of valor by both captor and captive. Such deeds culminated at times in the consumption of human flesh. For Tomlinson, this provides an opportunity, not to dig into the full setting of those acts but, rather, to invoke Marcel Mauss and, later, structuralist interpretation. He posits a “sung economy” that cycles song and human flesh, a “gift” of one resulting, by the freighted, reciprocal terms of Mauss, in the “gift” of another (pp. 98–99). Marshall Sahlins, quoted here, correctly recognized that all cannibalism is symbolic, being meshed in systems of meaning (what human act is not?). Tomlinson still seems averse to a more basic view: that such song serviced a notional regime of masculine valor, involving defiance rather than reciprocity, and that cannibalism may have been a literal and figurative incorporation of a despised enemy (cf. Houston 2001; Houston et al. 2006).

The following chapter, on the Inka, is less an advocate for a particular theory than a diffuse exploration of song in an imperial context. The Inka songs work as repositories of imperial memory and exhortations to continuance of conquest. True: the record of these, in situations of acute stress, Spaniards nearby, must be understood as conditioned by that setting. But it is too subtle to suggest that the mere act of recording in alphabetic script or early imagery was both hybridizing and inalterably compromising. What may be a minor matter of hermeneutics or practice is elevated to a position beyond its weight. For Tomlinson, contact and collision led to irreconciliation, a “yawning gap” of peoples and meanings that could only result, as among the Franciscans, in a sense of mutual betrayal.

If there is one description for this book, it is that the prose is “lush” or, less charitably, “overwritten.” Other terms apply, too: “ornate” or “bravura,” with strings of paragraphs that seem either to make a finely honed point or to repeat themselves in slightly variant if clever ways. There is a distinct preference for francophone theory and thought, some force-fit to the subject at hand. Thus, in temporal order: Montaigne, Rousseau, Derrida, Mauss, de Certeau, Lacan (why not Charles Cooley?), Deleuze and Guattari, Gruzinski, and Desan, leavened by some figures of more transparent relevance, such as Bierhorst, Cummins, and Zuidema. Dubious works, as by Joyce Marcus, are said in worrying manner to warrant “consummate interest” (p. 9, fn. 1; cf. Coe 1993). In fairness, there is commendable ambition throughout, as well as clear evidence that Tomlinson, a creative and celebrated student of Renaissance music and early opera, has grappled with difficult sources, including several in an indigenous language, classical Nahuatl of central Mexico. Yet a survey that examines songwork among the colonial descendants of the Aztec, the Tupinamba (Tupi) of early contact Brazil, the Inka, and the Sioux, is likely to be general, only fitfully deep in its penetration of sources, and lashed to summary works, such as Clendinnen, Lockhart, and Soustelle on the Aztec.

A question to pose is, what audience is intended for this volume? One composed of specialists, or those, like Tomlinson, with a broader, questing interest in song? The answer is firmly the latter, with the proviso that the author has drawn valid attention to the broader setting and meaning of song. Through a provocative and, in sections, tendentious volume, he has awakened a lively sense of what is lost, what is unknowable, and what specialized scholarship still hopes to reveal.

References cited

- Coe, Michael D.
1993 Rewriting History: Review of Mesoamerican Writing Systems: Propaganda, Myth, and History in Four Ancient Civilizations, by Joyce Marcus. *Nature* 362:705–706.

Houston, Stephen

2001 Decorous Bodies and Disordered Passions: Representations of Emotion among the Classic Maya. *World Archaeology* 33(2):206–219.

Houston, Stephen, and Karl Taube

2000 An Archaeology of the Senses: Perception and Cultural Expression in Ancient Mesoamerica. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 10(2):261–294.

Houston, Stephen, David Stuart, and Karl Taube

2006 *The Memory of Bones: Body, Being, and Experience among the Classic Maya*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Shiv Sena Women: Violence and Communalism in a Bombay Slum. *Atreyee Sen*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007. 220 pp.

DEEPA S. REDDY

University of Houston, Clear Lake

Atreyee Sen's *Shiv Sena Women* takes on the critical task of assessing women's participation in right-wing Hindu regional politics in Mumbai. While many other scholars have written copiously on the place of women and gender within "Hindutva" imageries, the emphasis of this body of work has generally been on discursive constructions. The task of engaging actual women participants in a sometimes violent and religiously oriented politics, by contrast, has perhaps been set aside as a far too uncomfortable prospect for generally secular, left-leaning academics. Sen does not, however, shy away from the challenge that her chosen subject matter poses. Although her narrative pauses at many moments of discomfort and, indeed, outright fear of her informants and the powers they wield, she follows intimately the lives of women in the Mahila Aghadi (women's wing) of the Shiv Sena. She rents an apartment close to those of her informants; she adapts not only her attire but also her social habits to her new circumstances, and in the end she produces an account of Aghadi life that reflects this closeness by being sensitive to its multiple dimensions. Her study is avowedly not a critique of "women's involvement in violence from a secular or feminist point of view" (p. 9), nor even a "now I loved them, now I hated them" (p. 16) accounting of this involvement but, instead, an honest attempt to document an Other's worldview, "the everyday realities, the circumstances and the violence in the lives of Sena slum women" (p. 18).

To this end, Sen explores first the processes and shifts that brought women into urban areas, into slums, and into the Shiv Sena's Mahila Aghadi. The "moral economy of an urban slum" (p. 23), she shows, is first a response to the displacements, uncertainties, and anxieties brought on by urbanization. Violence in this context is not merely or only the

violence enacted by Aghadi women but also the quotidian violence and abuse to which they are routinely subjected—by employers, husbands, neighbors, and others—as displaced and disenfranchised "permanent slum dwellers" and workers (p. 29). The very routinization of violence in the lives of poor women produces a propensity for "aggressive retaliatory or collective violence" (p. 48). Sen is not moralizing in her analysis of Sena women's actions; rather, she is keenly aware that her informants sometimes have a fairly sophisticated analysis of the conditions of their own vulnerability (as women, as workers, as members of families turned nuclear by migrancy, even as children—sons in families wracked by violence and separation), of structural violence in the slum, and therefore of what sort of "brute" justice (p. 99) a retaliatory political activism could well achieve. One gets a sense of the range of the term *violence* in Sen's writing, and if an ultimately clear definition remains missing, the uses of *violence* in its many forms are fully explored: violence forges strategic ties, creates an "umbrella under which personal, familial, commercial, and other local scores were settled" (p. 71), for better or for worse, and provides a means by which to deal forcefully with the exigencies of gendered vulnerability in slum life. Sen's association with the Aghadi itself serves to protect her from sexual harassment, so the use of violence to "readjust the mechanisms of power" that frame daily life is hardly without its benefits, even to her as researcher (p. 76). And, yet, the bullying, shaming, and other coercive tactics that come packaged with violent behavior frequently leave Sen aghast, squirming, and, inevitably, also fearful. Although she presents the worldview of Sena women sympathetically, her position as outsider—both because the Aghadi sends a detective after her and because her own sensibilities differ from those of her informants—is always clear.

If violence represents a sort of pragmatics for the Mahila Aghadi, then much the same is true of "Hindutva." The anxieties and vulnerabilities of migrant life make association with the Shiv Sena at first a practical matter; the affinities with emergent Hindutva rhetorics that are comparably antioutsider develop later. The Shiv Sena's "Hinduness" is known to be far more practically oriented than that of other similar organizations (such as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh [RSS]), and the women's use of religious ideologies and symbolisms further exemplifies this. Although popular accounts tend to characterize the Shiv Sena as a baldly Hindu extremist organization, Sen suggests that its brand of Hindutva is in fact rather adaptable, even if somewhat arbitrarily so—a fact that its women cadres clearly find appealing. Sen tells us that women's stake in violent communal politics is "in fact born of conscious choices designed to achieve certain ends exclusively for women" (p. 108). So it is not merely Hinduism that is rendered instrumental to their politics, but also, interestingly,

their very affiliation to the Shiv Sena. The Aghadi's goal is not to realize a Hindu utopianism but, rather, to perpetuate a struggle that per force creates spaces for the expression and exercise, however problematic, of gender autonomy. The Aghadi's politics is therefore at its core a pragmatics fundamentally concerned with making a strategic "bid for cultural hegemony" (p. 108).

The emphasis on pragmatics, however, although invaluable, comes at an analytical price: religious convictions are inevitably undergirded by the somehow more real practical considerations that rewrite power dynamics in the slums. Sen's representation of the "others" who are her interlocutors is astute in its descriptions of them as workers, women, and as cadres, but it shies away from considering them as believers. In fact, the problem of how one goes about studying groups who are not just different but who trouble our sensibilities is not systematically addressed in the text, the existence of a fairly extensive ethnographic literature that wrestles with similar issues notwithstanding. Theoretical insights, too, are interspersed through the text, elucidating Sen's narrative point by point, to be sure, but the rather-too-frequent recurrence of the phrase "According to [author]" ultimately has the unfortunate effect of casting Sen's own work as an explication of existing knowledge rather than a theoretical contribution in its own right. *Shiv Sena Women* could have been bolder about its own value and could have done much more to situate itself as an ethnography, at the very least to make it a more effective teaching text. Even so, the volume is a welcome addition to the corpus of writing on Hindu-Indian politics and on the role women play in shaping an inherited politics to meet their given ends.

Gullah Culture in America. Wilbur Cross. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2007. 288 pp.

FRANKLIN O. SMITH

The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey

Like a thoughtful menu, *Gullah Culture in America* serves the appetites of different readers. For lay readers or tourists, there are discussions of festivals and celebrations, historical sites, and of arts and crafts to be found within the Gullah Corridor, which stretches along the coastline from northeast Florida to Wilmington, North Carolina. This work also supports the interests of African diaspora enthusiasts, particularly those focused on North America. *Gullah Culture in America* provides historical and theoretical frameworks for Gullah studies, which should be useful to undergraduate as well as graduate readers.

There is some redundancy in repeat referencing of the iconic role of the Penn Center in the life and history of the Gullah people; but the practice is not so obtrusive as to mar the work's sweet flavors and contributions. Offered like a 12-course meal with each chapter starting with a taster or summary page, *Gullah Culture in America* has a concise foreword by Dr. Emory Campbell, the former CEO of the Penn Center. Among other factors, he outlines the uniqueness of language, customs, food, crafts, artifacts, religiosity, and the worldview of the Gullah people; in doing so, he joins readers to their strengths and struggles.

Using a measured, warm, and conversational writing style, Cross takes us inside Gullah society for a rare, intimate, and voyeuristic experience. Chapter 1, "Welcome Home," introduces the connection between the Gullah and Sierra Leone, and the subsequent voyage of a Gullah delegation to this West African nation. This improbable reunion was the work product of American historian Joseph Opala, who used historical records to establish a direct linkage between Gullah and Sierra Leone families. In 1989, a Penn Center delegation arrived in Freetown, Sierra Leone. They were greeted with a frenzied chorus of "*Wi gladi foh si un*" ("We glad to see you") and "*Tun roun ya le mi see who yo da*" ("Turn around and let me see who you are") that sounded like back in Gullah land. The closeness between languages—the Krio spoken in Sierra Leone and Gullah—was common to the ear, the people's manner and aesthetics common to the eye, and, later, the "hoppin' John" served was common to the palate.

Chapter 2, "Catching the Learning," traces the establishment of the Penn School to educate the newly freed in 1862. Told primarily through the eyes of its founders Laura M. Towne and Ellen Murray, the Penn School served a pivotal role during the turbulences of the Civil War in supporting the newly freed peoples' impulse to freedom and self-reliance.

In "A Quantum Leap," chapter 3, as well as in chapter 4, "Gullah Culture in America," the effects and the continuing impact of the loss of the isolation that served to enable cultural retention and homogeneity among Sea Islanders are explored. Chapter 5, "Hallelujah," is a journey into Gullah religiosity, looking at old plantation praise houses, churches, the use of shouts, music, and song, and renewal rituals that fortify and ground the Gullah in the belief that "Yes, Lord, we able."

Chapter 6, "Healing and Folk Medicine," offers that on arrival the Africans possessed extensive knowledge of holistic healing and the practice of medicine, and that geographic isolation and topography allowed the practice to live. "The Mellifluous Gullah Tongue," chapter 7, surveys Gullah metaphysical orientations and wit through folktales, parables, proverbs, poetry, and short stories—from Aesop's Fables to Uncle Remus to Bre'er Rabbit. "Geography," chapter 8, takes the reader through the Gullah corridor visiting

locations both luxurious and rustic, of historical importance and provincial, where echoes of the past haunt the present, where the names of places sing on the tongue like Wadmalaw and Edisto, or Coosaw, Dataw, and Daufuskie. “Feasting the Stomach,” chapter 9, looks at Gullah food crafts; therein, the rich vibrant history of Gullah food culture and dishes are offered so vividly that one can almost taste the words.

Chapter 10, “Festivals and Celebrations,” reviews the growth of and role played by the Penn Center in the expansion of festivals, celebrations, seminars, heritage events, and related entrepreneurial ventures highlighting fine art, artifacts, and crafts within the Gullah corridor. Chapter 11, “Music, Song and Dance,” runs deep among the Gullah, a tradition brought from Africa and alive today, a tradition sometimes found in the evening under an old oak tree where folks gather to eat a piece of fish on a plate of rice and okra, with music and singing in the air and the young ones dancing by, a revitalization ritual that got many a soul to the next day. Chapter 12, “Roots,” chronicles the journeys of “Gullah delegations” to Sierra Leone in 1989, 1997, and 2005. Building on the seminal research of Lorenzo Turner and others, Joseph Opala’s work magnifies the historical relationship between Sierra Leone and the Gullah. It is a long relationship running in two directions, a relationship that blushes with promise.

Gullah Culture in America is a wonderful reading experience offering sufficient historical references and theoretical frames to be of value to the serious student of cultural studies without sacrificing its utility to the lay reader of more secular interests. The work is a highly referenced historical contribution that also enables the Gullah to tell their own stories in their own voices. *Gullah Culture in America* should be a mainstay in many cultural studies collections and a prized artifact on many a family’s coffee table.

The Debated Lands: British and American Representation of the Balkans. *Andrew Hammond.* Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007. 328 pp.

KRISTEN GHODSEE
Bowdoin College

Andrew Hammond’s *The Debated Lands* is a rich textual analysis of over 250 years of British and American travel writing on the Balkan Peninsula. It begins with Victorian imaginings of South European savagery in the early 19th century and ends with modern Western travelogues dating as recently as 2006. Hammond’s substantial work follows in the footsteps of Maria Todorova’s 1997 book, *Imagining*

the Balkans, in which the Bulgarian historian identifies the Western tendency to what she calls “Balkanism,” following Edward Said’s paradigmatic concept of “Orientalism.” Hammond himself claims that his book is a corrective to Todorova’s, and he hopes to show that “despite dominant tendencies, the region has entered the Western imagination as a far more unstable and mutable concept (as a series of “Balkanisms,” as it were), with British writings in particular expressing an ambivalence to the continental other that does much to undermine the [Balkanist] discourse’s claim to authority” (p. 8).

Hammond’s thesis is that both British and American travel writing on the Balkans ultimately reflect the foreign policy objectives of the imperialist Western powers. Drawing heavily on Foucault’s concept of “power-knowledge” and Derridean “deconstruction,” Hammond posits that different instantiations of the discourse of Balkanism all ultimately served to justify foreign meddling in the region. “Through evoking in foreign cultures the spirit of radical otherness, of chaos, backwardness and poverty, western travel texts produce justification for the economic and political mores—democracy, capitalism and liberalism—which underlie western society, entrenching the form of power in currency in that society and valorizing its political dominance in the international arena” (p. 12). This particular imagining of the Balkans became a tool not only for justifying British and American imperialism, but it was also an important social lever through which local domestic populations wearying of Enlightenment rationality and hyper-industrialization could be kept in check. “The Balkans were . . . on the very ground of Europe, but formed a Europe gone horribly wrong, a realm where travelers found such a stark combination of similarity and difference that it was as if the reverse side of their enlightened rationality had risen up to haunt them. And in this lay their intrinsic value to western power” (p. 14).

The book is divided into three parts, consisting of three chapters each. The first section deals with the period between 1850 and 1914, wherein the dominant imagery of the Balkans in British travelogues was that of poverty, barbarism, ruthlessness, drunkenness, lust, and fierce ethnic allegiances. The first two chapters of this section consist of detailed textual analysis of a wide variety of travel writings by British subjects, which ultimately legitimate the machinations of their homeland on the Balkans. The third chapter examines the autobiographical aspect of the narratives, and how constructions of the rational and orderly British self were contrasted to the wild and untamed peoples of the Southeast.

The second section of the book is where there is the most distinct break with Todorova’s work on Balkanism. Here, Hammond cleverly illustrates an interesting about-face in the subtext of new British works and the American travel writing that was also circulating widely in Britain at

the time. In this new vision of the Balkans, one precipitated by the Balkan wars of independence and the British alliance with the Serbs during World War I, the region suddenly became a fantasy world of untrammelled natural landscapes, home to noble peasants and soldiers. Hammond explains:

Weary of western modernity, travelers were now finding in this previously depraved corner of Europe . . . a peace, harmony, vivacity and pastoral beauty in utmost contrast to the perceived barrenness of the West, receiving benefits that ranged from personal rejuvenation to outright revelation. According to this alternative balkanism, violence had disappeared from the Balkans, savagery had been tamed, and the extreme backwardness that was once the gauge of deficiency had become the measure by which the region was extolled. [p. 110]

The author does a painstakingly thorough job of closely reading an extensive number of texts in this period (according to Hammond, more travelogues were produced between 1915 and 1939 than in the preceding three centuries).

This new imagining of the Balkans was so pervasive that it influenced Western perceptions of the region well into the Cold War. The final chapter of this second section reflects on the changing worldviews of the travel writers themselves. Hammond demonstrates how the growing personal disaffection with modernity in the West fed into this new construction of the Balkans as an idyllic refuge from the madness of civilization: “the upheavals of war, urbanization, industrialization and technological innovation, combined with the growth of psychoanalysis, had dislocated the

individual’s relation to the world, casting doubt on that stable, coherent model of selfhood expressed in much Victorian realism” (pp. 170–171).

The final section, and, perhaps, the most compelling from an ethnographic perspective, is Hammond’s examination of the period between 1939 and 2006. The first chapter in this section deals specifically with the Cold War discourse on the Balkans, which was still relatively positive compared to the earlier Victorian and Edwardian periods. In the second chapter, “The Return to Denigration,” Hammond provides an intricate analysis of a plethora of new British and American travelogues. These once again constructed the Balkans as a cesspool of intransigent ethnic hatreds and irrationalities that easily boiled over into the premodern madness of warfare, mass rape, and genocide. The final chapter is another reflection on the writers themselves, this time a troupe of jaded postmodernists, disdainful of both home and abroad.

The material presented in the book is quite comprehensive with the largest number of pages dedicated to the close readings of the selected texts. The book is thus ideal for advanced graduate seminars in cultural studies, southeastern European studies, literature courses dealing with the travelogue genre or, more broadly, any anthropology or ethnographic methods course interested in the problem of “writing culture.”

Reference cited

- Todorova, Maria
1997 *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.