



## Book Reviews

### COMBINED REVIEW

**Ethnography as Commentary: Writing from the Virtual Archive.** Johannes Fabian. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008. 140 pp.

**Memory against Culture: Arguments and Reminders.** Johannes Fabian. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007. 192 pp.

#### CHRISTOPHER KELTY

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Johannes Fabian's contributions to anthropology are distinctive. Depending on where you start, he is an Africanist; a linguistic anthropologist; a partisan and critic of the "Writing Culture" moment in U.S. anthropology; a folklorist and student of popular culture; a historian of drug use by colonial anthropologists; a theorist of time, memory, and alterity; and now something of a hacker. Two books have been published recently that capture some of his heterogeneously distinctive work. The first, *Memory against Culture*, collects several recent talks and articles, including one called "Ethnography from the Virtual Archive," which is the germ of the second book, *Ethnography as Commentary*. This second book is both a meditation on creating a "virtual archive" of ethnographic sources and a "late ethnography" of a popular ritual that Fabian experienced in 1974 in Zaire with a healer named Kahenga.

*Ethnography as Commentary* is a fabulous (and short) book. It is an excellent introduction to the detailed practice of ethnographic interpretation; it is also a very thought-provoking meditation on the changing possibilities of the ethnographic monograph after the Internet and of the idea of ethnography as commentary. Last, it is an experiment in "late ethnography," in which an explanation of a cultural event (Kahenga's ritual exclusion and protection of Fabian's house) is conducted through memory, notes, and other sources; contrasted with the practice of writing history; and used to shed light on the authority of ethnographies based in contemporary sources.

The core of the experiment discussed by Fabian in *Ethnography as Commentary* is the creation of an online resource of materials: The Language and Popular Culture in

Africa Archives ([LPCA]; n.d.). The LPCA includes an online open-access journal started in 2001 as well as a collection of heterogeneous transcripts and documents, some translated and annotated, all of which have a rough thematic connection to popular culture in Central Africa in the 19th and 20th century. For instance, the site contains a Boloki perception of a visit to Europe written in 1895–97 as well as translated and annotated poems from a French collection of Central African songs and poems published around 1930. Several conversations that Fabian has recorded over the years (incl. a focal one in *Ethnography as Commentary*) are present. Also featured on the site are an interview with a Burundi potter discussing the history of local techniques; the "archives of popular culture," which contain letters, a local history of Zaire, and a play "Power Is Eaten Whole" by the "Troupe Théâtrale Mufwankolo" of Lubumbashi; a vocabulary and other texts; and an extensive bibliography of related sources.

This online corpus is quite obviously more complete and detailed than anything that could previously have been published in a standard ethnographic monograph. No longer are page limits, publishers' concerns about untranslated materials or footnotes or restrictions on images, tables, or appendixes applicable: now all of that material can be included in an archive. But this raises a new problem: What are we to do with such a beast?—because the answer is certainly not "read it." Fabian has recognized the implications clearly: placing all this material online and available for experts to consult necessarily has an impact on what the subsequent book or article should look like. The archive is not the thing itself; it is just the material that was once inaccessible: the demand to write something that synthesizes it still remains. But what form should this subsequent book take? Will it look like the ethnographies we know today? If not, what principles should guide it?

Fabian's answer is twofold. On the one hand, something new—that is, commentary—might now be ascendant as a form of composition in which reference to a changing and growing archive of shared materials is to be presumed. But, on the other hand, something old—that is, memory and participation—remains the complicated prolegomena

to writing anything, whether or not “all” the sources are now available. Fabian makes this point clear with an experiment in “late ethnography” wherein not only documents but also his own memory and authority are on display as a kind of evidence that remains as inaccessible to others as ever. This book might fail on both counts, but that lends it the unique distinction of being the only book so far to do so. What is really at stake in Fabian’s book is the first rigorous rethinking of how research and writing in sociocultural anthropology are conducted today without attempting to invent some new mode or style. The fact that Fabian has tried this experiment should be warrant and proof enough that it is a challenge worthy of intellectuals: it is not just a question of finding a research assistant who can throw some things up on the Internet for others to consult; it is at once an editorial, archival, and theoretical task.

Of course, Fabian seems anxious, and justly so, about whether readers of his short text will actually ever look at the archived materials at LPCA. I did. As someone with nearly no knowledge of popular culture in 20th-century Africa, I can say that browsing the archives was no more or less compelling than browsing the stacks in my library looking for the curious, the surprising, or the unfamiliar. But I can much better imagine myself as that student of African popular culture for whom this archive is a fantastic resource, which just ten years ago would have required a trip either to Africa or to Fabian’s university to view, as well as something to potentially contribute to. Such a scholar might find the archives something in between a newsletter and a full-fledged journal but also a thing very open in its possibilities. I do not think, however, that many people will look at it, but that does not seem to matter to Fabian’s argument that the archive changes the implications for ethnographic writing merely by having such a technical affordance available.

Many issues that Fabian’s project and the LPCA raises are already familiar: copyright and privacy issues, sustainability (both in terms of personnel to run the archive and formats and software that must be updated or lost permanently), and more general “ethical” concerns about the safety, sovereignty, and rights of informants and subjects. Fabian does not directly address these issues in the book, but this actually makes it a better read: it is carefully focused on the theoretical and methodological challenges to ethnography. The other issues can be found elsewhere, but a real focus on the intellectual significance of the Internet to anthropology has been hard to find.

Indeed, one of the most impressive aspects of this short book is the detail and attention with which Fabian investigates every step of the construction of this archive: the interpretations and claims he can and cannot make about Kahenga’s work, world, and thought—the interpretive method laid bare as process. Fabian’s project is a struggle to shore up the “regime of truth” within which this kind of ethnographic writing exists by relentlessly unfolding the process bit by bit. As such, the book could be an excellent

tool for teaching in a methods class or proseminar regarding what it means to move step by step toward one interpretation that is better than others and toward the construction of a personal “archive” of materials out of which to make such claims.

At heart, Fabian’s demonstration of interpretation makes it especially clear that the claims to truth he makes are not based on the act of interpretation itself but, rather, on the laying of groundwork necessary to get to that point. Expertise is a piecemeal, long-term, painstaking project and one that is never complete. On this foundation alone it is possible to make claims that critics of ethnographic method are wont to see as “merely” interpretations of “unrepresentative” events and “partial” knowledge. It is this foundation that distinguishes a naive from an experienced observer’s interpretation of some event: the obsessive filling in of background and context to give meaning to one highlighted sequence of events. Obviously this is not the only thing that ethnography can do nor is it even the most widely practiced—but it is one of the most powerful. It is the kind of research that people recognize when they refer to ethnography as rich, detailed, thick, textured, or any of the other baroque terms of approbation so commonly used.

*Ethnography as Commentary* may well appeal beyond anthropology, in particular in the fields of history and literature, wherein scholars are being confronted by a similar challenge to rethink the historical or literary monograph in an era when digital collections are rapidly being created and made openly available. The question of “history as commentary” (and even more so, literary criticism) might be a useful counterpoint to Fabian’s experiment. Raising commentary from its low status as something undistinguished and requiring little thought to something more like “debugging,” designing, or remixing requires rethinking the collaboration and coordination of work as well. But ethnography of the sort Fabian proposes here does retain something distinctive, which is the manner in which expertise is constructed, pedagogically speaking, both in the training of scholars and in the necessary experience of “being there” that is presumed to be a kind of epistemological encounter necessary to the creation of ethnographic knowledge.

I have said almost nothing about Fabian’s companion volume, *Memory against Culture*, which was published contemporaneously with *Ethnography as Commentary*. *Memory against Culture* is a collection of previously published articles, and I will hopefully be forgiven for dwelling less on the content of these articles (which ranges across that distinctive heterogeneity I mentioned at the outset) and more on the form of the publication. The act of publishing a collection of prepublished articles has its own kind of meaning—and even more so today with the transformation of publishing by the Internet. Just as Fabian’s archive of arcane Swahili materials was unavailable before the Internet, most if not all of these articles are now hyperavailable for the same reason (at least those in journals, if not those in edited volumes).

This is a strange kind of confirmation that, although they are available elsewhere, there is nonetheless value in collecting these articles together as an event and archive of its own kind. In some ways, the problems of memory and forgetting, and of “late” ethnography, are not only features of ethnographic investigation but also of social and human sciences generally. Today, the work of scholars can be forgotten in so many ways, whether it is published in obscure journals and expensive collected editions, goes out of print, becomes unfindable online, disappears from libraries because of rising costs of journal subscriptions, is remaindered, or is no longer taught—to say nothing of it simply not being read, a fate to which most of us are already well resigned. So, *Memory against Culture* is in many ways an act of memory, rather than one of publishing, and it is worth-

while to reflect on this in a Fabianesque manner: to take seriously, theoretically and methodologically, every layer of this onion of knowledge production in which we engage as contributing to the shaping of that very knowledge we desire to produce. We need constant reminders of this today, in the face of an onslaught of new forms of media, new archives, and newer and ever-fancier tools that both enable and constrain our desire to know ourselves and our worlds. And we need arguments for why and how to use these new things and for how they make us forget in new ways.

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### SINGLE BOOK REVIEWS

**Coming of Age in Second Life: An Anthropologist Explores the Virtually Human.** Tom Boellstorff. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008. 316 pp.

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There can be little doubt that cultural anthropology has been rather slow to embrace as viable subject matter the many forms of and domains for online sociality that have accompanied the rise of access to the Internet. Perhaps it is true that such topics were for a time triply damned in the eyes of many in the field: suspiciously associated with studying “up,” tainted by strong connections to unproductive (in the Marxian sense) “leisure” activities, and, perhaps, garish in their sheen of high technology, which maybe runs counter to proud roughing it of generations of cultural anthropologists. Tom Boellstorff offers a provocative rebuke to this tendency in his *Coming of Age in Second Life*, a work based strictly on ethnographic research performed within the virtual world, Second Life (SL).

Virtual worlds are, in Boellstorff’s words, “places of human culture realized by computer programs through the internet” (p. 17), including such programs as *World of Warcraft*, *Club Penguin*, and *EvE Online*. Boellstorff’s book is the first sustained effort to examine a virtual world from the anthropological point of view and to forge connections to long-standing concerns within the discipline. It reflects the virtues and dangers of being one of the first in a discipline to move within a new area. Its aims are many and include the methodological (in its ambition to establish virtual-world ethnographic research as viable), the theoretical (in its claims about the coming of an Age of Techne for humans who were always in some sense virtual), and, finally, the substantive (the task of conveying the “native’s point of view” for *Second Life*). For the most part, Boellstorff makes

headway toward achieving these aims. The book stands as a good starting point for anyone interested in what virtual worlds are, in a larger sense, and how we might understand our disciplinary concerns as benefiting from their examination. In particular, the author’s command and handling of the existing literature, both from within and (well) beyond anthropology, throughout the text is a tremendous accomplishment (the book merits wide course use for this reason alone). If any of these three suffers as a result of this multipronged ambition, it is mostly the substantive treatment of SL itself. In his breathless connections of SL to what seems to be a comprehensive list of long-standing topics in cultural anthropology (agency, gender, embodiment, to name a few), Boellstorff provides no end of potential starting points for such discussions, but a sustained sense of SL’s culture is thereby slightly blunted, although still quite rich and useful for those unfamiliar with it.

On method, Boellstorff succeeds in provoking thought about the most cherished item in our ethnographic toolkit, participant-observation, by unabashedly claiming that this is not only possible within the three-dimensional, avatar-based environment of *Second Life* but also possible to use exclusively within that space. Why, he asks, should we assume that, in a domain in which people see themselves as their avatars and act and communicate through them with great nuance, one cannot have “face-to-face” interaction (p. 67)? Boellstorff builds an intriguing argument that any treatment of online arenas that does not accord them the status of contexts in themselves subordinates them to the detriment of our field and risks leaving us hopelessly behind as digitally mediated social action becomes ever more prominent worldwide. This provocation could begin a useful conversation about online ethnographic-research methodology, but it does give anyone who knows SL well some pause: its users easily move in and out of the space proper, even as they continue to do SL-related things (on blogs, social-networking sites, and commercial sites, to name a few).

SL has a number of distinctive features that make it especially appropriate for Boellstorff. In contrast to most other virtual worlds, it relies on its own users for the creation of “content” in the world. For Boellstorff, the scope for creation that SL offers is vital, as it signals the arrival of the Age of Techne. Humans have, he contends, always been virtual—in that the cultural imagination of possibilities are central to our experience of an actual, physical world—but virtual worlds like SL, he argues, make intentional acts of creation, of the realization of the imagination, possible in a “recursive” way. Creating in a virtual domain provides “humans with radically new ways to understand their lives as beings of culture as well as physical embodiment” (p. 58).

Lingering here is some confusion about the role of intention in these acts of creation. Although techne is at one point “above all intentional” (p. 57), much later it seems that “such artifice is not always intentional” (p. 245). This emphasis on creation, however intentional, as a locus of value is for Boellstorff the sign of a distinctive ideology, that of “creationist capitalism,” and this zeroing in on the ways in which “participatory culture,” “crowdsourcing,” and similar current concepts rest on a fundamental linkage of creativity, labor, and value is a significant line of thought. It is useful to anyone who has noticed the rise of what looks like a new kind of exploitation: creative action, which is presumably rewarding for its own sake but benefits some other entity (such as in Google’s Image Labeler game).

It would have been welcome to see more development of this idea of “creationist capitalism.” One is left wondering about the social distinction between those who “create” within a complex but also contrived system, SL, and those who create the system itself. Although Boellstorff is ready to understand the valuing of creative labor as a distinctive and current ideology somehow made possible by technology, the implications of this for who gets to create, and at what level, are not drawn out.

**Beijing’s Games: What the Olympics Mean to China.** Susan Brownell. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008. 211 pp.

#### DAVID PALMER

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Around the time of the Beijing Olympiad in August of 2008, many friends and colleagues from North America and Europe asked me if I thought the Olympics had changed or was going to change China. The question stuck me as strange, because I could not recall anyone ever asking if the Atlanta Olympiad would change the United States: Would the Olympics help change the fact that three percent of the adult population at a given time, and ten percent of black males, is incarcerated or on parole? And I also could not recall the U.S. government ever having been required to make promises to this effect to the International Olympic

Committee as a condition for hosting the Olympics. So, what does it mean for China to have hosted the Olympic games? *Beijing’s Games* offers a fine and multifaceted analysis of this question, by an U.S. anthropologist who has been a nationally ranked athlete in both the United States and a Chinese college team as well as advisor to the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

*Beijing’s Games* discusses the issue from several perspectives. Chapter 1 considers the long and arduous process of China’s involvement and integration into the Olympic movement, a tale that is told by Brownell through the mirror lenses of Classicism and Orientalism, and their effects on the role of Greece and China in the Olympic movement. Classicism assigned Greece a foundational role in the birth of Western civilization and in competitive sports as an expression of the virile spirit of Western freedom whereas Orientalism depicted China as a land of weak and effete bodies, where sports could not even be conceived of. A millennia-long history of sport, which had nothing to envy of Greece, was thus ignored. For China to take its place within the Olympic movement was thus a process of reclaiming its own sporting history and of asserting its bodies on the global arena.

Chapter 2 shows how the Eurocentric bias of the Olympics remains strong, through the example of the Chinese martial arts that were rejected as an official sport by the IOC in 2006, because they deviate too much from Western models of competitive sports.

Chapter 3 discusses the relationships between sports stadiums and state power in China, from the early 20th century up to the construction of Beijing’s new Olympic stadium and facilities.

The next chapter is a fascinating analysis of the centrality of gender in understanding popular nationalism and attitudes to sports in China: from images of female warriors in Chinese martial tradition to the role of female athletes in holding the banner of Chinese patriotism in the post-Mao period, during which their teams were far more successful in international tournaments than their male counterparts, reinforcing widespread images of emasculated, humiliated Chinese men. This condition began to change in the 1990s, and the Beijing Olympics occurred at a moment when Chinese masculinity had become more confident and assertive.

Chapter 5 recounts the relationship between the IOC, the Republic of China (based in Taiwan), and the Peoples’ Republic of China, from the establishment of the socialist regime in 1949 until 2008. The next chapter debunks many of the stereotypes that persist in much U.S. sports reporting on China, from the “state-supported sports machine” to the persistence of Cold War rhetoric. And, finally, the author returns to the question of how much the Olympics will change China—looking mostly at mundane issues such as the legal legacy, more intense media scrutiny, and expanded international exchanges—and asks why public discourse has not focused on the opposite question, that of how China might change the Olympics?

*Beijing's Games* is a well-written and lively account of sports in contemporary Chinese public culture and politics. It offers a timely context for understanding the issues surrounding the Beijing Olympics. It is a must-read for anybody interested in sports in China and in the anthropology of body and gender in the contemporary PRC. It is a pity that, likely for marketing reasons, the book was released a few months before the games, causing it to be "dated" after a short shelf life. As it stands, the narrative anticipates, but does not provide, the climax of the games itself. The book would have been far richer and useful in the long term if the publisher and author had waited a few months and included an analysis of the Beijing Games themselves in relation to the many themes discussed in the book.

**Alcman and the Cosmos of Sparta.** Gloria Ferrari. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008. 183 pp.

### KATERINA LADIANOU

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In this book, Gloria Ferrari uses archaeological, literary, and anthropological sources to offer a reinterpretation of Alcman's *Partheneion*, one of the earliest examples of choral poetry. Ferrari offers a provocative discussion of the poem's dramatic performance, ritual context, and societal role, shedding a new light on its perplexing imagery. Her interdisciplinary approach deepens our understanding of the *Partheneion* by pointing to its cosmological background as inextricably connected to its performance.

In the introduction, Ferrari argues for the central significance of performance and summarizes relevant ancient and modern scholarship. In chapter 1, she addresses the obscure mythological references to establish a cosmological motif as the cornerstone of the poem's imagery. Chapters 2 and 3 are dedicated to the chorus, exploring its dramatic function and ritual role. Following former scholarly discussions, she sees the performance as a social act but emphasizes its dramatic dimension. Finally, the postscript focuses on the archaeological evidence and reinterprets literary sources proposing the festival of *Karneia* as the setting for the performance. The book ends with an appendix with the full Greek text—following Hutchinson's 2001 edition with minor changes—and her own English translation, a list of abbreviations, references, and separate indices for sources and monuments, followed by a general index.

In the first chapter, Ferrari investigates the perplexing mythological references in the first fragmented part of the *Partheneion*, concluding that they all refer to mythological tales of transgression with disastrous outcomes. She argues for references to the myth of Phaethon, which, connected to the myth of the Hippocontids, function as exempla of disintegration of cosmos and polis respectively.

The second chapter focuses on the function of the young girls' chorus. According to her interpretation, the

chorus of the *Partheneion* takes on the role of an archetypal chorus of stars. Ferrari departs from mainstream interpretations, discussing the chorus' self-references in a cosmological context and arguing that the poem is not about the maidens but, rather, about political order as reflected in the order of the universe. Taking up the discussion of the ritual and social contexts of the performance, she challenges the commonly accepted performance setting and uses abundant references to poetry and ancient science to argue for a festival not at spring but at the onset of winter. According to Ferrari, the chorus of maidens dances in imitation of a chorus of stars while pointing to the setting of Pleiades and Hyades, a phenomenon that marks the beginning of winter.

In chapter 3, Ferrari discusses the ritual performed in the festival and its role. By announcing the coming of plowing season, the chorus conducts a rite of passage that negotiates a turning point in the agricultural cycle. The song therefore emphasizes the timely succession of seasons and points to a homology of heavens and state. Alcman's poem projects a view of the cosmos within the traditions of archaic wisdom, poetry, and philosophy of nature. The performance, then, functions both as a spectacle of the heavenly bodies in a well-ordered cosmos and as a mimesis of a well-ordered community.

Having established that part of the festival's main celebration should be associated with the orderly succession of seasons, Ferrari gives her own answer to the much debated question regarding during which festival the *Partheneion* was performed. Relying on the previously established season and reinterpreting a key passage from Thucydides, she concludes that the performance setting should have been the *Karneia* at the onset of winter. She also uses archaeological evidence to identify the *kalathiskos* dancers as a representation of astral choruses. If Ferrari is right then, the chorus in the *Karneia* played girls who played stars, a role that could have been assumed, she proposes, by both female and male choruses.

Ferrari has made a fine exposition and analysis of a wide variety of ancient evidence, well-supported by current scholarship. Her interpretation is compelling but tends to rely too much on previously established conclusions and focuses on the cosmic underpinnings while excluding discussions of problems that do not fit directly this category. However, by discussing debatable matters and proposing her own innovative interpretations, Ferrari contributes actively and sensitively to these debates, making this book an important contribution to the study of ancient Greek choral poetry, archaeology, and art history.

**Under Construction: Making Homeland Security at the Local Level.** Kerry Fosher. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. 288 pp.

### ROBERTO J. GONZALEZ

San Jose State University

This descriptive ethnography focuses on interactions, institutions, and ideas that together constitute “homeland security.” It is based on participant-observation among firefighters, police officers, cargo screeners, city planners, emergency managers, and others charged with responding to disasters, accidents, and attacks in the Boston area.

A main theme that emerges in the book is the idea of “U.S. homeland security as practice, as something that is not monolithic but constructed” (p. xiv). Another is that local people create “security” largely by improvising solutions under significant constraints, including inadequate funding and insufficient time. These themes form “the book’s central metaphors of construction and thinking out loud” (p. 16).

In the opening chapters, the author discusses “problematic terms” including *terrorism*, *weapons of mass destruction*, and *homeland*. (Despite the obvious similarity to the German term *heimatland*, “homeland” slipped into common parlance after Bush administration officials created the Office of Homeland Security in late 2001.) In a thoughtful section entitled “Disciplinary Politics and Authorial Identity,” author Kerry Fosher reflects on her transition from a graduate student who once joked about ethically “contaminated” military-education programs to a professional anthropologist regularly “engaging with those flawed systems” (pp. 4, 8).

Subsequent chapters cover the day-to-day work (and challenges) faced by those responsible for keeping Boston secure. Apart from the mundane tasks of guarding ports, keeping watch over critical sites, and responding to crises, Fosher notes that they were also involved in subtler activities: coordinating and negotiating roles across different agencies and jurisdictions; assessing the relative vulnerability of buildings, roads, and other parts of the regional infrastructure; and building “a sense of community” among themselves.

The concluding chapter discusses ways in which applied anthropologists might help “security policymakers and practitioners” achieve their objectives (p. 221). These include providing assistance in conceptualizing “homeland security” more effectively; clarifying the differences between networks and hierarchies; strengthening the ability of local actors to work flexibly; and communicating how locally based experience and knowledge can forge better security policies. Fosher also comments on the “dirty secrets” sometimes standing in the way of better security policies and practices: a tendency for many in our country to romanticize police officers, soldiers, and firefighters (which often diminishes resources for public-health and other emergency-management personnel); lack of public debate about the limits of security; proliferation of bureaucratic documents impeding substantive work; and the rejection by many policy makers of realistic plans and valuable local knowledge.

*Under Construction* is inspired by research on organizational cultures, by community studies, and by practice theory and poststructuralism. In a revealing passage, the

author notes that emergency planners and responders were “not simply resisting or complying . . . [they] floated, swam, surfed, and struggled—sometimes as individuals, sometimes with company—in the political and discursive forces at work” (p. 18). Fosher clearly expresses a preference for “favoring practice over critique” (p. 231) after establishing that “this book is not in the tradition of critical ethnographies of the powerful that followed [Laura] Nader’s call” to study up (p. 14).

Dismissing this critical ethnographic tradition has unfortunate consequences. For example, *Under Construction* has little to say about the rapidly growing multifaceted homeland-security industry, whose corporate executives, managers, and employees have played vital roles in influencing and creating new policies, practices, and products. Some have supplanted governmental agencies in providing postdisaster services with no oversight, as when 150 heavily armed subcontractors employed by Blackwater USA arrived in New Orleans hours after Hurricane Katrina’s arrival (Scahill 2007:xxiv–xxv). Approximately two-thirds of government homeland-security spending since September 11, 2001, has gone to large corporations, with data-processing companies (such as IBM) and baggage-screening equipment manufacturers (such as General Electric’s In-Vision) leading the way (Monahan and Beaumont 2006). Fosher does not explain why an ethnography about the construction of “homeland security” should effectively exclude these powerful institutions and the many people associated with them. (The homeland-security industry’s exponential growth began during the time period in which Fosher was conducting research.) Nor does she explain why *Under Construction* should privilege the agency of public-sector responders (e.g., firefighters and public-health workers) over than the complex micropractices of those working for private firms (e.g., Blackwater or Bechtel Corporation subcontractors).

“I recognize that the decision to write about the nitty-gritty of everyday life, not tightly linking practice into a critical analysis of larger cultural trends, is, itself, a political as well as an ethnographic choice,” writes Fosher (p. 13). It ultimately results in a work of limited and narrow scope.

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**The Chumash World at European Contact: Power, Trade, and Feasting among Complex Hunter-Gatherers.** Lynn H. Gamble. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008. 359 pp.

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When Spanish explorers and missionaries first encountered the Chumash of California's Santa Barbara Channel, they found a densely populated landscape with large mainland villages numbering up to a thousand people. Spanish chroniclers were astonished by the intricate trade networks linking the offshore Channel Islands to the mainland; the complex marriage alliances that cemented social relationships; the bountiful resources of shellfish, fish, and sea mammals; and the elaborate political system led by hereditary chiefs and an elite or noble class. From the inception of modern archaeological research in southern California, investigators have attempted to explain the chronology and context for the rise of chiefdom-level sociopolitical organization in the Chumash world. Mortuary data from early cemetery excavations, shell-bead typologies, material-cultural analysis, human skeletal paleopathology, archaeological shell-midden excavations, and more have all been employed to explain the transition from mobile Paleocoastal hunter-gatherers to sedentary complex hunter-gatherers. These data also have been employed to explain and model the rise of political complexity elsewhere around the world.

Until this book was released, most of the published data on the Late Holocene (< ca. 3,500 years ago) and the rise of complexity came from the Northern Channel Islands. Although archaeologists commonly referenced important sites and ethnographic literature from the mainland, no synthetic account of the central Chumash homeland was available outside the gray literature (unpublished cultural resource management reports). In this book, Lynn Gamble focuses on mainland-coast population centers from Point Conception in the north to Malibu in the south, synthesizing the ethnographic and archaeological literature and painting a picture of the Chumash world as it existed when the Spanish established permanent occupations in southern California in C.E. 1769.

Gamble organizes the book into ten chapters. The first three provide theoretical, environmental, and cultural overviews. In chapter 4, Gamble briefly describes each of the historic Chumash settlements along the mainland coast as they were encountered by Father Juan Crespi, Captian Gaspar de Portola, and the Spanish soldiers. Chapters 5 through 9 address a variety of issues relevant to the sociopolitical and economic interactions of the Chumash, including the following: village and household organization; subsistence and feasting; rank, ritual, and power; wealth systems; and conflict and social interaction. In the final chapter, Gamble summarizes the sociopolitical structure of the historic Chumash, describing the features that marked them as complex hunter-gatherers. The Chumash political structure, then, is compared to two other sociopolitically complex hunter-gatherer groups in California: the Pomo and Patwin. Gamble compares the similarities and differences between how

these three Native Californian cultural groups established and maintained their sociopolitical structures.

Gamble's book is, essentially, a detailed cultural history of the central Chumash world in the mid- to late 18th century, making it an important read for any California archaeologist. Gamble integrates a variety of interdisciplinary datasets from ethnohistory, ethnography, ecology, archaeology, and physical anthropology to reconstruct the daily lives of the Chumash before they were forever changed by European occupation. Gamble's reconstruction of feasting; the roles of rank, ritual, and gender; settlement organization; and social integration among the Chumash will be of interest to anthropologists dealing with a variety of sociocultural issues but, particularly, anyone concerned with the evolution of complexity and inequality. Gamble's book provides a roadmap for anthropologists interested in engaging these issues from a four-field anthropological or interdisciplinary perspective.

Gamble concludes the book with a plea for future researchers to move beyond the environmental explanations, such as drought events and sea-surface temperature changes, which have been favored by some archaeologists to explain the rise and timing of complexity among the Chumash. Although this notion ignores some of the proximate factors described by these climate-minded archaeologists, a move toward a more holistic and interdisciplinary approach to understanding the cultural trajectories of the Chumash and other complex hunter-gatherers is warranted. Although Gamble falls short of suggesting how to accomplish this, this book provides an excellent model that can be expanded both temporally and spatially. Overall, Gamble presents a significant contribution, both descriptively and methodologically, that will be of interest to a wide variety of anthropologists, sociologists, historians, and other researchers in California and around the world.

**Circuits of Culture: Media, Politics, and Indigenous Identity in the Andes.** Jeff D. Himpele. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007. 246 pp.

**THOR ANDERSON**

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With the ascendance of Evo Morales as the first indigenous president of Bolivia, this book, delving into the complex constellation of politics, ethnicity, and "indigenist" nationalism, is both timely and of interest to a wide range of scholars. Published just as President Morales was entering office, Jeff Himpele's *Circuits of Culture* provides a fascinating glimpse of life—and its mediated formulations—in La Paz, its immediate environs, and beyond.

This is a valuable and important contribution to the growing body of literature in visual anthropology. The 20th volume in the University of Minnesota's Visible Evidence series, *Circuits of Culture* adds another compelling case study to an impressive list of publications. Himpele's monograph

is based on a long-term investigation of Bolivian film and television, focusing on how ideas of indigenous identity circulate through a contemporary Andean society. As the author states in his preface, the book “explores the indigenization of media and popular publics in urban Andean Bolivia” (p. xxiii). Himpele accomplishes a great deal in this volume, including critical reviews of the Bolivian film history, a comprehensive analysis of a popular television series, and contemplative vignettes from the field.

Situated in the Bolivian capitol city of La Paz, Himpele focuses on local media makers and distributors, coming to grips with “social networks and circulatory matrices that cut across the canyon walls of the city” (p. xxi). He describes how films cycle from first-run theaters in the city center to more modest venues up the steep, and increasingly impoverished, valley inclines. Himpele credits his interlocutors with shaping his concepts of circulation. These “circuits,” however, are not defined with precision; rather, ideas of orderly interconnectedness materialize in the guises of electronic circuitry, flows of materials and ideas, and even a Möbius strip, as media recycles into and back on itself. Despite extensive elaboration, these concepts are not clarified to the point of being useful as convincing organizing principles.

The author uses his own experience as a seasoned media maker to give insider views of the production process in both film and television. His descriptions of cinematic techniques are clear and jargon free. The social history of Bolivian cinema is similarly enriched by the author’s filmmaker’s eye, such as when he uses specific shots or filmic transitions as starting points for more detailed analyses. The interplay of Bolivian politics with the production of cinema is fascinating and well documented, with firsthand accounts from some of the principal protagonists. Himpele worked his way into the production studio of the most popular television series of the day, and from this unique vantage point he was able to document the multiple ways class, ethnicity, language, and politics interplay on the television sound stage, into the homes of the people, and back onto the streets.

However, there is a sense of distance from the people and their daily lives that cannot be explained away by the fact that this is a study of media. Protagonists in the reality-based television series, for example—whether hosts, participants, or production personnel—seem to exist almost exclusively on air. Their fates feel ephemeral. Further, the actual words of ordinary people, in this case the audience, are quite rare. Yet, anthropological citations abound, at times unnecessarily interrupting the text. Instead of providing concrete ethnographic evidence, the author faces another direction, as if the confirmation of an observation is best sought up some theoretical ladder. Once on this higher level of analysis, syntax becomes tortuously complex, and ideas that once seemed straightforward are routinely catapulted into constructions with three verbs, assorted objects, and word play.

The author is most at home on the page when he describes events he has witnessed close at hand. The last chapter clearly documents a final circuit of this visual ethnography, as Native American filmmakers from Bolivia bring their work on tour to the United States. Himpele’s rendering of the subtle interactions between the filmmakers, Bolivian ex-patriots, and others in the audiences is moving and fully engaged.

All in all, Himpele has made formidable steps forward in Andean ethnography and visual anthropology. At the same time, *Circuits of Culture* seems to float somewhere between life in the Andes and theoretical abstraction. For some, this text will virtually sparkle with fascinating connections; for others, these sparks, although brilliant, may not catch fire. In circling back to the perennial problem of “whose story are we telling,” we rediscover yet another “circuit of culture”—familiar, vexing, yet worth the struggle—that of integrating theory and ethnography in the practice of anthropology.

**Vaka Moana: Voyages of the Ancestors.** K. R. Howe, ed. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008. 360 pp.

#### JENNIFER G. KAHN

Bishop Museum

The exploration and colonization of the remote Pacific Islands was a remarkable episode in human prehistory. *Vaka Moana: Voyages of the Ancestors* relates this epic story of migration over a vast region and the technology required to achieve it. It is a beautifully formatted book and provides an excellent example of how social scientists can relate our research in a scholarly yet accessible manner not only to our colleagues but also to general readers and to an international audience. Because the timing, nature, and process of Pacific Island voyaging and settlement have been hotly debated, similar to other contexts such as North America, this work will have broad appeal to both archaeological and anthropological audiences.

The book is comprised of nine chapters, with contents contributed by a diverse group of anthropologists, historians, archaeologists, voyagers, and ethnobotanists. Most chapters are written by leading experts in their field, utilizing a wealth of data to define the current state of our knowledge related to Pacific Island migration (Howe: ch. 1; Taonui ch. 2), voyaging and settlement (Irwin: ch. 3; Finney: ch. 4), and navigation (Finney and Lowe: ch. 5). As with other edited books written for a generalized audience, some chapter contents are related in better detail in other scholarly publications. Yet the strength of *Vaka Moana* is that it brings together holistic information about our current understanding of Pacific Island voyaging and exploration, but it does not stop there: it looks at the aftermath, with in-depth discussions of culture contact (Salmond: ch. 7), postsettlement voyaging for trade and exchange and its transformations through time (Neich: ch. 6), resulting



Western views on Polynesian origins and how these were linked to the Enlightenment (Howe: ch. 8), and the modern renaissance in canoe building and voyaging throughout the Pacific (Finney: ch. 9).

Geoffrey Irwin's chapter on voyaging and settlement provides an excellent example of the holistic nature of the work. His masterful synthesis discusses archaeological evidence for the settlement of the Pacific Islands and what implications these have for the nature of Pacific voyaging. Irwin's chapter strikes a measured balance in reporting the history of the debates, particularly whether voyaging was systematic or random, discussing earlier evidence in light of more recent developments and providing the author's own opinions. Irwin's chapter, like many in *Vaka Moana*, relies on an impressive range of up-to-date sources; the noteworthy use of text boxes aptly provides discussions of interesting new data and alternate theories. Highlights of this chapter include: evidence that Pleistocene hunter-gatherers in the western Pacific moved animals from island to island, an innovation in subsistence practices associated with the use of boats; clear archaeological evidence for systematic voyaging as early as 20,000 B.P. to Manus Island; and the blunt assessment that Europeans were not much better wayfarers at the time of Polynesian settlement than Pacific navigators. Still of current debate are new data on climatic variability and if and how it affected human settlement of the Pacific Islands. Irwin discusses geological studies of mid-Holocene peaks in sea-level height, which, he argues, provide a strong environmental influence that could explain the chronology of settlement, as may have high frequencies of El Niño seasons, which increase westerly winds (used for exploration to the East) in frequency and duration.

Finney's chapter (ch. 4) focuses on the sailing vessels and navigational techniques used in Pacific Island migrations. What will strike archaeologists and anthropologists working in other regions is the holistic data used to reconstruct Oceanic canoes. The slim archaeological evidence for well-preserved and dated canoe parts is presented, as is ample evidence for prehistoric movement of plants, animals, artifacts, and human DNA; linguistic reconstructions for outrigger-canoe development; historic compilations of canoe designs; computer simulations of voyaging; and experimental voyaging with reconstructed canoes. Irwin favors a "long-pulsed" migration model, wherein bursts of expansion were separated by long pauses, and discusses China's Ming Dynasty as an example in which overseas-seafaring technology did not lead to continual or accelerated voyaging and expansion.

Finally, Finney's chapter (ch. 9) on the modern-day voyaging renaissance will be of interest to voyaging enthusiasts, as it provides a humanistic background to the story of experimental canoe voyaging. The chapter offers a broad synthesis of modern-day voyagers, navigators, sailors, and canoes from across the Pacific, typically lacking in other works that have focused mainly on the Hōkūle'a voyages out of Hawai'i.

Readers will note that there is some overlap between chapters and some disagreements among them. It is commendable that the editor chose to realistically portray the scientific debate of archaeology and anthropology as an ongoing process wherein competing hypotheses are revised and interpreted according to new data sets.

In closing, *Vaka Moana* has a broad appeal. Although some academics might be put off by the lack of intensive citations, the book successfully portrays the excitement and importance of scientific research to the general population and will be a useful resource for courses in Pacific Island archaeology, voyaging, navigation, and human migrations.

**Sex Work and the City: The Social Geography of Health and Safety in Tijuana, Mexico.** Yasmina Katsulis. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008. 174 pp.

#### PATTY KELLY

George Washington University

In *Sex Work and the City*, Yasmina Katsulis does something few anthropologists of sex work have done by focusing on female, male, and transgender workers in comparative perspective. Set in Tijuana, known best for its status as a border city, where transmigrants wait to leave while *estadounidenses* engage in the sunburned-tourist revelry typical of such places, Katsulis provides us with a detailed empirical study of the varied world of sexual service in Tijuana and shows how structural context and the divided and hierarchical nature of sex commerce differently impacts the occupational health of the city's diverse population of sex workers. In this very necessary and thorough study, Katsulis successfully documents how a sex worker's place in the social geography of prostitution in Tijuana shapes one's risk of experiencing violence, extortion, mental-health issues, drug addiction, sexually transmitted illness, and social stigma.

One of Katsulis's primary contributions is her analysis of the important distinctions between Tijuana's regulated (and therefore legal) sex workers and those who are unregulated. The legal regulatory system that exists in Tijuana is shown to be contradictory in nature, having both benefits and drawbacks. For instance, though "the system of health card registration is both coercive and misleading" and "far from ideal" (p. 85), Katsulis found that registered female sex workers (RFSW) in Tijuana suffer less police violence and social stigma while generally earning more per sex act than their unregistered female counterparts. (Interestingly, this is not always the case. I found that RFSW in urban Chiapas, for example, earn far less than unregistered street workers and often experience a heightened sense of social stigma, as their status as sex workers is a matter of public record [see Kelly 2008]).

Katsulis documents how, through the legalization of some workers (registered females) under Tijuana's regulatory system, others are criminalized. Males and

transgenders, whose work falls outside “the more conventional heterosexual female service role which is widely heteronormative, feminized, and homophobic” (p. 141), are excluded from working legally (and some females may not wish to or cannot register because of age, migration status, or a variety of other factors; see p. 64). Katsulis illustrates how gender diversity impacts sex work, finding that, without access to professional or legal status, male and transgendered workers “are at a higher risk for nearly all occupational hazards” (p. 113). For instance, transgendered sex workers “were twice as likely to face customer violence, three to six times more likely to face violence at the hands of employers, three to ten times more likely to encounter police violence, and two to four times more likely to be accosted by strangers” (p. 133).

Perhaps the most important contribution of *Sex Work and the City* is its informed and lucid call for the creation of a fair and just prostitution policy that protects all sex workers from the many hazards associated with their work. By focusing on the entire spectrum of sex workers, not just regulated females, Katsulis shows how legal prostitution “exists within a larger context in which sex workers who work outside the system are criminalized, harassed, policed, and further marginalized while trying to make a living” (p. 143). In advocating a more inclusive and less coercive system that reduces police violence, protects individual civil rights, and encourages sexual and other health screenings for all workers, rather than simply forcing them on some, the author shows how the faulty Tijuana model could be vastly improved.

*Sex Work and the City* will not please those feminists who oppose all forms of sexual commerce or those who advocate decriminalization, rather than legalization. Nor will it satisfy readers hoping for colorful life histories or lengthy narratives by individual sex workers; Katsulis’ writing is spare with few literary flourishes that capture the flavor of this vibrant border city and its denizens. But what the work lacks in ethnographic richness it easily makes up in detailed quantitative data (tables and all) that, if applied, could truly contribute to improving the lives of sex workers in Tijuana and beyond.

In sum, *Sex Work and the City* is a crucially important and effective contribution to the study of sexual labor. It is essential reading for scholars of sexuality, Mexico, and the anthropology of work and especially valuable for students of public health and public policy as well as sex-work activists.

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**Two Bits: The Cultural Significance of Free Software.** Christopher Kelty. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008. 400 pp. [see also <http://twobits.net>]

#### DANIEL MILLER

University College London

It would be a great pity indeed if anthropologists, assuming they have no interest in software development, were to ignore the subtitle of this book. Because “the cultural significance of free software” takes to heart matters of concern to all anthropologists. They would miss the radical energy of chapters 8 and 9 with their visions of open-source publishing and tensions of academic authorship and collective contribution, chapters that barely mention software at all. They would miss a book that has as much to contribute to the anthropology of law as to the anthropology of religion, both much enhanced by the unusual perspective that emerges from software development. They would also miss a good read. If the reportage sometimes feels journalistic, that is intended as a complement; there are stories here that are quite gripping, full of tension and passion. This is a book about people who care greatly for what they do and for the beliefs and moralities that they see inscribed in their practice. The author clearly experienced and now captures those emotional involvements.

The first part of *Two Bits* claims that geeks form their community around a shared ideology that creates what he calls a “recursive public.” The source here is as much Charles Taylor’s *Modern Social Imaginaries* (2004) as ethnography, although it is expressed as much through stories of geeks “selling out” when companies become big and profitable as it is in their “keeping the faith.” He captures the missionary zeal, although perhaps the degree to which he shares it leads to some homogenizing of these ideals.

The book becomes much stronger when it turns from discourse to material culture and the sense that it is the practice of software, and not just the claims of its legitimation, through which most of the action really occurs. There follows a series of five excellent chapters all devoted to key debates, in which the propensities of the software itself often take central stage—for example, when one branch of contributions to enhancing software makes it no longer compatible with others. He tells of the shock when the closure of Napster demonstrated that battles could be lost. Of particular interest are the tensions but also highly productive encounters between academia and commerce. Whether it is Linux or Unix, with each development there tends to be a key argument between two schools as to both the philosophy and methods behind free software and the development of code. The collaborative aspect of open-source technologies emerges as only one of the essential properties of free software. He sees their blind spot as a failure to engage with the problems of intellectual property and copyright licenses. He also shows also that the glib dismissal of open source as an utopian, but ineffective, fringe ignores its major underlying impact on many innovations, including the Internet itself.

*Two Bits* has its weaknesses. Its emphasis on the cultural significance of free software is sometimes at the expense of

its culture of construction. There is remarkably little engagement with previous anthropological discussion of this topic, such as of open source from a Maussian perspective. Kelty misses the work of James Leach and others showing that, at least in Europe, 98.5 percent of those involved with open source are male. So, despite its ethnographic foundations, he does not always grasp the wider significance of the degree to which geeks do not “get a life” and have specific cultural conditions of production beyond those of discourse and work. Nor is the case study fully grounded in the much wider cultural shift during which many others also saw themselves as betraying the promises of the 1960s. Finally, the relative homogeneity of ideology claimed in the first part to mesh with philosophical debate is largely contradicted by much of the rest of the book.

But *Two Bits* is highly successful ethnography in that the debates themselves certainly ring true. In the third part of the book, Kelty turns to some further implications of a struggle he has himself engaged with: the potential for open-source publications beyond the likes of Wikipedia. Here he certainly achieves his main aim of clearly demonstrating why we all need to pay attention to these debates as practitioner academics and not just as an account of the other: because many of the questions raised by free software could apply to authorship and ownership of academic ideas and writings. Free software and open source are significant challenges to our own conservatism. He thereby reveals a final fascinating tension between the necessary pragmatism of successful practice and the ideals that are objectified through that practice.

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**Three Centuries of Woodlands Indian Art: A Collection of Essays.** J. C. H. King and Christian Feest, eds. Altenstadt, Germany: ZKF Publishers (distributed in the United States by University of Nebraska Press), 2007.

#### IRA JACKNIS

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Artifacts of the Eastern Woodlands were among the first forms of Native North American objects to be encountered by Europeans. As such, they have sustained a long history of collection and study. Despite this attention, however, when compared with aboriginal peoples of the Plains, Southwest, and Northwest Coast, these art forms remain little known and understood.

*Three Centuries of Woodlands Indian Art* serves as a wonderful resource of current thinking on these objects. Derived from papers presented at a 1999 conference at the British Museum, with additional contributions, the volume includes 18 chapters—plus an introduction—by 18 authors

(some authors contributed more than one piece and some coauthored chapters).

Among the contributors are such well-known scholars as Christian F. Feest, Dale Idiens, J. C. H. King, Shepard Krech III, Trudy Nicks, Ruth Phillips, Jolene Rickard, and the recently deceased William C. Sturtevant. Although the disciplinary background of each author is not always apparent, a little over half appear to be anthropologists (11), the rest being art historians (3), historians (2), and independent scholars (2). By nationality, about half are from North America, with seven from the United States and three from Canada; the rest are from England (4), Scotland (1), Germany (2), and Austria (1). Only one, Jolene Rickard, is listed as a Native (Tuscarora). These identities seem to reflect fairly today’s current field. Perhaps because of the rich early Eastern collections in European museums, there does tend to be a higher proportion of continental scholars than in the study of other regions of Native American art. Similarly, because of the long time depth, one finds more engaged historians.

There is a good bit of ethnic diversity in the topics, with about half of the volume’s chapters devoted to multiple tribes (ten). This relatively high number of comparative chapters is because primarily of the often-poor documentation of early museum collections and the difficulty of ascertaining proveniences. However, as King observes in his introduction, trade and other kinds of ethnic sharing have long characterized the region. The Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) are by far the most-examined people (four chapters), whereas others—such as the Menominee, James Bay Cree, Red River Ojibwa, and Mashantucket Pequot—are covered by just one author. Again, one might imagine the demographic issues at play, with a greater Native population arrayed over a larger area and remaining a vital society up to the present.

The volume is arranged roughly chronologically, with the primary temporal focus divided into six on the 18th century, seven on the 19th, three on the 20th, and two on the early 21st century. Despite the great scholarly interest in earlier periods, objects from the 19th century are more common in museums and are accompanied by better documentation. However, this is a region for which the ancient past has always held sway, and scholars have been less inclined to address the present.

In terms of artifact types, most of the chapters address a wide range of objects (seven chapters), with four on textiles (coats, hoods, “prisoner ties” for securing captives, and silk-ribbon appliqué); two on wooden war clubs; two on Native paintings in Western styles; one on paintings by Western artists; one on intercultural performance; and two on contemporary (Iroquois) art.

Methodologically, almost half of the chapters focus explicitly on museum collections (seven chapters) and display (two chapters). Of the remainder, however, most draw on such collections to address broader issues, and almost every chapter explores in some way themes of cross-cultural interaction. Although a fair reflection of recent trends, the

contemporary interest in Native agency is somewhat muted, perhaps because most of the contributions deal with early centuries and because there is only a single Native author. The theme is addressed most explicitly in Trudy Nicks and Ruth Phillips's provocative chapter on an early-20th-century Mohawk dancer, in Cath Oberholtzer's review of James Bay Cree hunting regalia, and in the two treatments of contemporary art.

This is the third in a monograph series produced by the *European Review of Native American Studies*. Americanists will be familiar with this journal, published since 1987 and currently edited by Feest. Distinguished for the high quality of its research, this volume is no exception. It is also well produced, with good reproduction of its one map and 152 color and 66 black-and-white illustrations.

Despite its somewhat sprawling contents, *Three Centuries of Woodlands Indian Art* must be one of the best books on Woodlands Indian art to have been published in recent years. It is recommended to all who desire a view of current scholarship.

**The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics.** Tania Murray Li. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007. 392 pp.

#### MICHAEL WATTS

University of California, Berkeley

Tania Li's new book *The Will to Improve* speaks to contemporary development practice in the highlands of Sulawesi, but its obvious reference point is 17th-century England, the ideas of John Locke on property and agrarian improvement, and, more generally, the relations among capitalism, development, and notions of "trusteeship" (the point of reference here is of course Mike Cowen and Robert Shenton's foundational text *Doctrines of Development* [1995]). This is an ambitious book seeking not only as the subtitle suggests to link governmentality, development, and politics—to document the complex rationalities, limits, and contested natures of improvement schemes in Indonesia—but also to simultaneously provide an account that sutures the ideas of Karl Marx, Michel Foucault, and Antonio Gramsci (among others). In all of this, Li is only partially successful: for example, although raised in the introduction, Gramsci's ideas are never engaged with in any serious and sustained way. However, *The Will to Improve* nevertheless is one of the very best and most sophisticated efforts to pick up the gauntlet thrown down by James Ferguson in *The Anti-Politics Machine* (1994), his ethnographic rendering of rural development in Botswana: namely, to provide a practice-based and ethnographic account of development projects and institutions.

Li wants to retain the power of the will to improve—understood as a two-century-long project in Indonesia to secure the welfare of populations—but to root it in a historical and ethnographic reading of government practice while remaining attentive to the jagged rhythms of capitalist accu-

mulation (how, in other words, accumulation and welfare, freedom and order, are in her words "balanced"). She is especially concerned, through a raft of projects and programs in Sulawesi, about the ways in which government programmers draw boundaries around, and render technical, aspects of landscape, conservation, and livelihood. She also addresses how these practices have limits imposed by the contradictions between improvement and sovereign power, and between the rationalities and practices of government and their ability to actually regulate dynamics of social relations that open up the terrain of "contestation and debate between people with different interests and claims" (p. 270).

In the first part of the book, Li offers a broad sweep through Indonesia history, detailing how differing sources of power attempt to balance accumulation and welfare and the boundary drawing entailed by contradictory forms of rule based on trusteeship. In chapter 2, she highlights the forest-farm boundary in the colonial and New Order periods, while in chapter 3 she attempts (with somewhat uneven results) to show how improvement programs generated often-violent conflicts around the intersection of accumulation and identity (religion in particular). In an excellent chapter on conservation and development in Sulawesi, she brilliantly shows how the efforts to "render technical" a raft of conservation efforts screened out processing of marginalization among the recipient communities, a process that produced limited development benefits and community radicalization. In two subsequent chapters, Li focuses explicitly on politics surrounding a national park. In one case, the Free Farmers Forum emerges from a century of failed improvement; in another highland, villagers reject the park and efforts by the Nature Conservancy, which Li sees as a permanent provocation between the will to govern and strategies of struggle. In all of this, she convincingly shows how local politics turns on the contradiction of a form of rule as trusteeship in which agents with power are ultimately unprepared to relinquish their authority, however much it is draped in the rhetoric and discourse of participation and empowerment.

In what was for me the most-compelling chapter, Li concludes her book with a tour de force account of the new wave of World Bank programs, which she cleverly sees as a form of governance through the community (she draws productive here on the work of Nikolas Rose). What is striking in her account is the great sophistication of the local World Bank practitioners, deeply sensitive to poststructural anthropological theory as much as the theory of social capital and identity formation. Aware of what she calls "the contradictions of capitalism" (p. 263)—that is to say, the consequences of agrarian differentiation and the powers of local class interests—Li emphasizes the constitutive exclusions of the program and the limits of improvement when confronting transnational capital, unruly government officials, and ethnic militias. The bank's response was to attempt a massive campaign of micromanagement ("minutely calibrated calculations," as Li calls it).

There is no question that Li has raised the bar as regards providing a serious anthropological critique of development (perhaps the only comparable book is David Mosse's *Cultivating Development* [2004]). There are many moving pieces in her book, and on occasion I felt that the dynamics of local accumulations and the local dynamics of government actors (officials and elected representatives) received short shrift. The grand integration of Marx, Foucault, and Gramsci is still awaiting us. But with that said, her desire to demonstrate that practices of government "limit the possibilities for engaging with targets of improving schemes as political actors" (p. 281) and to show the "critical potential of an ethnography of government" (p. 282) are both achieved with extraordinary clarity, brilliance, and élan. A very fine book, indeed.

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**Consequences of Contact: Language Ideologies and Sociocultural Transformations in Pacific Societies.** Miki Makihara and Bambi B. Schieffelin, eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. 234 pp.

#### PAUL V. KROSKRITY

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In their coauthored introductory chapter, "Cultural Processes and Linguistic Mediations," Miki Makihara and Bambi Schieffelin announce the core theme of *Consequences of Contact* as being "a basic concern with the multiple ways that processes of historical change have shaped and been shaped by linguistic ideologies: reflexive sensibilities about language and language use, held by Pacific peoples themselves" (p. 4). Pacific societies are a likely focus for this first-ever "regional" collection of case studies involving language-ideological approaches. With its extensive history of precolonial and colonial contact, its own indigenous hierarchies as well as the inherent inequality of imposed colonial relations, and postcolonial emerging nationalisms, these societies provide the proverbial "natural laboratory" for (participant-) observing the dynamic role of language in social transformation. (But, of course, we must recall Geertz's caveat about such natural-science imagery when, indeed, "none of the parameters are manipulable" [1973:22]). In addition to the introduction, eight substantive case studies and a final chapter of commentary complete the volume.

From the perspective of one who has coedited a comparable collection of case studies (Kroskrity and Field 2009) from a completely different area—indigenous peoples of the Americas—I am struck by what seems like a more pervasive influence (with correspondingly more academic emphasis) on the impact of missionization in the Pacific region. This comparative abundance probably suggests a deficiency in the Americanist agenda, but it most definitely indicates the especially powerful force that missionary influence has historically exerted in the Pacific context. For example, Bambi Schieffelin's "Found in Translating: Reflexive Language across Time and Texts in Bosavi, Papua New Guinea" is one of several chapters that treats missionary influence on language ideological and vernacular change. She carefully examines how Christian influence mediated by the Tok Pisin translation of the bible and the bible-reading performances of Bosavi pastors introduces new metalinguistic and metapragmatic notions that reshape the Bosavi vernacular forms over time.

This theme of missionary influence is also apparent in other chapters, including Courtney Handman's chapter on bible translation in Papua New Guinea and Joel Robbins's study of Urapmin (PNG) language ideological change as indexed to ideological change regarding the material exchanges associated with Christian colonization. Missionary epistemologies and missionary-introduced speech practices also surface as highly relevant to the study of chiefly language in Tonga. Susan Philips's "Changing Scholarly Representations of the Tongan Honorific Lexicon" documents changes in the anchoring of this honorific system in which the highest level was formerly indexed to the sacred king of the traditional Tongan polity but is now indexed to the secular king of the Tongan constitutional monarchy. This change is accomplished through a submerging of the sacred, which, as Philips effectively demonstrates, is a product of contact with the theological epistemology of the Dissident Calvinist missionaries on Tonga.

Another theme found in many of the chapters is the role of language ideologies in the construction of national or ethnic identities. An example here is Makihara's "Linguistic Purism in Rapa Nui Political Discourse," which provides a detailed examination of two registers of contemporary discourse that have emerged in postcolonial struggles of this indigenous group with the Chilean nation-state. She shows how a syncretic register developed that democratically incorporated the social variation and creolization between Spanish and Rapa Nui that is exhibited in the linguistic repertoires of community members. Although this register has functioned to be maximally inclusive to community members, it is complemented by the emergence of a purist discourse that appears to be directed to outsiders for the purpose of ethnic boundary maintenance.

Although the volume cogently contributes to many topics of interest for scholars interested in the languages and cultures of the Pacific, it also makes significant advances in methodological and theoretical realms.

Schieffelin's discussion of how attention to what she calls "changing discourse practices in context"—in her specific case, instances of bible translation and reading over two decades—strongly endorses the recording, transcription, and microanalysis that permits attention to the process and relationship of speech practices and ideological change. Although particularly relevant to long-term research, the chapter is especially valuable as a call for more grounded studies of language ideological processes in general.

As a whole, the volume is something of a "coming-of-age" celebration for language-ideological approaches in that relatively little time is spent defending or defining a language-ideological orientation. Rather, the authors admirably demonstrate its utility as a theoretical frame in revealing language and discourse as critical forces of sociocultural transformation.

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**Cosmopolitan Anxieties: Turkish Challenges to Citizenship and Belonging in Germany.** Ruth Mandel. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008. 413 pp.

#### KIMBERLY HART

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Ruth Mandel's richly textured and subtly worked ethnography, *Cosmopolitan Anxieties*—which is concerned with German reckonings of past and present through essentialized and racialized conceptualizations of "ethnicity" and its implications for framing citizenship in a denationalized European Union for Turkish immigrants—is an important and brilliant work. The book bridges bodies of literature on the Shoah, Turkish immigration, Turkish national secularist quests for modernity, Islamist movements in the Turkish Republic and how these are shaped through Turkish populations abroad, Alevi diasporas, and German national reformulations of "space" and "identity" before and after the fall of the Berlin Wall. These historical and contemporary scholarly domains and bodies of literature are merged through Mandel's poignant questions about how Jews, Turks, former East Germans, Aussiedler (ethnic Germans in Central Asia), and others caught in historical, national, and state constructions of identity manage in the space of Berlin.

Mandel's personal vision and ethnographic experience spans 20 years, making this book a personal epic—one deeply felt and one envisioned through literatures and individuals, journeys, and cultural processes. We travel with Mandel, uncovering segments of history, memory, pro-

cesses of forgetting, and the elimination of Jewish and Turkish presences in Berlin, as the city reformulates itself after the fall of the wall and through a gradual transformation in German ideas of "citizenship" and "belonging." *Cosmopolitan Anxieties* tackles the question of how to write an ethnography of a place that is shaped by troubling histories. These—the Nazi era, the Shoah, the DDR, and reintegration, none of which Germans want to face—complicate the lives of Turkish immigrants, who bring their own complex questions of identity, national histories, religious movements, and quests for futures, without explicitly knowing the space they fill in the German psyche. As others out of place within a nation that conceives of itself in rigidly essential terms, Mandel shows that the ethnographic data for understanding and managing the self through constructions of otherness are everywhere, embedded in intimate expressions, glances, observations, and state structures, which extend or ignore rights. The cultural space under consideration is broad and includes art—both fine art in galleries or public sculptures and graffiti—in discussions and text. This—as well as media, texts, observations, and interviews—creates a rich bed of material from which she shapes the cultural milieu of Berlin. The chapters on East Germans, "haunted Jewish spaces," travels across eastern Europe to Turkey, and class-conscious consumption performances of returned migrants in villages in Anatolia are especially interesting because they are overlooked in most literatures on Turkish immigrants in Europe.

Such an ambitious and lengthy work could have included more interviews from informants to bring the theoretical discussion to the ground. The points at which we meet individuals and hear their words enliven the text are fascinating. A more explicit and theoretical inclusion of class would have aided in explaining why Turks fall outside contemporary German attempts at cosmopolitanism. Ideas of "class" and how it relates to joining or not joining a Turkish "folk" character in Germany clearly play a role among Turks. Mandel mentions that upper-class Turks distinguish themselves from their compatriots through consumption choices (such as eating pork) or in how they strategically choose to join them by, for example, wearing a headscarf in Germany as a sign of pride in Turkishness (not primarily or particularly Islam). Class must play an important role in deciding whom the Germans are willing to include in their national imaginary of a metanational cosmopolitan Berlin. As well, class helps explain how Europeans (and Turks) can imagine themselves as liberal while they simultaneously enact state policies that are intolerant.

Although the book should be praised for the efforts in de-essentializing Turkish immigrants as a seemingly homogenous population, more effort could be made in how Germans are represented. In particular, it would be important to learn more about German understandings of "citizenship" and "national identity" as they have changed to allow the right of citizenship through birth. I wondered whether transformation signals a shift in German

self-conceptualization and whether this is a product of involvement with the EU? If so, it would be interesting to consider how EU metanational conceptualizations of “rights” and “personhood” are reshaping state policies and individual and collective experiences in Europe and Turkey.

**The Ancient City: New Perspectives on Urbanism in the Old and New World.** Joyce Marcus and Jeremy Sabloff, eds. Santa Fe: SAR Press, 2008. 405 pp.

**MICHAEL E. SMITH**

Arizona State University

This collection originated in a prestigious Sackler Colloquium of the National Academy of Sciences in 2005. It exemplifies the state of the art in the archaeology of ancient cities, and the news is both good and bad. The most positive message sent by the book is that a long drought in comparative research on ancient urbanism has finally come to an end. The diversity of regional coverage and the high quality of the chapters invites comparison with the influential urban conferences of a half century ago (e.g., the “City Invincible” conference of 1958 and “Courses toward Urban Life” in 1960). That was a fertile time in urban studies, and archaeological research resonated with comparative work by Lewis Mumford, Kevin Lynch, Gideon Sjoberg, and a number of urban anthropologists. But as the period of big conferences and interdisciplinary interests came to a close at the end of the 1960s, many archaeologists drew back from comparative urban research and abandoned their concern with theory beyond the narrow confines of cultural evolution. Indeed, the discussion of urban models in the editors’ introduction (ch. 1) could have been written in the 1960s; the theoretical works cited in that section all date between 1938 and 1963. Archaeologists today have considerably more urban data in hand, but it will take more than presentation of the results of fieldwork to advance the study of ancient urbanism.

Apart from the outdated theory section, chapter 1 is a broad and interesting introduction to the book. The four chapters in the next section (part 2, “Overviews and Commentary”) is by itself worth the price the book. Four senior experts on ancient urbanism each explain their thoughts on early cities and stimulate thinking about—and beyond—the book’s case studies. In contrast to many edited volumes, in which symposium discussants provide boring, superfluous comments on the chapters, in this book each of the four commentaries is fresh, dynamic, and thought provoking. Colin Renfrew reviews some of his early work and extends it by an explicit focus on urban transformations through time and space. Bruce Trigger provides a critical review of three archaeological approaches to ancient cities (processual, symbolic, and emic). Classicist Mogens Hansen takes a new look at Gordon Childe’s model of the “urban revolution” and urges archaeologists to broaden their perspectives

by taking a functional approach that acknowledges the social and regional contexts of cities. This theme is taken up by geographer Karl Butzer, who insists on the importance of space, history, and transdisciplinary thinking to understanding ancient cities. In my view, these four chapters are the best in the book.

The authors of the case studies in part 3 are experienced excavators of urban sites. To the editors’ credit, they went beyond the usual suspects in anthropological archaeology to include archaeologists from other disciplines. Roman cities in the Mediterranean and northern Empire are described respectively by Janet DeLaine and Michael Jones. These chapters make non-Romanists like me envious of the quantity and quality of excavations at Roman urban sites. Elizabeth Stone contributes a discussion of two Near Eastern cities—Mashkan-shapir and Ayanis—with interesting data but simplistic interpretations. Kathryn Bard reviews the diversity of Egyptian urban sites, putting to rest any lingering suspicion that, as the long-standing interpretation goes, Egypt was a “civilization without cities” (Wilson 1960). Jonathan Mark Kenoyer describes his work at Harappa and summarizes information from other Indus cities.

Lothar von Falkenhausen’s review of early Chinese cities ends with the odd suggestion that these were not “real cities” because they do not match Weber’s conception of Medieval European towns. Chapurukha Kusimba reviews some poorly known African cities. Anne Pyburn contributes a somewhat confusing discussion of Classic Maya urbanism and consumption. Kenneth Hirth applies a model of the Aztec *altepetl* (city-state) from postconquest documents to archaeological data from Xochicalco and complains that unspecified Mesoamericanists adhere to inappropriate Weberian ideas. Craig Morris completes the case studies with two Inka sites: Huanuco Pampa and La Centinela. Editors Joyce Marcus and Jeremy Sabloff close the book with a valuable discussion of ten “productive avenues for future research”: topics such as city walls, urban plans, city services, and regional context.

Once finished reading the book, though, I could not help but wonder if an opportunity was missed here. If the organizers had chosen just one of their ten avenues as a focus for the conference, participants could have explored it from empirical, theoretical, and comparative perspectives. Such an approach could have moved forward significantly research on at least one aspect of ancient urbanism. As it stands, we have a collection of high-quality case studies, some very good conceptual chapters, and an outstanding bibliography, but unfortunately the whole is no larger than the sum of its parts.

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**Social Violence in the Prehispanic American Southwest.**

Deborah Nichols and Patricia Crown, eds. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2008. 273 pp.

**SHIRLEY LINDENBAUM**

City University of New York

This stimulating collection of essays evaluates the evidence for violence in the prehispanic U.S. Southwest and its possible association with witchcraft and cannibalism. Deborah Nichols and Patricia Crown (organizers of an earlier symposium and editors of the present volume) provide lucid chapter summaries as well as a balanced account of the conclusions to be drawn from what has become a contentious topic. There can be no question that social violence occurred, they argue, and evidence is strong that at various times and places it was associated with warfare and probably witchcraft accusations. Anthropophagy appears to have occurred in specific instances, but these acts were usually ritualized, rather than tied to hunger. In a wide-ranging and thought-provoking conclusion, George Armelagos also includes discussions of individual chapters that provide new data and new ways to think about old data.

Many of the contributors reevaluate and criticize the evidence in Christy Turner and Jacqueline Turner's 1999 publication *Man Corn*, which was presented to postulate that the Chaco region was invaded by Mesoamerican groups using sacrifice and cannibalism to intimidate and subdue local populations. The sensational nature of Turner and Turner's presentation, with its language of Toltec "thugs," was also found to be disturbing, not least because it deflects attention from more nuanced questions concerning the identification of different types of social violence and their context.

Archaeologists and anthropologists have a precise lexicon to describe the nature of their findings. The term *cannibalism* receives close semantic attention here, challenged as a stereotype in Western discourse that equates the behavior with the stigma of primitivism and savagery. Burdened by the freight of colonial, literary, and psychological renderings, the term is said to have no value as a scientific concept. *Anthropophagy*, the eating of human flesh, is the proposed alternative. The contributors have all taken note of the change, no doubt in response to the consternation among modern Pueblo peoples caused by the unsavory image of "Anasazi cannibalism" following the publication of *Man Corn*. This is part of a wider shift in anthropological sensibilities. For example, investigators studying the mortuary practices of the Fore of Papua New Guinea have begun to use the term *transumption*.

Much of the volume's appeal stems from an approach that brings into conversation bioarchaeologists, ethnohistorians, and archaeologists, all bent on investigating the causes of social violence. This conversation calls on well-tried research methods as well as new methodological approaches and productive alliances. Bioarchaeologists have shifted beyond a paleopathological approach that once

focused on a single lesion or individual frame of analysis to establish the chronological and geographic limits of disease, turning instead to multiple stress indicators at different units of analysis: ecosystem, population, individual, organ, tissue, cell, and chemical components of the cell. In addition, by relying on strong inference and by simultaneously analyzing different data sets (demographic, forensic, and neuropsychological), one study shows that females sustained more cranial and postcranial injuries than age-matched males, indicating that the women might have been an underclass of slaves, servants, or immigrants, or they may have been victims of witchcraft accusation and physical abuse. To escape the confines of the theoretical approach exemplified in *Man Corn*, another study makes good use of a practice-based explanation for variations in the forms of ritual violence found in different cultural and historical contexts. The editors are to be complimented for eliciting chapters that document site-specific cases, discuss ethnographic data, address epistemological issues, and examine the politics of interpreting evidence.

George Armelagos notes that biological anthropologists are now considering genetic evidence concerning the occurrence of "cannibalism" in hominid evolution. Studies of molecular variation at the prion protein-gene locus in human populations suggest that strong balancing selection has influenced the gene in all human populations and that the age of the codon 129 polymorphism, which provides some protection against prion diseases such as kuru, could be 500,000. Using the human-diversity sample series, a recent study shows that the V129 prion allele has a very high frequency in South American populations relative to the East Asian populations from which it arose, suggesting a selection at the prion locus mediated by kuru-like diseases associated with endocannibalism, influencing allele frequency (Hardy et al. 2006).

Just as skeletal biology, archaeology, and ethnohistory now provide a broader context for evidence of anthropophagy in the U.S. Southwest, future studies might benefit from an alliance with molecular genetics (see Collinge 2005). The topic of "cannibalism" has moved beyond old debates. It remains to be seen whether a change in terminology or more sensitive accounts will eradicate the modern stigma now associated with this widespread human activity.

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**Women's Social Activism in the New Ukraine: Development and the Politics of Differentiation.** Sarah Phillips. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008. 206 pp.

**TANYA RICHARDSON**

Wilfrid Laurier University

After socialism's collapse in Eastern Europe, development organizations and Western governments created extensive programs that explicitly prioritized building civil society as the key to democratization in the region. *Women's Social Activism in the New Ukraine* is an engaging ethnographic account of the unintended effects of these interventions, particularly the ways in which the NGO sector in Ukraine has operated as a site of differentiation of new categories of "citizen." Focusing on women's mutual-aid associations in Kyiv, Sarah Phillips argues that differentiation processes driven by social-welfare reform and development programs converged in the NGO sector (particularly among women's NGOs) and led to the privileging of certain claims, organizations, and leaders. By juxtaposing the trajectories of four women activists between 1998 and 2006 with an analysis of U.S.-funded development interventions and social-welfare reform, Phillips provides a detailed portrait of precisely how differentiation occurs.

Throughout the book, Phillips tracks back and forth between women's life stories, organizational histories, the history of women's activism in Ukraine, and large-scale accounts of transforming social welfare policies and gender ideologies. Since 1991, a shift in social-welfare provision from a system of universal benefits to a differentiated system has produced a corresponding change from a language of entitlement to one of needs and poverty alleviation. In parallel, gender ideologies invoking Berehynia, a pagan goddess and Earth Mother figure, emerged as part of post-Soviet Ukrainian nation-building and reinforced women's domesticity and caretaker roles. Consequently, vast numbers of women flocked to the NGO sphere to provide a social safety net for vulnerable groups and income for themselves.

An illuminating chapter on Kyiv's NGO world analyzes the ways in which development programs generate the neoliberal socialities and subjectivities driving differentiation. As a result of leadership-training initiatives offered by U.S.-funded NGOs promoting personal initiative and self-reliance, participants began differentiating themselves from so-called backward, Soviet-oriented associations that continued to demand state support. Meanwhile another project run by Counterpart International sought to introduce social enterprise, a strategy developed in Western Europe and North America for creating private forms of social-service delivery. Although participants rejected elements unsuited to the Ukrainian context, they did incorporate the rhetoric of privatization. Phillips forcefully critiques the project for simultaneously excluding organizations serving the most marginalized groups and entrenching women in caring organizations.

The last half of the book chronicles differentiation through a portrayal of the struggles of NGOs excluded from donor funding (ch. 3) and the upwardly mobile trajectory of Ivana (ch. 4). "Our House," a mutual-aid association assisting large families, was excluded from donor initiatives because its maternalist language was viewed as incompatible with a Western, liberal, feminist agenda, while its strategy of demanding benefits from the state did not fit the neoliberal model of privatization that donors advocated. By 2006, "Our House" was no longer active, and its leaders either unemployed or employed at a salary below the subsistence minimum. By contrast, Ivana, a teacher who founded a small NGO targeting troubled girls, rose through the ranks of NGO training and eventually landed a position in a large publishing company. Phillips concludes with a set of policy recommendations for development organizations.

The book makes an important contribution to the anthropology of development in the precision with which it dissects how donor initiatives empower some women's groups and marginalize others. In charting changes over a decade, Phillips effectively captures the complex interplay of structural constraints, new and old ideologies, and human motivations in the strategies of women leaders. She adds a new dimension to the critical anthropology of development in the postsocialist world in emphasizing that cynical "euro-elites" are not the only product of civil society-building initiatives. Socially committed elites and an emerging underclass are additional—albeit contradictory—outcomes of these programs.

I commend Phillips for pushing for more attention to emerging class formations in postsocialist states and the ways in which civil society is a site for their emergence. However, a more rigorous theoretical discussion of differentiation, emerging class fractions, and civil society would have enabled Phillips to make a bolder statement about how to push this scholarly agenda forward. She critiques donor rhetoric for its liberal conceptualization of civil society as a class-less realm detached from state and market yet does not relate her critique to other Marxist or poststructuralist analyses. Although her use of Pierre Bourdieu's distinctions among economic, social, and cultural capital help distinguish individuals' sources of status and wealth under socialism and after its fall, it is sometimes unclear when Phillips is referring to her informants' conceptualizations of class and when she is herself identifying a phenomenon as indicative of an emergent class fraction or identity. Nevertheless, this ethnography provides an insightful analysis of the intersection between gender and class among women NGO activists in Ukraine.

**White Roads of the Yucatan: Changing Social Landscapes of the Yucatec Maya.** Justine M. Shaw. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2008. 227 pp.

**ARLEN F. CHASE**

University of Central Florida

The ancient Maya made extensive modifications to their landscape and constructed enduring vestiges of the complex organizational structure that once sustained their civilization. Justine Shaw has undertaken a comparative study of one structural form, the Maya *sacbe* (pl. *sacbeob*) or “white road,” that served as a binder for their vanished organizational framework. Her interest in this topic is both inspired and conditioned by her research in the central part of the Mexican Yucatan Peninsula at the sites of Ichmul and Yo’okop, and the archaeological data from these two sites is utilized as a springboard for a broader contextualization of ancient Maya roads.

Shaw’s book deals with two very different topics. Although overtly a consideration of ancient Maya roads and their spatial distribution throughout the lowlands, Shaw also presents the results of her archaeological research in the northern lowlands. Chapters 2, 3, 9, and 10 deal with her archaeological data, while Chapters 1, 4–7, and 8 deal with the broader topic of Maya roads. The distribution of roads in the ancient Maya area is exhaustively examined. The different ways in which they can be constructed is delineated, and the lengths of the constructed *sacbeob* are examined for potential patterning. Based on *sacbe* length, Shaw differentiates between local intrasite *sacbeob*, core-outlier intrasite *sacbeob*, and intersite *sacbeob*. All these roads, but especially the intersite *sacbeob*, are viewed as being relevant to Maya sociopolitical organization. The longest road known is the one between the Maya sites of Coba and Yaxuna, which runs for 101 kilometers. Shaw strongly suggests that other long-distance road systems once existed in the northern lowlands but have been destroyed by modern construction activity. Although not an extensive focus in the book, aerial photography also has documented long-distance road systems in the southern lowlands, particularly focused on the site of Mirador, Guatemala.

By far the majority of Maya road systems were of the intrasite kind. Following the lead of other researchers, Shaw synthesizes previous categorizations of Maya intrasite causeway systems, identifying four kinds. The first type is referred to as a “linear *sacbe* system” and is fairly common in the northern lowlands, being characterized by the site plan of Sayil, Mexico. The second type is also common in the northern lowlands and is referred to as a “cruciform *sacbe* system,” such as the one found at Ek Balam, Mexico. The last two types are called “radial” or “solar *sacbe* systems” and “dendritic *sacbe* systems.” The site plans of Caracol, Belize, and Chichen-Itza, Mexico, present examples of dendritic *sacbe* systems. Shaw uses Coba, Mexico, as an example of a radial or solar *sacbe* system, but this may be a misnomer. In fact, as Shaw herself notes, the Coba *sacbe* system probably results from two temporally different sets of causeways—an initial cruciform *sacbe* system that is overlaid with a second *sacbe* system, resulting in a dendritic or radial appearance. Explanations for the functions of these different causeway systems run the gamut from ritual to sociopolitical to economic; the one unifying

factor is recognition of their use in facilitating transportation and access.

Although the contextualization of *sacbeob* comprises much of Shaw’s book, just as important is her presentation of her archaeological research undertaken at Yo’okop and Ichmul. Both of these sites are in a part of the Yucatan Peninsula that has been little explored. The site of Ichmul is directly beneath a modern Yucatec community, whereas the better-preserved ruins of Yo’okop are in the rural countryside. From 2000 through 2002, Shaw and her colleagues carried out research at Yo’okop, mapping the core of the site as well as excavating eight test pits and one structure. Work at Ichmul was carried out between 2003 and 2005. Besides mapping, excavations at Yo’okop consisted of ten test pits: two within the Ichmul site core and eight at Ichmul’s causeway termini (two each at San Andres, San Juan, San Andres, and Xquerol). From this relatively small archaeological sample, Shaw has assembled an impressive interpretation of the archaeological history of both Yo’okop and Ichmul.

Shaw’s *White Roads of the Yucatan* is a case in point for how a determined researcher can carry out meaningful archaeology with limited resources. Her book is a well-written exposition on the archaeology of a little-known part of the Yucatan Peninsula that succeeds in framing the data in terms of a broader consideration of Maya causeways, which will have relevance for most other Maya scholars.

**Cultural Transmission and Material Culture: Breaking Down Boundaries.** Miriam Stark, Brenda Bowser, and Lee Horne, eds. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2008. 320 pp.

#### BEN MARWICK

University of Washington

The most important result of this edited volume is that it represents the first substantial integration of Darwinian archaeology into the broader concerns of anthropology and archaeology. This collection assembles diverse studies that identify theoretical parallels and intersections between Darwinian and other more broadly held approaches. In doing this, the editors should be congratulated on successfully achieving their goal of “building bridges across paradigmatic boundaries” (p. 16).

The collection is a tribute to the late Carol Kramer, and the concept that unifies the volume derives from her work on the material manifestations of cultural transmission. Geographic coverage ranges from the Americas to Africa, the Near East, and South Asia, and chronological coverage spans prehistoric–precontact and colonial periods through to the present. There are a diversity of research strategies (ethnographic, ethnoarchaeological, and archaeological) and conceptual approaches (esp. the European framework of the anthropology of technology and the North American dual-inheritance approach).

The two chapters by Peter Jordan and Ruth Mace and Jelmer Eerkens and Carl Lipo exemplify the combination of robust, empirical, Darwinian approaches to investigating patterns of cultural transmission with ethnographic, historical, and archaeological data that give rich detail on the specific contexts and outcomes of transmission. Jordan and Mace examine variation in textile and housing types in nine hunter-fisher-gatherer communities on the Pacific Northwest Coast. Textiles and housing styles were geographically constrained, but textiles tended to cross linguistic boundaries more than house styles. Using ethnography, they interpret this as a result of patrilocality, wherein women moved away from their birthplaces after marriage and transferred textile patterns and technology, whereas men and their housing styles were less mobile. This chapter is a good example of how large-scale patterns analyzed with Darwinian methods can be productively integrated with more traditional anthropological interests in apprenticeship, identity, and the performance of technological practice.

Eerkens and Lipo use a simulation to estimate the amount of variation that should be present when only simple copying errors are the source of assemblage variation over time. They use these simulated estimates as a baseline to compare measurements of variation in the thickness and diameter of Woodland Period ceramics from Illinois to determine when variation-increasing forces (such as experimentation by potters) and variation-reducing forces (such as conformist or prestige-based transmission) were active. Their main point is to show that random drift in ceramic metrics over time can be differentiated from transmission processes that increase or reduce variation over time. This chapter augments Rob Boyd and Peter Richerson's (1985) cultural evolutionary approach by demonstrating that a basic empirical method for quantitatively analyzing cultural transmission and material culture changes over time.

If these two archaeological chapters are the equivalent of using a telescope to peer into past transmission processes, then the ethnographic and ethnoarchaeological chapters in this volume are the equivalent of an electron microscope. These chapters give extremely fine-grained and sophisticated insights into the transmission processes. For example, Brenda Bowser and John Patton's ethnoarchaeological research in the Ecuadorian Amazon shows that changes in the styles of pottery produced by a woman are strongly correlated to changes in a woman's political networks that occur during her life history. A similarly fine-grained analysis is provided by H el ene Wallaert's study of apprenticeship strategies among Dii potters of northern Cameroon, which focuses only on the period when a girl is between 7 and 15 years old. Citing Eerkens' work on copying errors, Wallert describes how corporal punishment, public humiliation, and the incremental release of technical instructions are used to minimize errors and variation. Ingrid Herbich and Michael Dietler show that, between the

Luo and Rendille societies of Kenya, there are substantial differences in postmarital stylistic variation. Among the Luo, women must adapt their pottery craft to conform with the style of their husband's family, with whom they reside after marriage. Rendille women, however, bring their household objects into their husband's homes and are under little pressure to conform to the local styles of their husband's family (and in this way resemble the Pacific Northwest groups that Jordan and Mace describe).

One productive area for future research suggested by this collection—which would truly be a synthesis of approaches (of which only a selection are described here)—is the application of quantitative Darwinian methods of material cultural analysis at the microscales examined by ethnographical work on apprenticeship and life history. To conclude, the richness and quality of the contents of this volume are ample justification for including this volume in any library, and the book is likely to inspire much interesting new work.

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**Counting the Dead: The Culture and Politics of Human Rights Activism in Colombia.** Winifred Tate. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007. 379 pp.

#### LESLEY GILL

Vanderbilt University

Oppositional politics based on the idea of human rights became a way of contesting the rule of repressive governments in the last half of the 20th century. Although debates about human rights have focused on their universality and how they affect state sovereignty, Winifred Tate has written an impressive book that tacks in a new direction. *Counting the Dead* explores how different and frequently opposed groups in Colombia use the idea of "human rights" to categorize certain kinds of violence, organize political action, and generate public support for their agendas. The book is a fascinating analysis of how the theory and practice of human rights activism emerges from particular social, political, and historical contexts and bends to the competing agendas of diverse people and institutions.

The book first traces the rise of human rights activism amid an intensifying dirty war in the late 1970s and 1980s through its subsequent transformation and professionalization in the 1990s, as political violence intensified. Early Colombian human rights activists belonged to solidarity organizations linked to the left, and they intensely debated collective-versus-individual understandings of rights. Influenced by liberation theology and the Colombian Communist Party, activists tied human rights advocacy to progressive political projects, including revolutionary socialism.

Yet, by the 1990s, with the end of the Cold War, the decline of socialism, and an increasingly suspect guerrilla war in which kidnapping, extortion, and involvement in drug trafficking raised questions about the political goals of the insurgents, the kind of political project offered by human rights became less clear, as the connection between human rights and an agenda for collective social transformation blurred.

Several of the early solidarity organizations became NGOs that harvested new international funding for human rights work and employed better-educated and better-paid professionals who focused less on denouncing specific instances of state-sponsored violence and abuse than on influencing state policy through international organizations, such as the United Nations. Human rights reporting was harnessed to international legal standards, and in the process, it became depoliticized, focused on statistics, and driven by a moral imperative that centered on shielding vulnerable individuals from the abuses of state power as well as from the rights violations committed by insurgent groups.

As NGOs proliferated across Colombia, state institutions charged with the protection of human rights also began to emerge. Often staffed by professionals from the NGO sector, they opened up new ways to address human rights crimes through state organizations. Yet, as Tate demonstrates, these entities contributed less to the resolution of crimes and the prosecution of perpetrators than to the production of impunity through the creation of even more bureaucracy.

Finally, in one of the book's most fascinating chapters, Tate documents how the Colombian military embraced human rights when it could no longer simply dismiss them as left-wing propaganda. The shift occurred as international attention focused on the massacres, community displacements, disappearances, and extrajudicial executions that were attributed overwhelmingly to the armed forces and as the U.S. military began to espouse human rights in its training programs. Critics, however, had ample reason to be skeptical.

The military programs had less to do with protecting the rights of vulnerable people than with winning their "hearts and minds" in a dirty war that had gone on for decades. Senior Colombian officials incorporated human rights into psychological operations and civic-action campaigns aimed at generating public support for the war against the guerrillas, and they portrayed the Colombian military as a victim. The armed forces also wielded human rights as a weapon against NGO efforts to limit their power and hold officers accountable for abuses. As Tate observes, however, the military failed to even acknowledge the bizarre contradiction between its claims to produce human rights documentation, on the one hand, and the numerous charges that it violated the rights of the very citizens that it was charged with protecting, on the other hand.

*Counting the Dead* represents a considerable achievement. It is an important intervention in the ongoing debate about human rights and the promises and pitfalls of rights-based, oppositional politics. It is also a valuable contribution to U.S. scholarship on Colombia, a country relatively understudied by anthropologists because of the conditions that Tate describes so well. The book is well written and full of rich details drawn from the author's long involvement with human rights activism and research. Scholars across a broad range of fields, including anthropology, Latin American studies, peace and conflict studies, sociology, and political science, will find it interesting and important.

**The Ironies of Freedom: Sex, Culture, and Neoliberal Governance in Vietnam.** Nguyen-vo Thu-huong. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008. 356 pp.

#### ERIK HARMS

Yale University

Vietnam, as Nguyen-vo Thu-huong demonstrates in this important new book, "has two faces when it comes to freedom" (p. 246). Building from rich ethnographic research among sex workers and medical experts, compelling and well-informed analysis of literature, news media, and popular films, and a careful study of Vietnamese agencies concerned with prostitution, *The Ironies of Freedom* describes governance by choice and coercion. Since the *doi moi* (renovation) reforms instituted in 1986, the government's approach to prostitution increasingly depends on a "parceling" of governing functions to different parts of the state responsible for governing an increasingly "differentiated citizenry." One face of freedom increasingly celebrates individual self-mastery and free choice among gendered subjects who seem to benefit from the market-based economy. This is the face scholars might identify as "neoliberal governmentality." The other face, embodied most directly by the Ministry of Public Security, relies on extremely repressive and punitive technologies of social control and policing. Scholars rarely associate this type of governance with neoliberalism, but this book shows how both faces of freedom are connected. In this two-faced form of governance, exhortations of freedom for the middle-class "bourgeois housewife" coexist with the seemingly contradictory extension of carceral regimes of repression and coercion to working-class women.

The different forms of intervention that become differentially deployed along gender and class lines emerge most clearly through the book's ethnography. The author provides sensitive and analytically convincing descriptions of the inner workings of sites in and around Ho Chi Minh City and the coastal town of Vung Tau to which few other scholars of Vietnam have had access. The text is enriched by vivid conversations and descriptions of observed interactions in a sex-service café, state-run rehabilitation

camps, a rehabilitation home run by a private charity, peer-education groups led by “reformed prostitutes,” and an abortion clinic. The ethnography reveals an intimate connection between marketization and the commodification of pleasure, whereby business connections among male entrepreneurs are “hooked” (*moc noi*) via commercial sex. As Thu-huong writes, “Vietnam’s liberalizing economy was a hooking economy in which personal connections were vital for business, especially sensitive business. Foreign, state, and private entrepreneurs offered the enjoyment of commodified pleasure, especially sexual pleasure, to facilitate and maintain contacts among business partners or potential partners” (p. 18). This “hooking economy” is more than a play on words: male entrepreneurs forge their class identities through the consumption of female bodies, producing a symbolic economy of desire within which status hierarchies are performed.

The author also shows how health professionals intervene into women’s lives in ways that both respond to and reproduce different class identities. Medical experts teach upper-class housewives to embrace medicalized “natural” desires and to assert free choice and self-mastery, but they also urge them to respond to the “social evil” of prostitution by making themselves more attractive to errant husbands—by “out-whoring prostitutes . . . within the hygienic confines of the conjugal bed” (p. 113). Lower-class sex workers, by contrast, are governed in much different ways: incarcerated in prison-like reform camps, they are infantilized, and their free choice is denied rather than cultivated. Carefully outlining these two faces of choice and coercion in medical and police domains, the book also carefully shows how they appear in realist popular films, media representations, and journalistic reportage.

Theoretically, the book opens new conversations among Foucauldian theorists of governmentality, feminist critics of gendered subjectivity and performativity, and Marxist analysts of class inequalities in ways that will speak to readers across the disciplines of anthropology, political science, sociology, and critical Asian studies. Some readers may find that the book uses the term *neoliberalism* uncritically, eliding the difficulty of applying such a term to a nominally socialist Vietnamese state that itself has no local terminology for neoliberal type reforms. But in doing so, the author opens up an important debate that calls for further discussion. Most refreshingly, the rich ethnography allows the author to ground the scholarship on “governmentality” in context, pressing the limits of received theory with the hard facts of social differentiation and the two faces of governance in Vietnam today. Adding Marx to Foucault, the book shows how “governmentality” for the middle class coexists with classic repression, exploitation, and alienation for the working class. The “ironies of freedom” are many: self-mastery coexists with conformity; choice with coercion; consumer freedom with social obedience; and today’s Vietnamese Marxism allows class prerogatives to dictate unequal governance. Marx’s own wandering ghost, on reading this book’s sobering account of market-

oriented, post-reform era Vietnamese Marxism, would be likely compelled to repeat his most ironic of phrases: I am not a Marxist!

**The Archaeology of Ethnogenesis: Race and Sexuality in Colonial San Francisco.** Barbara Voss. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008. 400 pp.

**LU ANN DE CUNZO**

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This exemplary study examines the establishment and service as a Spanish military outpost (1776–1821) of the Presidio of San Francisco, California (now a National Historical Park). Typical of imperial frontiers and yet a hindrance to Spain’s ambitions on the Pacific coast, the initial settlers were a pluralistic community of colonized people from western Mexico with Mexican Indian, European, and African ancestry. Investigating four generations of these military settlers, Barbara Voss charts how these displaced families created new cultural identities and transformed themselves into a unified colonial force. She interrogates this process of ethnogenesis, the manipulation of familiar ethnic, religious, gendered, and economic identities to political ends.

At the outset of Spanish settlement, the *sistema de castas* (lit. system of classes) governed the social order, a racial code based on skin tone and, secondarily, on social practices, legitimacy, and wealth. Voss’s research reveals a paradox: the colonial settlers actively resisted this policy of racial inequality yet ultimately replaced it with another, a “Californian” identity that privileged local associations, Spanish ancestry, and a particular form of ethnosexuality.

The work consists of ten chapters divided into “Contexts” and “Practices.” In the first part, Voss explains how she explored the articulated micro-, meso-, and macro-histories of colonial identities and social institutions. Her theoretical framework emphasizes overdetermination and motion, describing these borderland peoples in terms of hybridity, ambivalence, and fluidity and fixity. Other chapters outline the historical context, beginning with Spain’s decision to expand militarily into Alta California at the end of the Seven Years’ War. Presidio San Francisco was the northernmost of four settlements established along the California coast initially for defense and later to serve as governmental seats.

Voss mined historical records to learn about the 130–200 people residing at the Presidio. Beyond basic demography, she examines issues such as labor arrangements with local Native Californians hired at the presidio, ideologies of honor and shame, and the initial negotiations of racialized and gendered identities. Turning to the archaeological research, Voss chronicles methods and significant findings of 13 years of fieldwork. Examples include the expansion of the Presidio’s main quadrangle to encompass almost 250 percent more land than documents suggested and evidence

from one apartment and several middens used to explore the material practices of ethnogenesis.

The five chapters in "Practices" detail the author's multiscalar, multivocal, and multilocal analyses of the landscapes, architecture, foods and dining practices, and self-fashioning practices cultivated over the course of four generations of colonial residence. Voss documents how the colonists' adopted ethnonym of *Californio* captured their process of "graft[ing] themselves onto the land" (p. 147), negotiating the 1772 *Reglamento* (regulations for presidios that guided construction to ensure the Presidio functioned as a precision timepiece of defense). Over time, the colonists homogenized, centralized, and expanded the Presidio. This involved adopting adobe to assert the colonizer status of occupants and shifting decision making and surveillance from households and homes to the military command and public plaza.

The colonists' bodies and homes were also sites for displaying tradition and taste and negotiating gendered Californio identities. Extensive, detailed analyses of macroflora, fauna, ceramics, and documents revealed how the Presidio residents created a fusion colonial cuisine. Sumptuary laws attested to the significance of clothing in *castas* (castes or classes) ascription in the founding years of the Presidio. Over time, the generations refashioned themselves into Californios, defined in contradistinction to Native Californians and in the context of public and sacred, rather than everyday, dress. Men's roles, responsibilities, and honor were expressed through ornate Spanish Bourbon styles onto which they grafted symbols of military rank. Women manipulated styles more freely yet their allegiance to the media of expensive imported fabrics and ornaments conveyed the European ideals of civilization on which they founded their cultural identities.

In this study, Voss has narrated a powerful history of Spanish imperialism from the perspective of disadvantaged colonists drafted to serve on the front lines of European struggles for hegemony in North America. Although ethnogenesis proved an effective tool to alter the institutions that enlisted these colonists, Voss concludes that her study also "provides an important caution against viewing hybridity, fluidity, and contingency as inherently liberatory strategies" (p. 289).

*The Archaeology of Ethnogenesis* is a required read for scholars of European imperialism, colonization, race, class, and gender. It offers graduate students an inspirational model study. Highlighting the ambiguity and unevenness inherent in the process of ethnogenesis, Voss complicates our understanding of the relationships between colonizers and colonized. Her comparisons reinforce the need for continued research into the diverse strategies employed throughout the colonial Americas.

**Rumba Rules: The Politics of Dance Music in Mobutu's Zaire.** Bob W. White. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008. 300 pp.

## ANDREW J. EISENBERG

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This ethnography of young dance-music performers and audiences in 1990s Kinshasa, Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), examines urban popular culture as a site of articulation for *political culture*, in the sense of everyday ideas and practices of power and authority. Using vivid first-person narratives that are at times as enjoyable (if not as danceable) as the music around which they revolve, Bob W. White examines multiple facets of Kinshasa's dance-music scene—from its compositional and performance practices to its industrial context to its attendant subjectivities—for evidence of how Mobutu Sese Seko's heavy-handed cultural policy and authoritarian leadership infiltrated everyday life in urban Zaire.

The music at the center of this study is the Cuban-tinged dance genre known locally as *rumba* or *musique moderne*. Despite the international scope of this music, White does not extend his study beyond Kinshasa (a city whose reputation for danger has no doubt dissuaded others from undertaking similar projects). The parochial focus is generally appropriate for White's stated objective of mapping the quotidian dynamics of political culture in Mobutu's Zaire; however, it sometimes seems at odds with the highly mobile nature of the musical culture around which the study is framed. Chapter 5's discussion of musicians' social mobility and cosmopolitan sensibilities, in particular, may have benefited from more attention to the global circulation of Congolese music and musicians (something White has written about elsewhere in insightful ways).

White finds the most revealing connection between Zairian dance music and Zairian political culture in the concept of "animation," which was central to both musical aesthetics and state cultural policy. Before animation became central to Zairian dance music, Mobutu had instituted a policy of animation politique, denoting state-sponsored, large-scale performances and daily performances of songs, dances, and slogans at schools and places of work. Without necessarily acknowledging the connection to animation politique, dance musicians in Kinshasa subsequently invented a two-part form that stressed the achievement of an ebullient state of animation in the upbeat second part (the *seben* [from the English musical term *seventh chord*]). White suggests that it was precisely dance musicians' ability to conjure animation that motivated Mobutu's regime to keep musicians poor and struggling through a "strategic neglect" of their industry (p. 81).

The political potential of animation was most directly realized in Zairian dance music through the advent of *libanga*, a form of percussive praise singing performed by the band's maraca-playing *atalaku* (probably derived from the Kikongo for "look at me!"). Through learning the art of the *atalaku*, White acquired a powerful ethnographic ear on the micropolitics of Kinshasan dance music and the dynamics of Zairian political culture more generally. His

ethnography reveals intimate links between libanga practice and animation politique as well as between the internal politics of Zairian dance bands and Mobutu's "big man" leadership.

In the book's final chapter, White thoughtfully airs the politics of his writing about Mobutu's Zaire in its wake. The urgent question confronting him is whether it is possible to approach the everyday reverberations of Mobutu's authoritarian rule without perpetuating the Western myth that gross abuses of power are uniquely, or essentially, African. This dilemma is particularly acute in regard to White's project, which, against the grain of much popular-music scholarship (incl. Congolese scholars' emerging writing), examines Zairian popular music as a site of accommodation, where subjects assimilated dominant political culture. White's response to this dilemma, evident throughout the book, is to keep in view the fact that accommodation is not the same as zombification. He portrays his young interlocutors in Kinshasa as fully formed subjects with projects and desires, as individuals who were drawn to dance music as a source of sustenance, pleasure, and meaning in the often-bleak world of Mobutu's Zaire.

Considering White's attention to the politics of his writing, it is a bit ironic that he engages in an unnecessary polemic on a field in which his book is likely to be read: ethnomusicology. In a brief passage on methodology, he describes *ethnomusicology* as a field wholly devoid of anthropological concerns; his characterization of the field is so reductive as to generate incomprehensible assertions like "[during the 1990s] the anthropological study of music still tended to be confused with ethnomusicology" (p. 13).

On the whole, *Rumba Rules* is a cogent and empirically rich contribution to the study of political culture in Mobutu's Zaire and beyond. It is a fine addition to the ethnographic literature on popular music in postcolonial Africa, which, by virtue of its object, has always enjoyed a privileged perspective on the nexus of micropolitics and macropolitics. Scholars interested in the popular, the urban, and the political in Africa will find much of value in its pages.

**Patterns of Exchange: Navajo Weavers and Traders.**  
Teresa Wilkins. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008. 231 pp.

**LEA S. MCCHESENEY**

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The intention to incorporate Native Americans within a national economy through trade as a form of education in "civilization" runs deep in the history of federal-Indian relations. It began in the Southwest after establishing a U.S. government foothold through army sutler's stores, administrative offices, and trading posts. Situated within a discussion of colonial and indigenous exchange systems, *Patterns of Exchange* explores relationships between Navajo

weavers and Euro-American traders, focused primarily on the eastern Navajo Reservation from the inception of trading posts in 1876 to the present day. Although Wilkins does not analyze Indian trading through the lens of the settlers' colonial project, the actions and correspondence of traders who implemented federal policy reveal the processes of assimilation within U.S. capitalism. Yet she shows that their widespread recognition in a flourishing Indian art market a century later is less an outright vindication of the policy than of Navajos in converting capitalism to their own ends through the textile trade. Exploring both Navajo and Euro-American perspectives on the economic and social content of trading relationships within distinct cultural parameters, Wilkins provides a historical analysis that is accessible to the multiple audiences, including Navajos, she addresses.

Through a detailed ethnography of intercultural production, Wilkins accomplishes a textual tapestry that is organized, appropriately enough, like a Navajo textile to reveal an intimate knowledge of the objects, agents, and territory she explores. The chapters exploring Navajo values, the heart of her book, are framed within borders the way a weaver structures her design. Wilkins first addresses the history of Southwest trading ("exchanging spaces"), then proceeds to consider Navajo weavers' knowledge of designs and materials as well as their motivations to engage with traders ("we wove the design we wanted"). She next discusses trading practices enmeshed in long-standing kinship relationships (trade "a long time ago"), followed by weavers' considerations for valuing their work in the marketplace ("please, my son, my rug is worth that much"). "Exchanging places" caps her analysis by investigating the innovation of traveling off reservation as a demonstrator to convey Navajo knowledge and practice to the outside world. The subtle alteration of the bordering chapter titles shifts authority for articulating the value of Navajo weaving from the trader to the weaver, from commodity to process and gendered body of knowledge. A chapter on traders' efforts to shape the market by establishing criteria of value for U.S. consumers at the turn of the 20th century, "the creation of a usable past," is also included within this bordered symmetry.

Wilkins contributes importantly to both the authenticity and creativity conundrums of recent anthropological and art historical debates, while revealing the way in which questionable capitalist practices, such as extending credit (a kind of futures trading of the day), were welcomed by Navajos for implicating the trader in their kinship system with its ideology of helping. Among her insights are the ways traders both disentangled weaving from the activities of daily life and disaggregated the process into stages of specialized labor. Her analysis of the basis, artistic execution, and Navajo interpretation of Hubbell's painting collection of precolonial weaving styles contributes to an understanding of "revivals" and the vexed question of "copying" designs. She thus sheds light on the layered processes by which weaving became aestheticized within the

Western canon, here permitting the liberation of designs from local social constraints, with concerns about respect of other persons and modes of learning, and paradoxically enabling a “process of autonomous creation” in accord with Navajo values, which supports the identity of artist today.

Wilkins respects the multiple points of view she represents and is at pains to refute “Marxist” studies that she contends reduce traders and weavers to exploiters and exploited. Although her “relational” approach is laudable, as is her goal is to foreground a Navajo “register of values,” she avoids the political dynamics for both weavers and traders that influenced the market’s structure and weavers’ socialization into it, providing differential access to valuable knowledge. Nor does she specifically address how gender entered into these dynamics. These topics could offer a powerful and nuanced way to rethink political economy utilizing indigenous knowledge as forcefully as Western theory. Indeed, the Navajo perspective of the trading venture (“we’re all in it together”) that helped restore their vitality applies equally to this rich intellectual project, which makes theoretical contributions even if they remain undeveloped. Although there is more to be explored and much to be mined from academic and indigenous perspectives alike, *Patterns of Exchange* will reward readers in its intricately interwoven details.

**The Impact of Electricity: Development, Desires and Dilemmas.** Tanja Winther. New York: Berghahn Books, 2008. 256 pp.

#### MICHAEL BRIAN SCHIFFER

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Partly the report of a development project, partly an ethnography, and partly a discourse on development anthropology, *The Impact of Electricity* is a fascinating and significant work. Beginning in 1991 as an engineering student, Tanja Winther took part in the development project that had brought electricity to Uroa, a village in Zanzibar. Later visits to Uroa as a social anthropologist and consultant for a Norwegian development agency enabled Winther to craft a work that asks: What impact did “the arrival of electricity . . . [have] on people’s lives in rural Zanzibar?” (p. xiii). She answers this question with considerable insight and thoroughness and also strives, with less success, to explain consumption (adoption) patterns of electrical appliances.

Winther made friends in the village, observed activities, and elicited electricity-related discourse. In addition, she accompanied the meter reader on his rounds and so was able to make a house-by-house inventory of appliances. She also conducted a census of 114 households (a 23-percent sample). However, she made little use of sociodemographic data when studying adoption patterns.

The electrification of Uroa is an unusual case of development because Uroans initiated the project and most

stakeholders deemed it successful. Winther properly emphasizes the role played in this success by early community participation. In Uroa, support of community leaders and sufficient time to neutralize opposition paved the way for electrification. In nearby Binguni, however, leaders learned about the plan without time to marshal local support, and the village was not connected to the grid.

The greatest benefits of electrification took place at the community scale. The use of an electric pump supplied clean water in taps throughout Uroa, which reduced the incidence of diarrhea. And in health facilities, emergencies were handled around the clock, instruments sterilized, and medicines stored in refrigerators. Such benefits suggest that “one might even . . . consider access to electricity as a human right” (p. 224).

Electricity also had significant effects at the household scale. Lights and television, both widely acquired, created a never-ending day that promoted activity changes, new material desires, and a faster pace of life. Electricity also increased dependence on a distant bureaucracy with unfathomable rules, led to greater intrusions by the central government, and intensified social stratification. And some people struggled to pay the electric bill. One of the book’s special strengths is detailed discussion about how electricity at home affected each gender. For example, husband and wife spent more time together but, owing to the demands of socializing in the evening, had less time for intimacy. In addition, the costs of connection to the grid and of buying appliances raised the bar for marriage, and so younger men began to eschew polygamy. Reducing the need to haul water greatly lessened the workload for women and girls, giving the latter more time to concentrate on school.

This case study also brought to light the ways in which the behavioral changes were reconciled with Muslim orthodoxy. Some rules and values, as in the strict separation of the sexes, were ignored with little concern, whereas others—prayer times—were rigorously followed. As Winther notes, people hold multiple, often conflicting values that can be invoked selectively to rationalize behavioral changes that occurred in response to local material contingencies.

Although Winther suggests that “one cannot anticipate how a given change, such as the arrival of electricity, will affect social life” (p. xiv), some of the changes she described might have been predicted had relevant ethnographic data been gathered and analyzed before electrification began. Moreover, if prediction were in general precluded, then undertaking any development project in the absence of warranted forecasts of specific effects (positive and negative) would be morally questionable. Fortunately, Winther’s empirical account of how the changes “are actually perceived and experienced” (p. xiv) by Uroans lays a foundation for building models to predict electrification’s effects in future projects—assuming that relevant ethnographic information is collected at the outset. An obvious



implication of this book is that electrification's effects could not have been predicted on the basis of traditional beliefs and values; behavioral data, comparative analysis, and relevant theory would have been essential.

Despite obligatory mentions of Pierre Bourdieu, habitus, and agency, the book lacks an adequate theoretical framework for explaining adoption processes at the multiple social scales where agency is exercised. At the scale of household adoption of specific appliances, in particular,

Winther does not distinguish between a completed process and one that likely remains ongoing. This failure vitiates her explanation of the limited yet still-increasing acquisition of electric cookers (hot plates).

Minor inconsistencies and labored English aside, *The Impact of Electricity* is an informative and thought-provoking book. Its nuanced discussions of electrification's effects on Uroans are a valuable empirical contribution to studies of technological change.