
While other eastern Europe countries have received relatively more attention, Bulgaria has regrettably been largely ignored in anthropological literature. This book helps address this gap, at the same time providing an important resource on issues of social change in rural eastern Europe.

It is the development of agriculture primarily during the socialist and post-socialist periods which is of central concern in this ethnographic study of a village in north-west Bulgaria. A list of the chapter titles reveals the centrality of the theme of transformation: rural transformation, agricultural reformations, demographic transitions, industrial revolutions, informal proliferations and rural restitutions. In so doing, the author weaves a story of constant change by discussing a series of processes which, while having some sort of 'loose historical logic' (p. 30), are viewed as significant interactive processes, fundamental to understanding the nature of state socialism and post-socialist reform. The author thus 'speaks' against both present and past views of the rural sector as 'conservative' by showing the fundamentally transformative nature of rural life, before, during and after the collapse of state socialism.

In his first chapter, Creed provides some well researched historical material on the state of agriculture in the pre-socialist period and the reasons, both economic and political, for collectivisation. He describes the collectivisation process (completed in 1956), in what were highly fragmented smallholdings, underlining the importance of local social relations as a force in encouraging villagers to join the socialist co-operative. The second chapter focuses on the continual reforms to which agriculture was subject during the socialist period. Outmigration and fertility decline, in part a consequence of state industrialisation and collectivisation, in turn demanded redress through corrective policies. How these factors were tied to the changing nature of internal household structure and the widespread consequences they had for rural-urban relations is the subject of discussion in Chapter 3. The fourth chapter looks at another effect of rural industrialisation: the increasing importance of non-agricultural enterprises in the village and how this related to local agricultural activities. In Chapter 5, it is the informal sector which is given central attention. Creed shows how this sector cannot be understood outside social relations and how it served to integrate various dimensions of socialist life. His presentation of the informal sector as a facilitator of, as much as a drain on, the formal sector, emphasises the symbiotic nature of these two sectors.

Chapter 6 looks at post-1989 reforms, the consequences of decollectivisation and the widespread ambivalence by villagers towards the new developing capitalist system. Restitution and private farming were seen as a step 'backwards' and a threat to local gains made during the socialist period. While Creed offers numerous reasons for continued support for the co-operative working of the land after 1989, one of the more interesting is the important role of the co-operative in maintaining a positive notion of village identity. Co-operatives and the development of diverse forms of work during socialism allowed villagers to separate their sense of self from negative connotations conveyed by a more traditional 'peasant' form of existence dependent upon individual private agricultural production (a theme developed in the conclusion).

The transformative nature of Bulgarian agriculture over time is conveyed through the idea of 'conflicting complementarity', which denotes the processes of conflicting and complementary interdependencies that were viewed as characteristic of the socialist system. Every reform created new conflicts that sponsored new complementarities. Thus tensions such as between rural industry and
agriculture, between local, district and national level officials, between formal and informal economic activity, between subsistence and co-operative agricultural production, are seen as central to an understanding of state socialism. Given the importance of the concept, the reader’s task would have been made easier had a more focused discussion on ‘conflicting complementarity’ been provided – instead the presentation is fragmented at various points throughout the text.

I also felt that despite the author’s recognition of the importance of ethnography, much of the data is presented in a somewhat ‘abstracted’ manner. The informants often remain ‘anonymous’ and the reader gets little sense of the informants as ‘personalities’ grounded in a context. For example, in the chapter on the informal sector, Creed briefly turns to a wedding to show the importance of informal connections in the event (pp. 203–4). This is not a particularly significant part of the chapter’s discussion, but the participants in the description, as on many other occasions, remain largely ‘faceless’ to the reader, with no name or personal profile, and with little sense of the individual’s location within a complex set of relations within the village (surely fundamental to any exploration of informal ties?). The informants appear disconnected from each other and the reader does not get any sense of the village as a community. Finding an ‘appropriate’ balance in the development of analytical points through ethnography is always a difficult task and is to some extent a subjective issue. However, greater contextualisation of the informants would have provided a rounder picture of their lives and reinforced the analytical points more vividly.

These comments do not detract from the fact that the book makes a number of important contributions to the issue of transformation in eastern Europe. Perhaps the most significant is the author’s concern with ways in which villagers ‘domesticated’ socialism. Through ‘domestication’, Creed seeks to understand state socialism as an interactive process in which villagers had far greater influence in transforming national policies than they are usually given credit for. For example, Creed suggests that informal economic activity represents a local ‘adjustment’ to national policies (p. 212). Indeed, as he shows, local manipulations of wider state initiatives are still occurring as villagers disrupt post-socialist reform policies.

In short, with its wide-ranging concern with both socialist and post-socialist rural Bulgaria, and its focus on the issue of social change, this book is a valuable addition to the growing anthropological literature on eastern Europe and post-socialist states.

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Russia’s economy of favours. Blat, networking and informal exchange. By Alena V. Ledeneva.

The word blat refers to the system of informal contacts and personal networks which was used to obtain goods and services under the rationing which characterised Soviet Russia. Alena Ledeneva’s book is the first to analyse blat in all its historical, socioeconomic and cultural aspects, and to explore its implications for post-Soviet society. In a socialist distribution system which resulted in constant shortages, blat developed into an “economy of favours” which shadowed an over controlling centre and represented the reaction of ordinary people to the social constraints they faced. In social and economic terms, blat exchanges became vital to the population and to the functioning of the Soviet system. At the same time, however, blat practices subverted the ideological and moral foundations of Soviet rule, and the study of blat provides concrete evidence of the tendency of the Soviet system to subvert itself. Finally, the book shows that the nature of the economic and political changes in contemporary Russia cannot be properly understood without attention to the powerful legacy of the blat economy.

Ledeneva’s book is based on research, carried out by the author in her native Russia in the first half of the 1990s. The essential part of the research material presented derives from a series of 56 formal recorded interviews she carried out with respondents of different status, occupation, gender, age and location, and of diverse personal experience. Although most of the material comes from urban Russia, the author also provides us with examples from the rural milieu.

Ledeneva’s book is composed of six chapters. In Chapter 1, she introduces the term blat and its euphemisms, and describes and discusses the main use-contexts of blat, both historically and as it appeared before the market reforms of the early 1990s.

In Chapter 2, the author suggests some contrasts which might be made between blat and
notions more established in the sociological and anthropological literature, such as bribery, corruption and other informal ‘economic’ practices. The author then makes an effort to compare blat practices and analogous practices in other cultures, namely patron–client relationships in the Mediterranean and ‘fiddling’ in market economies. The author also discusses how and when to see blat situations, as well as people’s perceptions of blat and their reactions to it.

Chapter 3 focuses on the political and socioeconomic conditions which restricted, but at the same time also enabled, the development of blat in Soviet Russia. The analysis concentrates on how blat merged with the Soviet system: that is, how people dealt with the policies and ideological demands of the state and how the realities of social life shaped their experiences and actions. The author also considers Stalin’s policies concerning ruralisation of the cities, privileges in distribution and the return to middle-class values and their impact on the blat system. She then moves on to discuss the Soviet regime and the ambivalent character of constraints and personalisation of bureaucracy, perennial shortage and the increasingly expanding system of privileges and closed distribution which all lead to the creation of a social order in which unwritten codes and practices prevailed.

Chapter 4 is concerned with the social basis of blat networks. Here the author discusses and analyses blat networks and the principles of their formation, looks at differences in personal attitudes toward blat, and considers aspects of stratification in relation to blat, drawing on data from different social and occupations groups. The author also discusses blat masters, that is to say ‘blat experts’, taking into account the role of gender in the construction of blat networks and their urban–rural specificities.

In Chapter 5 the author provides us with an ethnography of blat as a form of exchange, discussing the internal logic and the ethical foundations of blat relations, and the forms of reciprocity, mutual trust and obligations it involved. In Chapter 6, which is the last chapter of the book, the author analyses the role blat has played in economic and social restructuring and in the formation of post-Soviet society.

Throughout the book, the author provides us with examples of blat practices in everyday context, focusing on the texture and principles of the day-to-day workings of society. One of the keys to the success of Ledeneva’s study lies in her detailed interest in life histories of ‘common people’, allowing her to provide the reader with intimate insight into such aspects of everyday life of the Soviet citizen as the organisation of one’s wedding banquet, getting oranges out of season for the children, a ticket for a resort at Yalta, medicine for a relative, a seat on the Trans-Siberian railway, high-quality clothes, spare parts for the television set and car, a new electric stove, exemption from compulsory kolchoz work or presence at a party meeting, and caviar when there was no caviar in the shops.

Alena Ledeneva’s book is vividly written. It is full of concrete examples, and is enriched with theoretical considerations and sophisticated insight into Soviet and Post-Soviet society. Russia’s economy of favours is a fine example of contemporary Russian scholarship.

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Until recently, sport has been an underrated field of study in anthropology and with very few exceptions a rather ‘minor arena for theory building in the social sciences. The expansion and the regulation of the practice of sport in leisure time are key aspects of Elias’s sociological theory on the civilising process in modern societies (as was the ‘courtisation’ of nobles in continental Europe from the sixteenth century onwards). In Elias’s evolutionist historical view, violent bodies and strong emotions can be (and are) disciplined through sport. Most types of sport embody an element of competition. In his approach empirical studies of sport must ask the same question. What kind of society is it where many people use part of their leisure time to take part in or to watch these non-violent contests of bodily skill and strength? (1986: 19). Bourdieu (1984), accepting the thesis of control and discipline, added an important dimension to the interpretation of sports activities, suggesting that the social and symbolic relevance of sports is intimately related to class identities, contradictory bodily images and conflicting value preferences.

This book can be seen as a presentation of more conventional and interesting anthropological
findings than an attempt to contribute to general theories on the meaning of sport in identity construction or on the significance of these types of bodily exploit for expanding the scope of theories of ritual and cultural performance. The introduction by MacClancy states clearly that the anthropological analysis of sport is not a reflection of society, but a means of reflecting on society (p. 4). Sport, understood as a central and not marginal activity, is conceived as a fruitful device for capturing important cultural, historical and social processes; the contributions are not aimed at singling out a field of anthropology of sport. This strategy is welcome; our discipline does not need a new specialisation.

Sports represent a complex space for the display of identities as well as an arena for challenging dominant social and moral codes. MacClancy’s analysis of female bullfighting in Spain is a case in point. He demonstrates how anthropologists have unproblematically accepted bullfighting as exclusively male in spite of the fact that over the last two centuries women have been bullfighters, taking the same risks and bearing the same scars as the male matadores. Thus, they contested the dominant ideology which promoted an image of the active male and the passive female. MacClancy shows that female bullfighting in Spain was usually banned by conservative governments and allowed by progressive ones. The chapter by Stokes on Turkey illustrates the complex relations between the wrestling ethos of Aba, a traditional sport practised in the province of Hatay, and the dominant constructions of masculinity. The festival of wrestling in Hatay enables one to see that the ideology of honour and competition between honour equals is difficult to realise in everyday life. Hidden motives of actors, successes and failures, humorous inversions and ironies are represented and lived in the wrestling festival. The rules of power are not transparent and one cannot always play ‘by the rules’. Wrestling allows for an experience of the contradictions of power and helps us cope creatively and critically with them.

Sport can divide as much as unite. Elias’s model, based on harmony, emotional control and social discipline, is difficult to realise. Stuart shows how the introduction of football to colonised populations in Southern Rhodesia did not produce acquiescent young male workers. Football played an important role in the construction of an African urban identity and became an arena for political contest. By striking against the white control of their league and obtaining recognition of their independent association in 1953, the African players won an outstanding victory in an oppressive situation. Pnina Werbner, in a complex and ethnographically rich chapter, shows how the conflict of generations among British Pakistanis is expressed through the practice of cricket. The young British Pakistanis celebrate a culture of fun by playing cricket. This makes it possible to draw on their South Asian, non-Islamic roots, in order to oppose the Islamic rigidity of their fathers’ generation. Parkes demonstrates the interplay between polo and politics. The polo-playing elite Pakistanis accepted the changes of the rules of their traditional game, developed by British officers in the nineteenth century and exported to the entire world. This civilised version of an equestrian tradition was imposed on local populations. In a once socially democratic game, new rules, which also included the introduction of expensive Punjabi ponies, produced a sharp distinction between the elite and rural villagers. Thus, the historical transformation of indigenous polo in Pakistan makes possible an analysis of the politics of regional identity.

The fascinating presentation of the Venice regatta by Sciama illustrates the complex relationship between historical traditions and contemporary problems. In the past the regatta was imagined as a celebration of community, but was later suppressed because it created competition and conflicts between different quarters of the city. The present revival and its transformation into a sport with the gallery of heroes is seen by the author as a need to affirm a local identity in moments of crisis. In the context of Venice’s environmental problems, the participants in the regatta keep alive skills and traditions which they consider essential to its threatened continuity. The regatta is at the same time a sport, the present in the present, and a ritual, the past in the present, these two aspects united by the desire of the local Venetians for identity.

The importance of the football club, Athletic Club of Bilbao, for Basque nationalism is clearly developed by MacClancy. Key dimensions in the reproduction of a nationalist Basque imagery through football are found in the search for purity (la cantera), as only Basque players were accepted until very recently, and the affirmation of a style based on courage and strength (la furia vasca), Athleticco Bilbao was seen, especially under Franco’s regime, as the symbol and the power (it was a winning team for years) of the Basque land.

The book presents a diversity of sports, some of them marginal by world standards of practice and popularity. However, the significance of these sports is understood by the way the authors integrate in their studies historical traditions,
politics of identity and culturally constructed realities. As MacClancy writes in the introduction, ‘sport does not merely “reveal” underlying social values, it is a major mode of their expression’ (p. 4).

References


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The publication in a World Cup year of another book on football hooliganism is scarcely surprising, for this topic has been sensationally reported and variously interpreted for more than two decades in the popular press, and latterly within academia. What was once smugly referred to as the ‘English disease’ by observers and politicians in Britain and beyond has become a broadly domesticated, though much decried, accoutrement to the game at the local, national and international level. What distinguishes Gary Armstrong’s study of this controversial phenomenon is that it is inspired neither by reformist bent nor contrived exoticism. Rather, he asks why so much conflict takes place around the game of football, and furnishes an answer based on detailed, sophisticated and extended ethnographic field research. Therein lie the considerable strengths as well as the few weaknesses of this study.

Critical of the superficiality of most writing on football hooliganism, Armstrong builds his account on fourteen years of watching Sheffield United compete on the pitch and a small proportion of its young male fans (who identify themselves as the ‘Blades’, the nickname of their football team) ‘perform’ inside and outside football grounds as self-acknowledged football hooligans. Having attended matches at Bramall Lane (the home ground of Sheffield United) since his childhood, Armstrong subsequently conducted postgraduate research with larger and smaller gatherings of Blades in pubs, during train rides to away fixtures, and in the midst of street confrontations with the ‘lads’ who support other football teams, both in Sheffield and elsewhere. While anthropological readers might have appreciated a more explicit rendering of what was entailed in doing participant observation research in this setting than is offered, there can be little complaint about the thoroughness and salience of the ethnographic material provided. Given Armstrong’s contention that football hooliganism cannot really be explained, he seeks instead to describe and evaluate the nature of this ‘complex contestation and its construction within specific male milieus’ (p. 21). In short, he presents football hooliganism as a form of aggressive masculinity that appeals to ‘post-modern tribes’ of young men who promote self-identity and self-definition through ‘deep play’ that comprises the ritualised pursuit of esteem and honour. These labile aggregations of some, but by no means all, of the ‘lads’ who follow Sheffield United generate ‘gatherings with little cohesion, structure, obligations or rites of passage’ (p. 306). In practical terms, the violence they commit is, with few exceptions, neither gratuitous nor terribly dangerous to themselves, their opponents or bystanders. What stands out in this account is the pervasive theatricality and performative dimension of behaviour that is steeped in local ideas of appropriate masculinity, but which to the extent that it has been deemed by some onlookers to be ‘matter out of place’ has been criminalised by politicians and the police.

Armstrong deftly marshalls ethnography to underscore the factual unreliability of many press reports and police interpretations of hooligan activity and to underscore the methodological shortcomings and theoretical excesses of a number of generously funded academic analyses of football hooliganism. In demonstrating the capacity of an anthropological approach to elucidate a much-publicised yet poorly understood issue, he makes a timely and useful contribution. Had he extended his analytical framework further, to take account of social constructionist approaches to public problems, the extent of his achievement might well have been made more readily apparent to non-British readers and to practitioners of other disciplines.

It would have been interesting to have learned more about where football hooliganism fits within the priorities of the police, who, as Armstrong
notes, play both a practical and a key dramaturgical role as umpires in the staging of hooligan episodes. More might also have been said about the working and recreational lives of individual Blades when they are away from football. Nevertheless, if the mark of a good ethnography is its ability to stimulate readers to engage with the substantive and analytical framework offered by the author and to propose further questions and possibilities, then Armstrong’s book must be judged a success.

By insisting upon fully contextualising ethnographic accounts that become less readily amenable to sweeping explanatory schema proffered by certain forms of sociological theorising, Armstrong makes a strong case for the virtues of anthropological perspectives on social drama. His critique of insufficiently grounded applications of sociological categorisations to complex settings makes an important point about the limits of causal models in the social sciences. Moreover, his focus on the moral basis of football hooliganism, as it is understood by its practitioners, raises serious questions about the theoretical licence that has been exhibited by a number of prominent social scientists who would seem to have spent more time writing about this issue than in observing it first-hand. The inconsistency and confusion shown by politicians of all stripes and more than a few academics about what, if any, may be the broader political implications of football hooliganism tend to support Armstrong’s view that they simply don’t ‘know the score’. The ‘game’ being ‘played’ off the field needs to be understood first and foremost in terms of its dramatic and carnivalesque qualities.

This book makes important contributions not only to an emerging anthropology of sport but to the discipline as a whole. It will also serve as an intriguing and persuasive introduction to the merits of ethnographical analysis for a wider readership.

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Bibliographies rarely receive the recognition which they deserve from the people who use them. The contribution which this volume makes to its chosen field is great, and cries out to be recognised because of the nature of ‘folk-knowledge’ (generally a mixture of half-truths, misunderstandings and prejudice exhibiting varying degrees of willfulness) which outsiders have about the Roma or ‘Gypsies’.

Over the centuries, there has been plenty written about the Roma, and most of it is tripe. Tong is ideally placed to produce a volume which will guide people interested in finding modern reliable written information about the Roma, Sinte and other associated groups (not all of them of Indian ancestry – the Irish Travellers are not, for example – so not all are ‘Gypsies’ in the narrow, pejorative sense). Having also researched Judaeo-Spanish, she has worked in Greece as a photographer (she includes several of her own pictures), collector of folktales and sociolinguist, and she knows Romani.

Tong’s work concentrates on providing publication details (including page-numbers of articles) and a descriptive and often highly personal commentary on material produced since 1960, mostly in English (though there are numerous exceptions), and generally available in the New York Public Library. Altogether there are some 1,053 references, arranged by author’s surname within twenty-one subject categories, and many items are cross-referenced. An appendix of relevant periodicals and indexes of subjects, authors and titles complete the volume. Her choice of items to include is excellent. She has included practically all the best works about Roma from the specified period, and a fair selection of the shoddy but widely-circulated works which have impinged more readily upon popular consciousness.

Tong is keen to reflect Romani voices wherever possible, and this can be seen in the selection of the works which she discusses. To take one of the most significant categories in this connection, one can find 28 works written or dictated by Roma in the section on Autobiography, in addition to 20 works by Gadje (non-Roma) who have lived or worked with Roma. Other autobiographical works can be found throughout the volume. The tenor of the two categories differs widely. The greater number of the autobiographical works by Roma, or by those who married Roma, depict hardship, economic uncertainty and the distrust shown them by Gadje (many of these works were written by Central and East European Roma or Sinte and describe experiences of forcible sterilisation and other horrors of Nazi death camps). With a few exceptions (and these mostly produced from the memories of local raconteurs rather than by
writers aiming at a belletristic effect), the works by Gadje strive more for quaintness, objectifying the Roma as the authors seek to project their paradisaical longings upon them.

This last tendency has come to produce followers, especially in Britain, of what is known as the ‘gypsilorist’ syndrome: bandana-wearing arch romanticists drunk on the effusions of George Borrow, obsessed with ‘the wind on the heath’, the ‘affairs of Egypt’ and the correct way to cook hedgehogs, who claim to know more and better about the Roma than the Roma themselves know. Tong’s astringent commentary (pp. 95–141) on the shortcomings of many works of children’s and adult fiction serves to highlight the perniciousness of this view of Roma. Similarly she criticises other popular but unwarranted constructions of them as inveterate thieves, child-stealers, and the more controversial but no less inaccurate post-modern view of Roma as itinerant groups who share certain occupations which impose nomadism upon them, but who, indigenous to the countries they inhabit, do not therefore constitute an ethnic group of unified origin, and who do not descend from Indian settlers in Europe after 1,000 BC. Neither hack writers nor reflexive anthropologists are spared Tong’s scorn: Carol Silverman’s almost Bakhtinian ideas of the motivations of gypsy life are criticised especially robustly, and the book is sure to infuriate many people who do not think the way Tong does!

This book is scrupulously produced and will serve as an invaluable introduction to the best, most realistic and sometimes horrifying modern work about and by Roma.

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These volumes are the latest in a world-famous series of ever more specialised histories. (Companion works on the history of native peoples in Mesoamerica and Latin America are also available.) The editors have been well-chosen for their interests in this field and their interests and approaches complement one another. Trigger, professor of anthropology at McGill and among much else an expert on Meroitic civilisation, has written two of what are probably the definitive works on Huron history, while Washburn’s specialisation – the nature and consequences of native contact with non-natives in historic North America – led him to be chosen as the editor of Volume 4 of the Smithsonian Institution’s Handbook of North American Indians, A History of Indian-White relations, published in 1988. Indeed, these volumes, available separately or as a set, invite close comparison with the contents of that book.

The chapters are divided between two volumes, but this is more because of the large quantity of material to be dealt with than because the volumes have differing foci. Volume 1 includes two scene-setting articles, by Peter Nabokov (‘Native views of history’, pp. 1–59) and by the general editors (‘Native peoples in Euro-American historiography’, pp. 61–124), which orient the reader to the current state of knowledge of native North American history, both via a more traditional ethnographic account of representation within the chronicles of the colonisers and by means of an historical narrative which draws on observations by Native Americans themselves. The three following chapters summarise what is known about the history of North American hunter-gatherers and indigenous agricultural societies. In attempting to document pasts of these groups at periods when written documentation of their lifeways was not available the authors concentrate on what can be gleaned from the evidence of archaeology, linguistics and other fields of study. This approach is probably unavoidable when studying a far-flung geographical area, some parts of which became ‘known’ to European colonisers more than two centuries before others: if we had the density of records for activity in Montana and the Dakotas in 1648 that we have for, say, Iroquoia, many of the puzzles in Plains history would be resolved.

The final three chapters in Volume I, and the seven in Volume II, follow much the same pattern and are more tightly focused: they discuss either an area, such as the Arctic, or more rarely a cultural theme, such as the Native American renaissance or the reservation period, within a specific time-frame, with concentration upon the landmarks (‘high points’ is not the right phrase) and effects of non-native – and thus generally Euro-American – contact upon this native area or complex. This often turns into a discussion and detailing of various Senate and House of
Representatives committees or resolutions, or legislation enacted.

The chapters average about 65 pages in length, and are well-written and generously illustrated with sketches, half-tone pictures and maps, and culminate in short bibliographic essays. Each volume is page-numbered as a separate book, and ends with a separate index. Most geographical areas are covered, although there are instances of chronological discontinuity: not much is said about the Southeastern United States after the War of Independence, and there is only one reference to the Cherokees’ Trail of Tears – while Bill Clinton gets three, none of which mention that he is the first US president of part-Native American ancestry. Sixteen authors have contributed fifteen chapters.

The strong points of these volumes are their relative immediacy – they contain references to work published as recently as 1995 – and the fact that the editors have gathered some of the most notable scholars in the field (Loretta Fowler, David Damas and Dean Snow, among others) to contribute chapters. The material in the chapters is reliable and the directions to further reading are valuable.

In most respects, though, they lose out when compared with the volume of the Smithsonian Handbook mentioned above. For one thing, none of the authors of the Cambridge volumes are Native American, whereas the Smithsonian volume could draw upon work by scholars such as the Pawnee Lawrence Baca or the Cherokee Rayna Green, who themselves were building on an historical and anthropological tradition of Native Americans writing about their own or other native cultures and using an originally Euro-American discourse to do so – a tradition that was more than a century old. The absence of Native American authors from such a collection is hardly excusable nowadays.

The Smithsonian volume is richer in scope, more detailed in coverage, draws from many more authors, including ethnohistorians, cultural anthropologists, lawyers and clergy among others, contains more articles and is more profusely and attractively illustrated: in the Cambridge volumes we see pictures of artefacts, in the Smithsonian volume we see photographs of people. Its section of potted biographies of non-native individuals who had a significant impact on Native North Americans is an unusual and very welcome feature. In more nakedly commercial terms, it also has a higher word-count and is cheaper. Where the Cambridge volumes steal the march is the fact that their articles are more up-to-date (some of the Smithsonian volume articles were submitted in about 1973 and were barely revised before publication fifteen years later). This makes Washburn’s account of the Native American cultural, political and religious renaissance (Volume 2: 401–73) especially valuable.

The Cambridge volumes supplement the Smithsonian volume rather than superseding it. They are certainly welcome, and are more immediately useful as sources of summaries, but Americanists will want both books on their shelves, even if they turn to the Smithsonian volumes more frequently.

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Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory.

Culture theorists Williams and Chrisman have assembled 31 historically, culturally and theoretically diverse readings so as to provide an in-depth introduction to debates within post-colonial theory and criticism. The readings fall into three categories: speeches made by Senghor, Cabral and Césaire on negritude; excerpts from books such as Said’s Orientalism, Giddens’ The consequences of modernity, Fanon’s The wretched of the earth; and ground-breaking articles from journals and other collections of writings.

The reader is divided into six sections, each having a useful introduction in addition to the excellent general introduction to the field of colonial discourse theory. ‘Part One. Theorising colonised cultures and anti-colonial resistance’ sets up a discourse surrounding society’s Other – the colonised person, the subaltern, male or female (Spivak). This section also considers negritude as ‘the African personality’ (Senghor) national culture (Fanon; Cabral) and the colonial alienation of the person (Bhabha).

Said initiates the debate surrounding ‘Part Two. Theorising the west’, with selected extracts from Orientalism, arguing that Orientalism is an institution for dealing with the Orient. For Said, and Williams in his article ‘Kim and Orientalism’, description leads to domination, as cultural texts produced about the Orient lead to material...
repercussions upon the Orient to the extent that
visitors to India in the 1920s were unable to
distinguish whether the people they met in the
capitalism leads to barbarism.
empire ‘were living their lives as Kipling
characters, or whether Kipling was “simply”
describing the normal behaviour of the imperial
ruling class’ (Williams, p. 481). The other authors
in Part Two either condemn the works of Said – by
rebutting his analysis (Porter; Ahmad) or by
concentrating colonial discourse upon the
globalisation of capitalist modes of production
(Giddens) – or condone Said, as when Césaire
describes colonisation as an enterprise ‘based on
contempt for the native and justified by that
contempt’ (Césaire, p. 177). In this way,
colonisation dehumanises the coloniser, such that
colonisation leads to barbarism.

Subsequent articles throughout the reader
repeatedly refer back to the writings of Fanon
and Said, who are believed to have initiated the
area of academic inquiry known as colonial
discourse analysis. This can give the impression
that little novelty is contained within this reader.
This is not so as Part Three, ‘Theorising
gender’, demonstrates. The writers Mohanty,
Suleri, Henderson and Sharpe tackle the
contemporary question: How is femininity
instrumentalised in dominant colonial/imperial
discourses? Each draws upon Fanon’s
observation that the colonial ideology latches on
to the mythology of the black-male sexual threat
to white femininity in order to legitimise itself.
Mohanty shrewdly criticises white feminist
movements for colonising the black experience,
and Sharpe draws together the pieces by Spivak,
Said and Williams with her textual/contextual
analysis of the ‘rape’ episode in E. M. Forster’s
A Passage to India. Sharpe notes that Forster’s
Aziz is figuratively raped by the accusation of
rape, just as the Indians of the 1857 Mutiny
were dehumanised and criminalised by British
accusations that they desecrated British women
and children. In a similar vein, Franco (in ‘Part
Four. Theorising post-coloniality: intellectuals
and institutions’) and Kandiyoti (Part Five)
argue that women are subordinate to the nation
in that control of their sexuality and purity is
central to national and ethnic processes.

Part Four examines the nature of the post-
colonial. Opinion is divided as to whether the term
refers to the period from the initial colonialism to
the present, or the period since the end of official
colonialism, or the period from the end of neo-
colonial domination onwards. ‘The relationship of
the periphery to the metropolitan centre’ (Hodge;
Mishra, p. 277) is central to this colonial debate.

According to Franco, the oppressed of the
periphery have a heart of darkness outside of
metropolitan civilisation, where communities have
no sense of place, and production/consumer
fetishism replaces Marxist commodity fetishism
(Appadurai; Mulvey, Part Six).

With the same issues in mind, ‘Part Five.
Theorising post-coloniality: discourse and identity’
looks at who controls the production and
distribution of post-colonial cultural discourse.

African writers Achebe and Thiong’o debate the
politics of publishing in English or their mother
tongues. English, for Achebe, is merely a language
with a wide audience which does not dictate
cultural values. Thiong’o, however, maintains that
the English language is a carrier of the English
culture and is, therefore, a form of neo-
colonialism. Is it possible to decolonise the mind?

Gilroy, hooks [sic] and Hall see the identity of the
black defined by skin colour and the coloniser.
This lengthy section finishes by questioning the
possibility of achieving the post-colonial condition.

In answer to this question, in ‘Part Six. Reading
from theory’, Makdisi describes the post-colonial as
the Third World coming to terms with the past by
revising and renarrating it. By applying theory to
literature, Makdisi reiterates Said’s thesis that texts
may have repercussions and material effects in the
real world. Makdisi goes on to suggest that figuring
out the processes of cultural production is the first
step in the direction of writing a new reality. This
is exemplified by Kipling’s Kim, a text which bridges
the gap between the coloniser and colonised and
which offers a ‘Utopian portrayal of racial
harmony’ (Williams, p. 480). However, Chrisman
duly criticises Spivak, Senghor and others for
privileged the word, or voice, from the periphery
above all others. Such bias will not be an effective
foundation for achieving the racial equality which
the majority of the writers in this reader are seeking.

Despite the inevitable criticisms attached to the
construction of a reader as ambitious, wide-ranging
and comprehensive as this, it is, as an in-depth
introductory text, highly successful. The skilful
selection of the readings, with linking themes and
issues between them, presents a well integrated up-
to-date dialogue between culture theorists from
different locations and generations. This book both
establishes an academic field and, with a
comprehensive bibliography and easily accessible
index, encourages the reader to explore further.

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Carsten presents useful information on the power and influence of women in the kinship system and usages of a village which she studied during the 1980s in Langkawi, a district in north-west Kedah, West Malaysia. The treatment is marred by the author’s doctrinaire and polemical feminism which regards the female gender emphases that her work explores as central to Malay kinship, wherever and whenever it is found (see pp. 19–22). Carsten is critical of differing materials from more fully agrarian regions, as if authors writing about those areas who mention practices that indicate male chauvinism have gilded the lily, presenting only practices of which they approve and ignoring the importance of female links and networks as well as of the pervasive symbolism of the hearth and its influence on behaviour.

She attempts to confirm the emphasis on siblingship rather than filiation that she found in Langkawi as central to all Malay kinship by quoting McKinley’s (1981) work on Kuala Lumpur kinship. One would surely expect siblingship to express itself strongly in Kuala Lumpur, without agrarian land and with a strong commitment to Malay identity (p. 87; cf. Banks 1983: p. 80, n. 2). Evidence from Langkawi and Kuala Lumpur does not demonstrate a similar emphasis in inland Kedah in previous decades or that filiation and male filiation were less important there.

Carsten’s suggestion that maleness and the disdain of femaleness in rural Kedah was an ethnographer’s fantasy or imposition on the data collected during the late 1960s omits certain crucial facts and experiences in rural inland Kedah (pp. 21–2). First, half-siblings through one mother were called dog relatives (saudara anjing) while those through males were real relatives (saudara betul). A dog is considered an unclean animal in Islam and this Malay phrase belittles the female contribution to heredity. Second, the Malay expression for resemblance to the mother (turun baka) was used with condescension (p. 113; cf. Banks 1983: 68). Third, the writer lost one excellent informant and heard of other deaths because no male next-of-kin was present to approve that the person in need of medical intervention be taken to a hospital. Absent males returned to find the pressure lamps on and the informant’s funeral in progress.

The present writer’s shock and sadness at the unequal attitudes and treatment of women in rural Kedah in the late 1960s should not imply that he collected the entire story of Malay kinship for all times. At that time the Vietnam War raged on. Emphasis upon maleness found expression in the media. The writer’s identity as an African-American probably also encouraged informants to teach him Malay values alternative to those they perceived him as having. If the above suggests a built-in slanting of the results, consider Carsten’s strategy of using all-male field assistants because women ‘would have been too shy to conduct the inquiries I had in mind’ (p. 9). For example, Malays in Kedah probably still react differently to interviewers of the same or apparently related sociocultural backgrounds as former colonials. They are still called Mem and Mat Salih, male and female Britishers, and are thought to live by their own rules. A female supervisor, using all male assistants, might suggest that the supervisor wanted answers emphasising female control and power.

Carsten’s suggestion that we ask how a people define kinship usages (p. 290) is central to the cultural study of kinship, but in the modern world we should not expect any colleague to gain all the answers through any interview strategy. Rich Malay cultural traditions can be mobilised to support one or another set of social practices, depending upon general life circumstances. The present writer is also gratified that the materials for greater female participation in social life were available to Carsten, however obtained, and that they indicate fuller female participation than he observed in the late 1960s. Such social changes should surprise no one.

These doubts aside, I found the book useful although too long, the author returning again and again to argue that her results are true Malay ones, and others bogus.

References

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In this work Ingham collates psychological theories with current trends in anthropological thinking. He adheres to the idea of an ecumenical ‘human nature’ while stressing the agential and dialogic aspects of the cultured individual. The discipline of cultural psychology must, according to Ingham, steer a course between hard-line relativism and universalism, producing a ‘compelling story about the intrapsychic, embodied foundations of will, desire, and agency’ (p. 8), whilst allowing for the influence of culture and social structure.

The layout of Ingham’s work is clearly configured, allowing for easy comprehension of the complex psychological materials presented. The book is divided into ten chapters, including a thorough introduction and conclusion. The introduction is followed by an exhaustive account of ‘human nature’. This chapter covers many strands of thinking, from psychoanalytic (both Freudian and Lacanian) to Edelman on the neuroscience have uncovered universals which are all explained in terms of the dialogue between the individual psyche and the strains of society.

In Chapter 3, Ingham uses ethnographic examples (Spiro, Taggart) to enhance the psychoanalytic argument that personality has its roots in childhood. However, he makes the important point that there is more to differences between individuals than can be explained by divergent child-rearing practices, driving home the idea that there is more to human nature than culture alone. For Ingham, the investigations of disciplines like cognitive neuroscience have uncovered universals which must be incorporated into anthropological studies.

In Chapters 7–9 Ingham changes his focus, becoming more concerned with the effects that ‘human nature’ and personality have on social relations, cultural beliefs and practices (p. 167). Drawing heavily on Freud’s notion of the ‘artist’, Ingham sees sociality as being a compromise between the individual phantasmagorical worlds of its members. Thus, all sociality is dialogic but only comprehensible by uncovering universals of ‘human nature’.

Chapters 7–8 provide a brief overview of ‘collective violence’ and ‘religion’ in a number of non-western Societies. These chapters are lucid examples of anthropological theory written from within the western modernist paradigm; no room is given to indigenous exegesis. Phenomena such as head-hunting among the Ilongot, ‘petty warfare’ of the Zulu and the destruction of some six million Jews and Gypsies during the Second World War, are all explained in terms of the dialogue between the individual psyche and the strains of society. Therefore, the ego and super-ego monitor dark idic desires, but only under the influence of interpersonal factors such as, socioeconomic climate or politics (p. 221).

Chapter 9 is a search for the ‘underlying motives’ behind religion (p. 222). This chapter looks at the cosmological beliefs of a number of cultures including the !Kung, the Nuer, Roman Catholics of the west, and Hindu India. With Frazerian panache Ingham searches for the universal reasoning behind religious activity. The explanations he provides are primarily psychoanalytic with slightly functionalist overtones: ‘religions may reassure believers that disappointment, losses, frustration and imperfection, while inevitable, are bearable’ (p. 246).

Chapter 10 concludes Ingham’s work, explicitly outlining his aim of contributing to psychoanalytic anthropology. He admits to using anthropology to put personality in ‘evolutionary perspective’ (p. 247), and readily accepts the universal applicability of cognitive psychology and psychoanalysis without ever hinting that these may be western epistemes.

Jean Lave (via Sahlins) offers us a notion which as less likely to experience multiple visions of self (p. 97). Despite the seductive coherence of his style, I have to question his premises here and in the following chapters where he discusses depression, hysteria and schizophrenia. The political implications of his sweeping generalisations and problematic cross-cultural comparisons, such as the likening of spirit possession to personality disorders, cannot be denied (p. 123).

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Jean Lave (via Sahlins) offers us a notion which
perhaps explains such lack of humility in western academic discourse; it is, she suggests, part of our systems of representation to ‘naturalise’ or ‘biologise’ those cultural constructs which form coherent constituents of our world. What else are ‘cognitive universals’, Lave suggests, but the very transformation of western beliefs; we insist on giving to the cultural the status of ‘the natural’. Ingham’s book is an account of the marriage of psychology to anthropology, though this could be expected to be a turbulent partnership. As Lave has explained, psychology stresses the universals of the human condition and can thus only view anthropology as the study of the irrelevant ‘particular’.

Though the comprehensive coverage of material cannot be criticised, the positivist framework, combined with evolutionist and functionalist premises from which Ingham writes, gives his book a sinister political character. The assumption is that psychological explanations are context-free representations of a meta-reality. However in trying to give voice to the subject, anthropology attempts to move away from such discourse. Dialogic studies, such as Ingham’s, should not only imply different selves and different voices, but also equal voices speaking from different but equally valid worlds.

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The methodology of fieldwork established by Malinowski, particularly the central importance of participant observation, has provided a model for countless anthropologists who came after him. His diligent and systematic use of photography, however, has been less widely considered, despite the importance he placed on it and the inclusion of a large number of photographs in his published monographs. This book, which presents a selection of almost 200 photographs from the archive held at the London School of Economics, is a welcome addition to the texts available on Malinowski’s work and reveals the seriousness with which he regarded the camera as a fieldwork tool. In retrospect, Malinowski saw his assignment of photography’s role as a ‘secondary’ activity in the collecting of evidence as a mistake (p. 8). Despite his self criticism (he called the photographs a ‘capital blot on my fieldwork’) the photographs reproduced in this volume show how far Malinowski had departed from the anthropometric approach of many of his predecessors, demonstrating a desire for candidness and context which went beyond the technical capacity of his photographic equipment.

One difficulty Young faced in putting the book together was that Malinowski had not catalogued the photographs clearly. This made it impossible to date them, and in some cases it is not certain whether a photograph was actually taken by Malinowski himself. Many of the photographs in the book were certainly taken by Billy Hancock, an English–Australian pearl trader, a keen amateur photographer living locally whose enthusiasm for photography Malinowski shared. Only occasionally did Malinowski scribble a few words on the back of a photograph which provide clues as to the subject matter and to his intentions in taking the picture. Young addressed this problem by including Linus Digim’Rina, a Trobriand anthropologist, in the enterprise. Digim’Rina was himself able to offer valuable insights into the material and his participation is a major factor in the success of the book’s project. In addition, once the photographs to be included had been selected, Digim’Rina took them to Kiriwina and elicited comments from a number of different groups of villagers, comments which ‘spring their own small surprises’ concerning what is visible to Trobrianders in photographs taken 80 years ago (p. 24). Thus, instead of captions from Malinowski, the photographs are accompanied by ethnographic and historical comments from Young and Digim’Rina. These do not offer modern interpretations, but are kept in terms of Malinowski’s own fieldwork, so that the focus of the book is on Malinowski’s experience, approach and methodology rather than on Trobriand society.

Young’s commentary is thoughtful and thoroughly researched. A few comments, however, are contradictory. For example, at one point he asserts that ‘In Malinowski’s photography there are very few portraits of any kind’ (p. 14), though elsewhere he writes: ‘he was . . . inclined to take candid portraits’ (p. 101). Those pictures which have the feel of portraiture are often ascribed to Hancock on those very grounds, although Malinowski himself did have a leaning towards portraiture. There is at times a sense that Young’s admiration for Malinowski leads him to interpret

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his approach in an overly generous light. Young suggests that Malinowski had a ‘rooted objection’ to the biometrical genre of anthropological photography advocated in ‘Notes and Queries’ (p. 19). Later he tells us that Malinowski took a copy with him to the field, and some of the photographs in the ‘Physical types’ section suggest that his rejection of this approach was less than absolute. Similarly, Young insists that Malinowski’s predilection for middle distance photography was a result of his desire to include contextual background, whereas it may well owe more to the limitations of his equipment.

In elucidating the subject matter of the photographs the book is remarkably thorough, but in relation to the technology of photography Michael Young seems less sure of his ground. Although he details the equipment Malinowski had at his disposal, little attention is given to the limitations this particular equipment must have placed on the photographer, and how he overcame them. For example, Malinowski’s frustration at not having enough light for snapshots and villagers not being willing to pose long enough for time exposures is documented, but the effect of technical problems on Malinowski’s methodology and the form of the photographs he was able to produce is not fully explored. Young remarks that ‘whether out of respect or timidity he kept a serene distance from his subjects’ (p. 14). It may well have been that Malinowski had by this time abandoned the cumbersome double extension for his camera which would have enabled close focusing and was relying on one of his ‘snapshot’ cameras. Young also lists a tripod among Malinowski’s photographic equipment, but never comments on when it might have been used or how its use might have affected the fieldwork situation. A reference to camera movement in one of Malinowski’s letters suggests that he was not making use of the tripod, but Young has nothing to say on the subject.

The book is introduced as ‘both a discursive exploration of his photography and an appraisal of Malinowski the photographer’ (p. 2). It contains almost 200 photographs, approximately one third of the photographs taken by Malinowski between 1915 and 1918. A further 270 have already been reproduced in Malinowski’s publications, these having been selected as the most suitable to illustrate his texts. This being so, what do Young’s volume and the photographs in it have to add? The chief virtue of the book is that it does focus attention on the photographs, encouraging the reader to examine them as texts in their own right. However, if the book were to add anything substantial to what was already available, it needed to shed light on Malinowski’s methodology. Unfortunately, the lack of additional information about the circumstances of photographing, the dating of the photographs and Malinowski’s plans for them means that in the end it falls short in this respect.

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The Netherlands has the third highest density of museums per capita in Europe, with more than 1,200 in 1998. In the last decade, a number of important Dutch museums have undergone a cultural revolution that has turned organisational structures and exhibition policies inside out. The shift of emphasis in many museums towards public service is integral to the privatisation process. But who is ‘the public’ in contemporary European states? The eight essays comprising Nieuwe Nederlands en Musea address issues surrounding new Dutch citizens as members of the museum public. There is an introductory essay by Lavrijsen, followed by essays on migration history and museums (Lucassen), cultural participation by allochthonous and autochthonous youth (Van Wel), cultural pluriformity in museums (Hermes), the transition from ‘white box to multicoloured museum’ (Van der Plas), outreach and other innovative programmes at the Amsterdam Historical Museum (Konsten), the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden (Van de Sande) and the Museum of Ethnology in Rotterdam (Reedijk).

A recurrent theme is that, until very recently, museums’ cultural products have not reflected the cultural heterogeneity of the Netherlands. From the nineteenth century, museums have typically catered for a restricted cultural elite but are now being forced to take account of fundamental changes over the past four decades. Decolonisation, the worldwide economic system and global tourism have produced accelerated cultural transmission, which has splintered the clear, monocultural, western, male view of the world and hence the value-free, scientific matrix underwriting museum authority (Reedijk). The

In a series of seven chapters, some published previously as independent articles or essays, the author examines the lives of Mexican tomato workers in the el Grullo valley of southern Jalisco and their reactions to the conditions of their work and to the controlling and dominating forces, political, managerial and social, in their lives. The work and write-up was undertaken in the late eighties and early nineties and is coterminous with such major events in the political economy of Mexican-American relations as the Chiapas uprising and NAFTA treaty. The author claims that these events are, as they should be, important conditioning factors in his reflections on, and interpretations of, his fieldwork. The one is a reaction to the extreme inequalities of the Mexican political economy and the other a treaty with potent possibilities for investment in that economy on the part of the monied interests in both Mexico and the United States. Another question entirely, of course, is whom those investments will benefit and what impact they will have on ‘extreme inequality’.

The first irony to be considered here is that at the time of conclusion of the write-up, 1994, these tomato-producing operations, in large part the product of United States investment and management, had succeeded in mining the local soil, were no longer able economically to defend themselves against insects and crop disease and were on the point of abandonment. This irony of opportunistic capitalist exploitation in an inadequately supervised and defended political economy, itself victim of exploitative forces, is not...
much commented on by Torres. He concentrates rather on the ironies, derisive humour, satire, sarcasm, mockery, burlesque and caricature employed by the workers when discussing their managers and political bosses, and conditions of life and work. The anthropologist as a prestige figure from the educated class is not exempt from these ironies, as the author candidly indicates.

The writer is a sociologist and in undertaking this research was part of a research team emphasising actor-oriented research directed by Norman Long at the Wageningen Agricultural University in Holland. Though he did not in the anthropological manner actually live in participant observation with the tomato workers over an extended period, he did visit them with frequency – ‘plunging into the garlic’ as he calls it – and on several occasions, to their astonishment, he worked with them in the fields. Anthropologists may ironise about his method of glancing intermittent contact, but in fact it provides the author with interesting texts which reveal the ironic dispositions of workers in several registers in their ‘practice of everyday life’. Indeed this work is reminiscent of de Certeau’s exposition of the contrarieties which characterise the practice of everyday life. In respect to anthropology, Torres evokes for this reader the long tradition of work, not in fact consulted by the author, on the social and cultural poetics of everyday life – work that addresses the social dynamic of the tropes including irony.

One may wish to comment on making of irony a central tool and focus of analysis and of emphasising its ‘force’ or ‘power’. Post-modernists and neo-pragmatists have been arguing recently that we now live in an ‘age of irony’, fruit in part of the ‘legitimation crisis’ of the late nineteenth century, but also a consequence of related post-modern worries about master narratives and final vocabularies. It is not exceptional, therefore, that ironic practices should be made the focus of Torres work.

But one may question the assigning of ‘force’ and ‘power’ to such ironic practices in any sense implying that they change the objective conditions of life. They surely can change the subjective or psychological conditions of life by subjecting an oppressive or excessively privileged Other to mockery, derision or debasement. But however much ‘joie de vivre’ irony may produce, the objective world question is: How does irony change the social and economic indicators of one’s life chances? Particularly as this tomato industry collapses around these Jalisco workers one wonders whether they are any differently placed now and in the long run in respect to the development indicators used by the United Nations to measure the gross difference in quality of life between nations and classes in the world. Torres does not speak of these changes. To talk about the force and power of irony without relating that force or power to change in such indicators is to risk being complicit in the perpetuation of conditions of severe inequality, and with the class and power differences they represent and protect.

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