Twelve years ago, in the *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Debra Spitulnik declared that there was not yet an anthropology of the mass media. The contemporary situation is somewhat different. Last year saw the inaugural meeting of the EASA’s Media Anthropology Network, and – as Walter Armbrust has recently acknowledged – a body of literature in the area is now ‘steadily growing’. Lila Abu-Lughod’s earlier work figured prominently in Spitulnik’s review, so it appears appropriate that her first monograph on the topic coincides with the subject’s bloom.

*Dramas of nationhood. The politics of television in Egypt* is unquestionably an excellent ethnography. From its very beginning, the description is thick and the reader is caught up in the imagery Abu-Lughod employs. Visually, even the cover – picturing a woman with two children sitting in front of a television in a sparsely clad room – engages us since we can imagine ourselves participating in the scene just as easily as observing it. Echoes of the notion of a picture within a picture resonate when a camcorder films a situation encompassing a television set, on to which set the very same scene is projected, causing layer upon layer of the same image to reoccur. This reminds us of a problem of the anthropology of the mass media, since the diffusion of mass-mediated messages seems equally complex and multilayered. Yet, despite this, Abu-Lughod excels at ‘following the thing’.

Abu-Lughod establishes television as a key Egyptian institution for the production of national ‘culture’, which she examines in the form of ‘melodramatic serials’. Such serials are unlike their Anglo-American counterparts, as they run to a definitive conclusion, like their Latin American equivalents. Abu-Lughod restricts her fieldwork to three particular sites: among the production elite, and with two groups of subaltern viewers. The production elite consists of the writers, producers, directors, actors, critics and government officials engaged in the production process and post-production critique. The subaltern groups comprise women from a disadvantaged Upper Egyptian village, heavily influenced by tourism, and maids working in the households of financially successful Cairene patrons.

By establishing those engaged in the processes of television production as members of the Egyptian intelligentsia, through their critical engagement with their own work and that of the state, Abu-Lughod illustrates the role of television in creating social hegemony (p. 13). She sees this as effected intentionally, through the framing of messages in terms of local sociopolitical ideological morality, and subliminally, through an interplay between narrative and emotionality, with such an emphasis on personal affect that individuality is accentuated (p. 113), with the consequence that this individuality is then understood in terms of the more overtly propagated overarching moral aesthetic.

Abu-Lughod calls on Schudson’s (1984) media aesthetics, identifying the aesthetic used in the television serials as ‘development realism’ that stresses the importance of education, modernity and national progress. However, she notes that such optimistic aims are far from the reach of her informants, who find everyday life very different from mediated depictions and feel patronised by the messages they convey. Nevertheless, at the ideological level, development realism is not unchallenged. Transnational Islamism also features in the discourse, as does ‘capitalist realism’, representing the idealisation of consumer choice, the protection of material attainment and autonomy in the private sphere. Abu-Lughod acknowledges a shift toward capitalist realism following the reorganisation of the television industry and questions whether this approach will successfully incorporate people with disjointed realities into the ethos of the nation state.
While Abu-Lughod introduces much empirical information to support the critique of the relevance of mass-mediated messages to those individuals represented by them, how inaccurate depictions are received by outsiders who have no personal knowledge of the ‘reality’ portrayed is only truly accounted for theoretically. How well people absorb inaccurate media messages is another dynamic worthy of empirical consideration that is complementary to how people feel about miscommunication about themselves, and a subject particularly pertinent to the issue of hegemony. In this sense perhaps Abu-Lughod’s work could have gone a little bit further. Despite this, its breadth and appeal is such that it has a wealth to offer to a number of disciplines and approaches.

Beyond its obvious value to media and gender studies, Dramas of nationhood includes contemporary discussions of cosmopolitanism and nationhood which will be useful to any anthropologist. For the anthropologist of religion, evidence of the manipulation of notions of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ Islam in television dramas will assist with discussions of the media’s portrayals of Islam more broadly. For those designing courses at Honours level, Abu-Lughod’s book will prove a good exemplar for teaching Gramsci and also Marcus’s notion of multi-sited ethnography.

As a final criticism, perhaps the black and white photos interlacing Dramas of Nationhood would have been that little bit more vibrant in colour. But when we recall Abu-Lughod’s remark that her informants’ ‘most eager and persistent dream . . . was for a color television set’ (p. 216), we realise just how closely this work represents the ethnographic reality it depicts.

MARK PAUL HIGHFIELD
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Richard Bauman’s book is a fresh take on folklore studies and a valuable addition to the corpus of writing on linguistic anthropology. The author balances attention to detail with the ability to present arguments elegantly and clearly.

In the introduction the key theoretical concepts of the book – genre, performance and intertextuality – are discussed. Bauman grounds his book in the ‘conception of social life as discursively constituted, produced and reproduced in situated acts of speaking and other signifying practices that are simultaneously anchored in their situational context of use and transcendent of them, linked by interdiscursive ties to other situations, other acts, other utterances’ (p. 2). Genre is defined as ‘one order of speech style . . . that serves as a conventionalised orienting framework for the production and reception of discourse’ (p. 3).

Intertextuality in Bauman’s view is ‘the relational orientation of a text to other texts’ (p. 4), while performance is ‘a mode of communicative display, in which the performer signals to the audience, in effect, “Hey look at me! I’m on! Watch how skilfully and effectively I express myself”’ (p. 9).

In the empirical part of the book Bauman presents several case studies, each focusing on a particular example of the intertextual play of genres in a performance. Chapter 2 is devoted to Icelandic stories about magic poems. The combination of prose and poetry in one performance requires the shifts in the mode of presentation. However, what interests Bauman even more are the ways in which the performer, Jón Norðmann, links his performance to previous performances and replicates or purposefully constructs an intertextual gap.

Chapter 3 studies the dynamics of genre in riddle tales. Bauman considers the latter in the context of power relations. The weak power position in society of the group where the riddle tales were collected (Scottish travellers) puts particular emphasis on the power of wit as a counter-balance to institutional power. Thus riddle tales channel the need for overcoming the power imbalance.

Chapter 4 analyses the calibration of genre in a Mexican market. The author develops an argument that links the calibre of the genre used on the market (‘call’, ‘spiel’ and hybrids of the two) to the type of consumer decision that needs to be taken, as well as to the socio-economic status of the buyer.

Calls (formally simple genre) are used to sell items of everyday use (vegetables, toilet paper etc.) and are addressed to poorer clients. Spies (formally complex genre) are used to sell items that require the customer to weigh up carefully their decision due to the high price or exclusive character of the item, and are more often addressed to richer customers. These two genres form the opposite poles of the continuum. The calibration and mixing of the two allows sellers to adjust their performance to the type of goods and customers involved.

Chapter 5 deals with first person narratives of a Texas storyteller. Self-presentation in the narratives serves as the means of indicating the status of the
narrator within a group (from a youth at the moment of rite-de-passage to an experienced authority). Bauman argues that Ed Bell solves the epistemological puzzles of reality though practical knowledge and imagination, which he presents in the generic forms of personal experience narratives, tall tales and practical jokes. Chapter 6 describes the negotiation of performance between narrator and listener. By presenting a hesitant performer, Howard Bush, and the ethnographer’s role in discerning parts of the narrative, Bauman wishes to emphasise the changes of subject roles during performance and the importance of interaction in constructing anthropological knowledge.

In Chapter 7 Bauman weaves together the analytical threads that appeared in the earlier chapters, concentrating on two interrelated problems: generic finalisation and organisation of participation. He attempts to transcend Bakhtin’s understanding of genre as a ‘finalised whole’, suggesting that more attention should be paid to the need to relay the source of utterance and to a resultant participant structure that is far more complex than a dyadic speaker–listener model. It is suggested that such routines can function as the means of traditionalisation, authorisation and socialisation of discourse. In the epilogue the author turns a reflexive eye on the ways in which ethnographers position themselves in the world of others’ words.

This thought-provoking book is, however, lacking a comment on why female storytellers and performers are absent from the world of others’ words. Since the author is generally interested in the issues of power misbalance and linguistic strategies for overcoming it, such comment would have seemed necessary.

ANNA HOROLETS
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Wilfred Beckerman’s A poverty of reason is part of a series of what are obviously intended to be polemical texts on current political, economic and moral issues produced by The Independent Institute. The book attempts a radical critique of the fashionable concept of sustainable development from an economist’s perspective, seeking to call into question both the evidence on which the concept is based and the claims to a moral high ground. Beckerman presents a number of interesting arguments to counter the views of the worst doom-mongers among environmentalists, but the logical inconsistencies and glaring omissions in the argument presented make the book as a whole difficult to engage with seriously. In particular it is difficult to swallow the approach taken, where facetiousness and sneering replace argument. At times it is unclear if the title is a critique of those Beckerman seeks to disprove or a description of the approach that he himself uses.

The book amounts to a series of short essays on various aspects of sustainable development, brought together to summarise Beckerman’s overall position on the environment and the role of economic growth in solving perceived problems. In each essay he deals briefly, and generally dismissively, with key aspects of sustainable development, with the tone of the argument reflected in chapter titles such as: ‘What is sustainable development supposed to mean?’ and ‘The “ethics” of sustainable development’. Beckerman aims to show that predictions of the imminent exhaustion of resources are unfounded, using this as the basis for the argument that the risks to the human race from the danger of climate change are overstated. In the final sections of the book he argues that the case for sustainable development is being made by bureaucrats, eager to extend regulation and thus their influence, and that the policies for environmental preservation are a new form of imperialism.

Any strength in Beckerman’s arguments is overshadowed by the aggressive and arrogant tone adopted and by a number of important weaknesses. While the positions of those he seeks to criticise are subjected to withering and scornful scrutiny, many of the underlying assumptions of his own position are left unquestioned. As a result, some breathtaking statements of what Beckerman assumes to be facts are made with little evidence to back them up. For example, he states, without any supporting evidence, that ‘the development of GM crops offers enormous benefits to farmers all over the world, including, in particular, farmers in developing countries’. He goes on to criticise those who question the use of GM technologies as pandering ‘to the prejudices of well-meaning but ill-informed people in the rich countries or to the “power-seeking” agendas of bureaucrats’. All of this is taken at face value, without considering the corporate and political interests that lie behind these developments.
The major weaknesses in the book are Beckerman’s failure to consider basic issues around inequality and the politics of the real world. In the case of inequality, for example, he fails properly to consider the unequal access and utilisation of resources, both within nations and internationally. He suggests that environmental considerations for dolphins may harm the livelihoods of Mexican fisherman and those for trees may harm poor communities in Thailand and Brazil, ignoring the fact that it is generally the corrupt elites who benefit from the over-exploitation of these resources rather than poor Mexicans, Thais or Brazilians. At the international level too, stunning international inequalities pass without comment from Beckerman. For example, a table showing per capita energy consumption for various countries shows that levels in the United States are almost triple those in Italy and over thirty times those in India, a point not noted in the text.

Beckerman also passes over the reality of world politics. In his dismissal of fears that energy resources will run out, he makes the case that market forces will solve any problems, ensuring that the rising prices of scarce resources will ensure rationing and will prompt the search for viable alternatives. What such an argument ignores is the reality of world politics, where powerful countries such as the United States are willing to fight wars to maintain access to energy resources rather than ration their current use or search for alternatives. Overall, this is reflected in a subtle (and unremarked) shift in argument through the book, which opens by looking at the consumption of resources, which has historically been carried out in the north, and moves to arguing that restrictions on future consumption as a result of a concern with sustainable development will harm the south more.

F R A N C I S W AT K I N S
Independent consultant (UK)


In 1992 the Canadian government, citing a catastrophic decline in fish stocks, declared a moratorium on the commercial cod fishery in North Atlantic. The effects of this moratorium, which is ongoing, have been particularly felt on the island of Newfoundland. Historically, the small and scattered communities of rural Newfoundland have been almost wholly dependent on the cod-fishery. With the fishery closed, the people of these ‘outports’ face having to adapt to life without a livelihood that not only sustained them economically, but was intrinsic to their very sense of identity.

Retrenchment and regeneration in Newfoundland is, as the title would indicate, a collection of essays written by historians, anthropologists and sociologists that address and analyse the circumstances of the moratorium and the ways in which rural Newfoundlanders have adjusted to the closure of the cod-fishery. However, although the ‘prolonged period of uncertainty’ (p. 1) precipitated by the collapse of the cod stocks provides the context for these essays, they may also be situated within a broader set of concerns which have dominated the historical and sociological study of Newfoundland since the 1960s.

Newfoundland is a peculiar place, one of extremes and contradictions. This is a deeply rural society, distant both literally and conceptually from the centres of economic and administrative power. Yet one of the defining features of this deeply rural society, dependent as it is on the catching and selling of fish, has been its integration into the world economy and regimes of colonial and then national administration. This integration may be, as Byron describes it, ‘imperfect’, but life in the outports is in many ways profoundly affected by market forces and political decisions, as well as by the mysterious habits of cod fish, all of which are largely, if not completely, beyond the control of local people.

It is the tensions inherent in the complex relationship between local lives, political decision-making, the workings of international capital and the management of the marine environment that have been the subject of much of the scholarship concerning Newfoundland’s social history. Retrenchment and regeneration in rural Newfoundland is no exception. Broadly speaking, the essays may be divided into two categories. The first deals with the politics of development in Newfoundland, focusing on the relationship between colonial, national and provincial attempts to ‘modernise’ the economy of the hinterland and local traditions of resource management. Among these are Sean Cadigan’s excellent overview of ‘The moral economy of retrenchment and regeneration in the history of rural Newfoundland’, Barbara Neis and Rob Kean’s critical discussion of the ‘Problem of “fishing up”’, John Omonhundro and Micheal Roy’s more ethnographic consideration of ‘Competing visions of the forest in northern
Newfoundland’ and Douglas House’s arguments, based on his own involvement in government commissions on rural regeneration, for the ‘Need for supportive capacity in the new regional economic development’.

The second are more sociological studies of the impact of the moratorium on rural communities. Three of these essays – Craig Palmer’s ‘A decade of uncertainty and tenacity in northwest Newfoundland’, Matthew Clarke’s ‘The professionalisation of inshore fishers’ and Bonnie McCay’s ‘Women’s rights, community survival, and the fisheries cooperative of Fogo Island’ – deal with the divisions that emerge within traditionally egalitarian communities as cod stocks decline and access to common resources becomes increasingly politicised and restricted. Another two essays – Peter Sinclair’s analysis of ‘Migration and the structuring of Bonavista’ and Dona Lee Davis’ discussion of ‘Occupational choice among Newfoundland’s youth’ – focus on why people chose to leave and return to rural Newfoundland in a time of economic uncertainty.

From the perspective of an anthropologist interested in Newfoundland this is an exceptional series of essays that makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the effects of the moratorium and, more broadly, the cultural politics of resource management in rural Newfoundland. From the perspective of a more general anthropological audience this volume may suffer from seeming a little parochial and narrow in its regional focus. In his introduction Byron provides a fine summary of the history of the fishery in Newfoundland, and those contributors – such as Clarke, Davis and Sinclair – who present community-based studies give pithy ethnographic descriptions of, respectively, Petty Harbour, ‘Grey Harbour’ and Bonavista. Nonetheless, the impression is that these essays are addressed to an academic readership that is interested in the sociology and history of rural Newfoundland. With the possible exception of Neis and Keans’ discussion of ‘fishing up’, there is little in the way of comparative analysis of the issues raised in the essays. Nor is there is there much attempt to situate the study of resource management and social change in Newfoundland within the context of more general theoretical discussions in the social sciences, though, again, Neis and Keans’ essay and, in particular, Cadigan’s brief but insightful consideration of the ‘tragedy of the commons’ model are exceptions.

This seeming narrowness of focus should not, however, detract from the real strengths of this volume. Indeed, by adopting an interdisciplinary approach to the study of an environmental crisis and its social effects, these essays taken as a whole provide a complex and nuanced interpretation of the network of relationships that exist between fish, trees, local communities and extra-local organisations, and how these relationships evolve over time.

JOHN HARRIES
University of Edinburgh (UK)


Janet Carsten’s new book, entitled After kinship, provides a summary of major debates about the ‘house’, the ‘person’, ‘gender’, ‘relatedness’, ‘bodily substances’ and the impact of ‘new reproductive technologies’. In her introduction she presents the reader with a very one-sided, highly incomplete account of the development of kinship studies in which she tells the story of the development from structure and form to content and process. The story goes like this. In the past, the older generation of functionalists and structuralists produced ‘static’, ‘rigid’, ‘technical’, ‘normative’, ‘highly abstract’ kinship studies that were written from a male perspective and served to reinforce ‘the boundaries between the west and the rest’ (p. 15). A ‘departure’ from this type of kinship with ‘no future’ came with David Schneider who revolutionised kinship studies with his culturalist critique and opened up a whole new range of questions, particularly about the relationship between ‘nature’ and ‘culture’, and successfully deconstructed the ‘old’ kinship. ‘After Schneider’, a new generation of anthropologists began to revitalise kinship studies. By exploring notions of gender, analysing the symbolic construction of the person and dealing with developments in reproductive technologies, this new generation contributed to the ‘rebirth of kinship’ (p. 21). In most recent kinship studies focusing on ‘the boundaries between what is social and what is biological in kinship’ (p. 188) Schneider’s own assumptions about the dichotomy between ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ are put into question, and this promises even further advances in our study of how people experience kinship.

This story of the development of kinship studies neglects many of the important characters who shaped it, such as the formalists in Oxford (there is
only one reference to Needham’s work), or those scholars around the world who continue to study ‘cold’ as compared to ‘hot’ kinship. Carsten intends to reintegrate two trends in anthropology whose representatives she calls ‘traditionalists’ and ‘revisionists’. She hopes to achieve this by drawing on highly valuable anthropological studies of the local meanings of ‘kinship’ and by taking into account recent studies on the effects of new reproductive technologies. In contrast to the ‘traditionalists’, whom in my view she categorically rejects rather than integrates, she wants to insert life into kinship studies. She intends to achieve this by providing ‘vivid’ descriptions of ‘emotionally charged social relations of close kinship’ (p. 31), something we can only welcome as long as it does not mean a complete neglect of other fields of investigation (e.g. various forms of kin classification) which may require more formal methods. Carsten further wants to overcome the ‘traditional’ separation between ‘us’ (who have families) and ‘them’ (who have kinship) by ‘defamiliarising’ certain concepts taken for granted in the West. In her view, this new trend in anthropology enables us to ‘experience’ new forms of kinship in our own society and to understand the double process of ‘naturalising technology and technologising nature’ (pp. 30, 172–6). This is perhaps the greatest contribution of this book as it extends the relativism implied in Schneider’s approach to the study of Western societies by showing that everywhere kin relations are shaped by local historical and political contexts, and not simply by ‘biology’.

In the main part of her book Carsten provides the reader with easily understandable summaries of rather sophisticated debates in recent kinship studies. She draws upon ethnographic data from all over the world and employs, contrary to many other followers of Schneider, cross-cultural comparison. Carsten’s examples are taken from various sources including her own extensive fieldwork on the island of Langkawi, other ethnographic studies and newspaper articles. In Chapters 2–4 Carsten attempts to show how in recent years kinship studies have been revitalised by studies focusing on important ‘tropes’ such as the ‘house’, ‘gender’ and the ‘person’ in which aspects of kinship are combined that used to be treated separately in more ‘traditional’ kinship accounts. This is followed by three chapters (5–7) in which she addresses the relationship between ‘nature’ and ‘culture’, as articulated in studies on ‘bodily substance’, cultures of relatedness and new reproductive technologies. In her conclusion, Carsten summons a new character to the stage, Bruno Latour, whom she confronts with the central figure of her earlier chapters, David Schneider. Latour gets the upper hand because Carsten criticises Schneider for upholding a rigid dichotomy, while she considers Latour to be ‘liberating’ since he rejects any fixed notions of this relationship and overcomes the typical dichotomy between the ‘West and the rest’.

Throughout the book I got the impression that Carsten’s critique of other anthropologists operates with a simple dualism: the ‘old’ is rigid, technical, static and morally doubtful (‘the West and the rest’); the ‘new’ is fluid, questions boundaries and addresses emotions and experiences. However, the ‘tropes’ she mentions cannot be the only focus of all new kinship studies since there are other phenomena around the world that express ‘relatedness’, such as certain clearly ordered kin classifications that require a more formal analysis and a distinction between terminology, rules and practices. If, for example, a formal analysis of Malay relationship terminology does not provide a key to the understanding of Malay concepts of ‘relatedness’, this does not mean that studies of relationship terminologies in other parts of the world are equally useless. It simply means that our data, and not the present trend, should determine our use of either ‘old’ or ‘new’ methods. In summary, the book provides students with good examples for the variable, local meanings of kinship, but also with a very one-sided history of the development of kinship studies and with a rather dogmatic approach that starts from the idea that all kinship phenomena can be studied with the same ‘new’ method which interprets experiences and emotions.

ROLAND HARDENBERG
Heidelberg University (Germany)


This book about Kinshasa was published as a sequel to the exhibition *Kinshasa, the imaginary city* which was awarded the prize for the best presentation at the 2004 Venice Architecture Biennale. During the summer of 2005 it was also on view at the Palace of
Reviews available on-line indicate that its anthropological approach to the way the inhabitants of Kinshasa experience and interpret their way of living came across as original and convincing.

Filip De Boeck has conducted fieldwork at various locations in Congo, and since 1995 increasingly also in Kinshasa. Much of the material presented here has appeared in different forms in earlier publications, but most of it has been reworked. Some chapters combine existing texts and others have been expanded substantially. The author justifies the diversity of topics and approaches by comparing Kinshasa to a mirror hall ‘fracturing the urban universe into a series of multiple but simultaneously existing worlds, originating at different points in history yet speaking to each other’ (p. 256). However, it is left to the reader to discover that this account is rather different from the story of Italo Calvino’s *Invisible cities*, to which the subtitle refers and one of whose 55 descriptions of totally imaginary cities is quoted at some length as an introduction to de Boeck’s own narrative. Although the book is written in English, its style reminded me of the way French anthropologists often try to convey their thoughts, of which Lévi-Strauss’s *Tristes tropiques* is, for me at least, prototypical. Most of the titles in the bibliography also refer to work in French, or translated from that language into English.

There are four chapters which are explicitly authorial, interspersed with three sections that tell stories from the point of view of some of the Kinshasa inhabitants themselves. The first chapter outlines the colonial history of the city and post-colonial changes: the gang culture of the 1950s inspired by Hollywood westerns in which contemporary youth culture is rooted; growing ruralisation; insertion into a global diaspora; and the role of rumour (*Radio Trottoir*). The next chapter describes relations between the living and the dead and deals with health and healing; African churches advocating a selective return to a precolonial past; widespread beliefs in zombies; and changing funeral rituals. The third chapter is about children and adolescents, and more especially about the breakdown of traditional solidarity and witchcraft accusations aimed at children. The final chapter emphasises that Kinshasa exists beyond its architecture and that the main building block of its infrastructure is the human body itself. It ends by invoking Foucault’s concept of heterotopia and the possibility offered by language to come to terms with the city, even though words ‘also form an intermediate zone where culture has often begun to drift away from its own codes and where meaning has become destabilised’ (p. 259).

The book is profusely illustrated with beautiful reproductions in full colour of photographs by Marie-Françoise Plissart, who worked with De Boeck in Kinshasa, with the explicit aim of making a book about this city jointly as a team. As the captions are relegated to an appendix and provide only minimal information one is drawn to the surrounding text for an interpretation of the pictures. This may cause misunderstanding. For instance, De Boeck’s account of ‘nativist’ churches devoted to spiritual communalism is illustrated with pictures of the Apostolic Church of John Maranke, although in my opinion this church differs in important aspects from the churches he actually describes (pp. 104–7). The juxtaposition of a picture of three adolescent girls and a description of different categories of ‘street girls’ (prostitutes) (pp. 168–9) is unfortunate and cannot have been intended, as there is no evidence that these girls are typical examples. On the other hand, the context of eleven portraits of children accused of witchcraft is only too clear, as they are published together with texts of their public confessions (pp. 148–53). Such confessions are part of healing rituals performed by certain churches, which treatment has led to accusations of child abuse by international aid agencies and NGOs. However, according to De Boeck, ‘one could argue that the churches, in providing and authorising this type of diagnostic, offer an alternative to the violence and conflict that occur in the family as the result of witchcraft accusation’ (p. 174).

JAN DE WOLF

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The Miskitu of eastern Nicaragua and Honduras are the largest Amerindian group in the Central American lowlands. They became widely known in the 1980s as a result of their violent conflict with the left-wing Sandinista government, which had endeavoured to integrate the Miskitu and other native groups on Nicaragua’s Atlantic Coast (Mayangna/Sumu, Rama, Garifuna and the Afro-American Creoles) into their project for a unified nation. In the midst of a
counter-revolutionary war instigated by the United States government, this attempt was doomed to failure, not only because of the war but also the long history of ethnocentric attitudes on both sides.

In fact, historically and culturally, the Pacific and Atlantic areas of Nicaragua had little in common. The Atlantic coast was not 'reintegrated' into the Nicaraguan state until 1894, by force. However, up to the Sandinista victory in 1979 the region remained neglected by the government and almost completely isolated from the rest of the country. After several years of civil war between Miskitu-led forces and the Nicaraguan Sandinista army, the violent conflict came to an end in 1985 when the government granted autonomy to the Atlantic coast. However, when the Sandinistas lost power in 1990, subsequent governments switched back to centralist policies and to the general neglect of the region, which they regarded for the most part as an empty space to be colonised by cattle-breeders and poor peasants, and as a reservoir of natural resources. When the war ended, the Miskitu, who had figured prominently in the headlines of the international press for a couple of years, once more fell into oblivion.

Ethnographic treatments of the Miskitu are few and far between. Following in the footsteps of Eduard Conzemius (1932), Mary Helms (1971) and Bernard Nietschmann (1973), Philip Dennis's work is the fourth book-length treatment of this topic. Similar to Helms (on Asang at the Rio Coco) and Nietschmann (on Tasbapauni on the southern coast), Dennis has chosen the 'traditional' community study format. As such, the study is of great value, since he not only presents a range of interesting data on 'his' Awastara community (on the northern coast) but also provides the opportunity for inter-community comparison and the development of a diachronic perspective. In contrast to Helms and Nietschmann, whose books contained material from the 1960s, in _The Miskitu people of Awastara_ Dennis interweaves his experiences from two extended field periods (1978–9 and 1999–2000) and several shorter stays. He is thus able to document both continuities (for example, the difficulties of getting to the village, or turtling as the most important economic strategy) and change (such as the growing importance of purchased food; the development of Miskitu military skill, the large number of weapons and the growing insecurity in the village; and the impact of the cocaine that is frequently washed ashore from drug shipments passing the coast on their way from Columbia to the United States).

_The Miskitu people of Awastara_ is a highly readable book and gives detailed insights into many aspects of the everyday life of a lowland Amerindian group in Central America. It provides a short introduction to the history of the Miskitu and the geographical and political contexts, and covers topics as diverse as settlement patterns, the economy, education, religion, health care, village politics and concepts of personhood.

Dennis's book is influenced by recent concepts of ethnography and the postmodern critique of science as a cultural product. Thus, the author does not present himself as an 'objective' observer but gives the reader a dense description of the cultural scene: 'The ethnographer becomes one of the participants in the interaction described' (p. 21). His account is indeed a lively picture of what it means to live in Awastara, both as a native Amerindian and as an ethnographer. Large parts of the book are detailed accounts of specific situations or processes, and dialogues between the author and his informants. However, Dennis does not confine himself to mere description, but delivers an interesting analysis of several general features of Miskitu culture. A case in point is his discussion in Chapter 11 of the structural contradiction between strong kinship obligations and institutions that require even-handed authority (such as political leadership or the organisation of cooperatives), which results in mistrust and a cynical attitude towards the political ambitions of those who are not immediate relatives.

Less convinced than the author and many postmodern ethnographers that disclosed information speaks for itself, the reviewer would have applauded a little more interpretation as a complement to the rich material presented.

WOLFGANG GABBERT
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Les bébés et les jeunes enfants constituent un des derniers terrains laissés en friche par les anthropologues. Lorsqu’on en parle, on a trop souvent tendance à les considérer comme des sujets purement biologiques et passifs devant être progressivement socialisés, donc originellement dénués de culture et indignes d’une étude.
anthropologique. Alma Gottlieb prend le contre-pied de ce postulat et montre que, chez les Beng de Côte d’Ivoire, les bébés et les jeunes enfants sont, dès le départ, des agents sociaux à part entière interagissant avec leur entourage et influençant la vie autour d’eux. On considère par exemple qu’ils sont dotés, dès la période de gestation, de l’esprit d’un défunt qui se réincarne en eux et qui leur confère une volonté propre. Au lieu d’être dépourvu de langage, les enfants sont considérés comme comprenant toutes les langues parlées dans l’au-delà et capables d’exprimer leurs désirs dans une langue que les adultes sont malheureusement incapables de comprendre – à moins d’avoir recours à un devin capable de communiquer avec les esprits. Loin d’être des êtres dépourvus de culture ou de libre-arbitre, les enfants Beng sont, dès avant leur naissance, dotés d’un esprit ayant une longue histoire, d’une mémoire, d’une conscience, d’un langage, d’une volonté propres et sont capables de jouer un rôle spirituel de premier plan.

Le modèle de la mère ‘euro-américaine’ éduquant seule son enfant est une anomalie chez les Beng. Dès le premier jour de leur vie, les bébés sont habitués à être lavés, purgés et maquillés chaque matin par leur mère qui essaie ainsi de les rendre attrayants pour les baby-sitters – une nécessité pour les mères qui retournent aux champs quelques mois après l’accouchement. La sociabilité est une des valeurs les plus importantes que les parents inculquent à leur enfant. Alors qu’on défend généralement aux enfants américains de s’éloigner trop loin et de parler aux étrangers, on encourage les enfants Beng à être familiers et à faire confiance aux gens qu’ils ne connaissent pas, et à les suivre dans leurs activités, loin de leurs parents.

Les différences dans les comportements liés au sommeil sont elles aussi fort marquées. Aux États-Unis, le sommeil d’un bébé est sacré et l’on essaye de faire le moins de bruit possible pour ne pas réveiller un enfant qui dort. Les parents américains essayent d’apprendre à leurs enfants à avoir de longues périodes de repos, à intervalles réguliers, et à passer leurs nuits tout seuls. Chez les Beng, le mouvement et le bruit ne semblent poser aucun problème ; les bébés ont souvent de courts repos de quelques minutes, lorsqu’ils sont attachés sur le dos de leur baby-sitter en mouvement, et on ne s’en gêne pas pour réveiller un enfant qui dort lorsque son sommeil est incompatible avec d’autres activités. Un enfant Beng dort avec sa mère pendant plusieurs années, au moins jusqu’à son sevrage. Alors qu’une mère américaine donne généralement le sein à son enfant dans un endroit privé et selon un schéma bien réglé, les mères Beng allaitent leurs enfants en public, à la demande. Si la mère n’est pas présente, n’importe qui peut allaiter l’enfant, y compris les femmes ne produisant pas de lait, afin de calmer l’enfant. On lui apprend ainsi que la nourriture se partage – une valeur très importante pour les adultes.

Les étapes du développement moteur présentent un autre champ de différences significatives. Les Beng considèrent que l’apprentissage du langage, la pousse des premières dents, la capacité à ramper et à marcher sont les étapes les plus importantes du développement des enfants. Toutes ces étapes doivent non seulement bien se passer, mais elles doivent également s’effectuer au bon moment et dans le bon ordre, sous peine de constituer une abomination ou un mauvais présage. Les parents utilisent des ‘médecines’ pour ralentir le développement moteur des enfants précoces pendant la première année, puis pour l’accélérer pendant la seconde année, afin de respecter le calendrier voulu.

La description approfondie des pratiques et croyances liées aux enfants correspond bien avec ce que l’on sait déjà sur les pollutions sexuelles, les tabous et le rapport des enfants avec l’au-delà dans les sociétés de la sous-région voire, pour certains aspects, dans toute l’Afrique subsaharienne. Il est un peu dommage que l’auteure n’y ait pas fait plus référence car une étude comparative plus large parmi les sociétés africaines aurait permis d’affiner certaines hypothèses. Bien que le livre innove en plaçant les enfants au centre de la recherche et en les analysant en tant qu’agents, la démonstration de l’auteure repose sur une démarche anthropologique comparative des plus classique, dont l’efficacité n’est cependant plus à démontrer. En prenant comme point de départ les différents présumptions occidentaux généralement acceptés comme allant de soi, à la fois scientifiques et populaires, l’auteure les remet en question en leur opposant les perceptions et les pratiques des Beng de Côte d’Ivoire et en montrant que, loin de n’être que biologiquement et objectivement déterminés, ils sont également des constructions culturelles subjectives. On pourrait peut-être considérer la comparaison systématique avec les conceptions de ‘la classe moyenne euro-américaine’ comme une faiblesse de l’ouvrage et regretter que le livre s’adresse principalement à un lectorat américain (ou occidental), si la démarche n’était justifiée par la dominance de ces conceptions ethnocentriques dans les théories scientifiques sur l’enfance. La remise à plat de ces dogmes est une entreprise salutaire qui ne manquera pas d’inspirer.
The empire of the senses is the lead text in the new ‘Sensory Formations’ series, edited by David Howes. Subtitled The sensual culture reader, the book’s 22 chapters provide a wide-ranging introduction to what Howes calls ‘sensual culture’ – ‘the cultural and historical study of the senses’ (p. 6). This volume traverses the social sciences and humanities to republish some outstanding works from medical science, social anthropology, sociology, history, geography, psychology, philosophy, literature and more. Its thematic sections form multidisciplinary sets of essays that address the senses and cognition, in history, across cultures, in everyday life and in contexts of displacement where people are dislocated from ‘normal’ sensory experience.

Some essays re-published here originate from the 1980s (Kondo, Friesen, Calvino) and earlier (McLuhan), demonstrating (like the chapters that discuss historical approaches to the senses in chemistry [Roberts], drama [Mazzio] and philosophy [Stewart]) how questions of sensory experience have preoccupied scholars and scientists for centuries. This includes discussion of prominent modern western thinkers, such as Marx on the senses in capitalism (Stewart, Howes) and Freud (Miller). However, most of the essays were first published after 1990, and several after 2000, indicating how recently academic interest in the senses has increased. This, Howes suggests, is a ‘sensual revolution’ (pp. 1, 4, 399), and a necessary corrective to previous (Geertzian and semiotic) approaches that treat culture as readable text. It certainly represents a recognition of the importance of sensory experience that was excluded from much academic work in the past and the realisation of a focus on the senses that Howes himself has argued for in his published work since the early 1990s. The extent to which an interdisciplinary research area of ‘sensual culture’ is being established is a question that will be borne out with time and practice. This volume nevertheless spells out this growing interest in the senses with a set of representative pieces between which Howes makes useful connections in his section introductions.

The difficulty of creating a Reader from existing work is that the chapters do not converse explicitly with one another. However, Howes highlights the book’s continuous themes in his general introduction under the critical concepts of ‘emplacement’ and ‘intersensoriality’. ‘Emplacement’, which implies ‘the sensuous interrelationship of body-mind-environment’, expands the more limited focus on the mind-body relationship of the concept of ‘embodiment’ (p. 7). ‘Intersensoriality’, which stands for ‘the multi-directional interaction of the senses and of sensory ideologies, whether considered in relation to a society, an individual or a work’ (p. 9), stresses how modalities of sensory perception and culturally constructed sensoria are always enmeshed with others. Themes also recur through the chapters. For instance, in the first section, Sacks (a medical doctor) draws on his research with people who have lost their sight. His essay makes for an accessible, well-written and fascinating start to the book. It introduces themes that resonate through more recent work in the anthropology of the senses – the interconnectedness of different categories of sensory experience and the specificity of individual sensory perception within culturally framed contexts. While most of the following chapters present scholarly academic work that combines original research and theory, some demonstrate aspects of ‘sensual culture’ in more descriptive (Friesen) or literary (Calvino) formats. Some of the more important newer works include Roberts’ analysis of how an early sensory chemistry was replaced by the quantitative science of the eighteenth century, Guerts’ essay on the Anlo Ewe (Ghana) sensorium, Law’s work on how Filipino women construct sensory identities in Hong Kong, Drobnik’s discussion of sensory practices in contemporary art and architecture, Howes’ discussion of the senses in consumer capitalism, Desjarlais’ work on the sensory worlds of homeless people in the United States and Fletcher’s ethnography of how people who suffer from environmental sensitivity ‘disorders’ in Canada experience their everyday environments. In addition the book contains some key established works in sensory studies in chapters by Classen, Corbin and Feld.

Empire of the senses is a long awaited introduction to the senses in the social sciences and
This book deals with the sacralisation of objects. It presents numerous practical examples to put forward a comprehensive theory that culminates in a claim that Western secularised societies have replaced archaic fetishism with a museum cult.

The author takes the approach of a historian studying cultural history rather than that of an ethnological fieldworker. The first section relates to the etymology of the term ‘fetish’ and explains the context in which it originated. Colonialisation and missionary work played a decisive role in this process: historic reports show that the Occident was highly sceptical of ‘African fetishism’.

Karl-Heinz Kohl, however, claims paradoxically that it was the importation of those Catholic cult forms which fused with traditional forms of object veneration in West Africa that contributed to the formation of the fetishist complex.

Starting from there, Kohl makes it clear in the second section of his book that it is above all the Christian (mostly Catholic) veneration of saints and relics that shows the greatest similarities to the sacralisation of material objects in non-European cultures. The way the author starts this section by describing the image ban in ancient Israel and explains it in terms of the abstract monotheist idea of God makes fascinating reading. Also, he proposes a thesis that the primary purpose of this strict ban on images (which, as the author correctly remarks, never actually was that strict) was ethnic differentiation. This thesis appears highly plausible and invokes the attempts at finding a structural explanation of the pork taboo made, for example, by Mary Douglas. The author mentions the Ark of the Covenant to explain that salvation and disaster are often associated with identical objects; they have the supernatural power to make things better and at the same time to punish the wicked mercilessly. The rest of the section is a detailed description of the most varied facets of the Catholic relic cult. Again, the author comes up with an interesting, almost functionalist thesis. According to Kohl, the protective effect of relics was considered the more important the more unstable the political situation was. In times of weak central governments, the veneration of relics seems to have increased sharply. And it lost its significance when the political situation remained stable for longer periods of time and people could rely on a strong ruler. In the third section, Kohl gives a detailed overview of the usage of the term ‘fetishism’ throughout history. He describes the word’s first use by Charles de Brosses, its meaning in the age of Enlightenment, and ends up explaining how it was used by Kant, Hegel, Marx and Freud.

The author begins the fourth section by making a semantic distinction between ‘thing’ (‘Gegenstand’) and ‘object’ (‘Objekt’). According to Kohl, the term ‘thing’ refers to an idealistic or constructivist line of study because it implies that our constitution of the world is always linked to our sensory and perceptual capabilities. By contrast, an ‘object’ exists more or less independently of the observer, so using this term suggests a materialist approach. In his book, Kohl sticks to the term ‘sacred object’ and tries to define it for the first time at the end of the fourth section. Accordingly, sacred objects differ from all other objects by their practical uselessness, their separation from the secular world, their purely symbolic character and their inalienability. Finally, Kohl wonders how sacred objects acquired this extraordinary significance and gives an answer that seems somewhat strange from the standpoint of cultural and social anthropology: ‘It seems that it is history alone that decides whether and under what conditions a specific object acquires a sacred aura [es scheint, dass es allein die Geschichte ist, die
Building on this proposition, the author tackles in the fifth section the question of the genesis of sacred objects. Once again, he quotes and interprets a text from the Old Testament (the tradition of Jacob and the stone shrine of Beth-El). From a socio-anthropological perspective, the views and cognitive constructions of those people who classify sacred objects as ‘sacred’ would have contributed a great deal at this point (if not earlier in the book) to a more comprehensive theory of the ‘sacred object’. If the author had taken into consideration existing empirical data, for example about the origins of local sanctuaries in the Middle East, he probably would have arrived at different conclusions.

In the sixth and final section, Kohl puts forward the thesis that modern museums in secularised societies are a legacy of archaic fetishism, and are the places that create sacred objects today. This conclusion seems inevitable from the author’s ‘etic perspective’ and may sound convincing to many readers. However, ethnologists and cultural and social anthropologists who have taken emic approaches to their fieldwork may doubt that the meanings constructed by those making pilgrimages to stone shrines and those making pilgrimages to museums bear significant similarities.

In conclusion, this is a highly recommendable book, and although it makes good reading it is never superficial. From a socio-anthropological perspective, the author’s observations on distressing contingencies and strategies to cope with them turn out to be highly promising and forward-looking. Karl-Heinz Kohl has delivered a sound cultural-historical theory on the sacralisation of objects that might be expanded with a section on ethnological aspects of religious practice.

GEBHARD FARTACEK
Commission for Social Anthropology, Austrian Academy of Sciences (Austria)


It was because of my early work on youth culture that I was asked to review this book, and it did bring back memories of fieldwork with young working-class teenage girls in an ethnically mixed inner city area of South London. Yet, even more powerfully, reading this book brought me back to my own youth, when I was a communist. Contrary to that ideological engagement, which took place in a Swedish idyll of safety and welfare, this is the real thing. And it is presented in an immensely rich and impressive way.

When László Kürti was a school pupil in the 1960s in Hungary, he learnt a revolutionary socialist song about ‘Red Csepel’, a steel mill town reputed to be a ‘workers’ paradise’ (p. vii) located on the southern outskirts of Budapest. It was not until he became a PhD student at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and came back to his native country in 1985 to do fieldwork in this legendary town, that he first entered it. Expecting a model factory town consisting of a thriving working class with well functioning organisations and a careful cultivation of the local heritage, Kürti found exploited workers without much chance of career advancement. Later, during two periods of follow-up fieldwork in the 1990s, he noted that a vision of Csepel as ‘Hungary’s Manhattan’ came and went with the project of a World Fair which was grandly conceived and then cancelled.

Kürti spins a long startling story of boom-and-bust in the town of Csepel, focusing on the fate of the factory, which reflects and connects to wider historical, political and economic transformations in Hungary, the Soviet Union, East and Central Europe, and the United States in the twentieth century. The main characters in this drama are the young workers, both in terms of their reproduction of working-class culture during different regimes and the resistance of youth movements to the socialist state. The fact that this resistance supported the state’s agenda by generating a shared working-class consciousness undermines the traditional social science perspective on the nature of youth resistance. Still, Kürti also provides an account of how a truly oppositional yet autonomous youth culture was formed around friendship and dating, and (Western) consumerist popular culture, performed in spaces such as parks and parties out of reach of elders. The latter represented the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party, the Communist Youth League (the KISZ), the trade union or the management of the factory where the youth worked. Another outcome of an increasing number of new and bureaucratic institutions in the 1970s and 1980s, which Kürti observed, was ‘political apathy and inaction’.
The heart of the book spans the mid-1980s to late 1990s, which includes Kürti’s three periods of participant observation, archival work, collecting of life stories and conducting other interviews in Csepel. Here we get a sense of ‘being there’, with the ethnographer making his way down through the hierarchy at the bustling, noisy factory, attending formal meetings, cultural events and rituals of political organisations, having dinner with families in their homes, and joining the young men and women workers when they go dancing, drinking and smoking at discos. This is prefaced by a fine historical ethnography of Csepel and its youth, going all the way back to how feudalism developed into capitalism under the Habsburg Empire, turning peasants into workers. A crucial event in this process was the founding of the factory Manfred Weiss Steel and Metal Works in 1892 by a German Jewish family. The fascist period which was replaced by Stalinism and the implementation of state socialism are by necessity also analysed in terms of an historical ethnography approach, especially around the idea of a socialist firm which the factory, renamed Csepel Works, had become. In the 1956 uprising, there were strikes and street fighting with casualties in Csepel. The book finishes with a consideration of the consequences of the end of state socialism: how the global market economy has produced unemployment, but also new business where young people can find a future.

Youth and the state in Hungary is a solid piece of work on major historical processes. It will also be of interest to a wide readership outside anthropology.

HELENA WULFF
Stockholm University (Sweden)


This book focuses on the Mass Observation project, which began in 1937 and was sustained for thirty years. In 1981 the Mass Observation Archive initiated a new project, which continues today. One of the guiding principles of this research has been the establishment of ‘an anthropology of ourselves’. While the traditional focus in anthropology has been on the ‘Other’ or the exotic, this programme was an attempt by the ‘natives’ themselves to observe their own society.

Tony Kushner’s monograph is the first book-length study of the original assignment. While the book provides a comprehensive account of the fortunes of the project, its interdisciplinary approach has a clear focus on race and British identity. The author sets out to explore the Mass Observation project as a resource for the study of ‘race’, ‘ethnicity’ and nationalism in Britain. He also endeavours critically to examine whether the project unintentionally reproduced the ‘colonial-bourgeois gaze on the anthropological other’.

The book has many strengths. Firstly, it successfully raises the profile of the Mass Observation project, and draws academic attention to a vastly under-used resource in a British university. Different chapters offer great insights into the worktown collections in Bolton and Blackpool, as well as highlighting the personal diaries that were forwarded to the archives. The author also expends considerable energy in discussing the influence of directives on the information received.

One of the highlights of the book is its orientation towards the racialisation of white groups in British society. Kushner cogently reveals the Germanophobia which heightened during the Second World War and still continues today. He also offers some interesting explorations of the anti-Italian riots that occurred across Britain following Mussolini’s declaration of war. While narratives of such xenophobia are interesting as historical resources, they also serve to contextualise attitudes towards other Europeans in Britain today.

Kushner examines the impact of various directives on racial research. Directives issued from January to June 1939, for example, had a specific focus on race. During the Second World War directives looked at the real possibility of the mass internment of aliens, but after the war focused on foreigners and coloured people. In these explorations, Kushner highlights the significance of ‘racial research’ within the Mass Observation archives, a feature that has not been recognised in the past.

The chapter on directives includes an analysis of the Antisemitism survey produced in 1939, and therein lies one of the book’s central themes: the role of Jews and ‘Jewishness’ in British society, both historically and in contemporary times. Kushner contends that scholarship and research on the idea of Europe has tended to ignore the role of the ‘Jew’ from the medieval period onwards, and focuses
instead on the Muslim Ottoman empire. However, the Jews were considered to be ‘the Outsiders within’ and much of Kushner’s book focuses on anti-Semitic attitudes and tendencies. The text also includes observations on the presence of Black people in Britain, and on the real challenges as individuals endeavoured to cope with an increasingly multicultural society.

The amount of detail in this book could sometimes make for heavy reading. However, Kushner provides some really interesting excerpts from the project which highlight its potential as an anthropological resource. Hostility towards Blacks in Britain becomes painfully clear when one reads personal extracts from everyday diaries and commentaries. Such accounts also illustrate the extent to which racial thinking was accepted and grounded in British society. Examples of personal observations provided in Kushner’s book suggest that a hierarchisation of races operated in which the British ranked themselves at the top. Even those who abhorred discrimination appeared to operate a ‘racialised map of the world, the boundaries of which were not to be transgressed’.

The construction of Englishness and Britishness is a recurring theme throughout the book and Kushner explores the common assumption of cultural heterogeneity among English people. The author contends that the construction of racialised minorities both at home and abroad played a key role in the making of collective identities in pre-1945 Britain. This point goes against the common assumption that Britain’s difficulties with multiculturalism arose in recent decades, especially with the alleged influx of refugees.

One of the great merits of the book is its honest assessment of the Mass Observation project. The complexity and wide-ranging nature of some of the work has been hidden or hindered by inappropriate labelling. There appears to have been more focus on the process of collecting rather than working with the material collected. In the past there were few attempts to incorporate minorities into the fieldwork of the organisers. Even today, there appears to be some difficulty in recruiting people of colour as correspondents. (Could there be a language issue here?). The central argument of the book holds throughout – that the potential of the Mass Observation diaries for the field of ethnic and racial studies remains unexplored. This book is the first step towards raising that profile.

MÁIRÉAD NÍ CRÁITH
University of Ulster (UK)


Recent years have witnessed a growing interest in the ways the Third World middle classes live through globality and modernity. Mark Liechty has taken up the challenge of depicting the middle class, an arguably elusive subject, as a culturally authentic actor, and produced one of the rare, truly ethnographic monographs on the subject thus far. His book on the middle class in Kathmandu, Nepal, asks what class does rather than what class is, by using narrativity and performativity as his main concepts in disentangling class as a process. The material concentrates on communicative practice and leaves social groups and social relations – actual social life – as well as the production of micro-ethnographic locales to the background.

In the first part of the ethnography, the role of consumption is described through the ways middle-class Nepalis speak about fashion, suitability and respectability. Here ‘middle classness’ is an utterly moral value in which the material performances of class merge with the moral narratives of class. However, there appear to be no winners in the consumer competition. The aim is primarily defensive: how to ‘count’ and not be excluded. Consumer culture is thus both a resource for the middle class and a source of anxiety. It is in this part of the book that Liechty best reveals his brilliant ethnographic talent.

The second part concentrates on mass media, and particularly on film, television, videos and pop music. Liechty shows how a relatively isolated spot such as Kathmandu is tied to global media flows in intricate ways. The middle-class public in Kathmandu is local even when it draws on translocal resources to ‘ideologically and materially construct itself’ (p. 148). Meaning is local while orientation is translocal. Liechty shows convincingly that the middle class cannot exist without media, and people’s constant discourse on it. Nevertheless, the conscious methodological concentration on communicative practice and narratives and the absence of material on social practice easily leads to exaggerating the social effects of the media-saturated environment.

In the third ethnographic part the construction of youth as an integral part of the larger project of ‘middle classification’ is explored. Being young and
middle class is to be in the vanguard of the cultural project whereby an emerging middle class attempts to weld a local past to a global future. The contradictions and ‘gut-wrenching anxieties’ (p. 246) of Third World modernity are most viscerally felt by the youth who are par excellence a group in between.

Liechty sees ‘mapping class on to space’ or ‘making space and taking place’ as the main middle-class activities. He does not clearly define what he means by ‘space’, but refers to it as a physical and conceptual phenomenon. However, all processes of identification aim at producing a conceptual, physical and social space in some sense, so this cannot be a particular prerogative of middle-class practice in the way Liechty’s conclusion seems to imply. In the preceding ethnographic chapters, the author has nevertheless drawn an intricate and evocative picture of the processes and strategies that middle-class people, especially youth, engage in ‘making space and taking place’. Liechty’s ethnographic richness saves the book from the danger of ‘lite’ anthropology – insubstantial claims concerning social change in a transnational world that are so common in cultural and post-colonial studies.

Curiously, neither Nepal nor Kathmandu is mentioned in the title of the book. If this reflects the book’s intended relevance for any new consumer society in the Third World, it would also have been desirable to present more comparative points of view in the conclusion. Further, the book would have benefited from some attention to the guerilla movement in Nepal since 1996, and its potential effects on middle-class positionings and narratives.

The field material Liechty uses consists mainly of the various ways in which the interviewees represent their ‘middle classness’ to the researcher and his representatives. As observations on social relations and practices are not covered by first-hand ethnographic material, the image of the middle-class reality that Liechty presents appears to be somewhat narrow. Suitable modern seems to address a wider readership than a strictly anthropological audience, and thus such a limitation may also be regarded as an advantage. Despite its limitations, the book provides a lucid image of middle-class communicative practice in Nepal. Liechty has taken a firm hold of a slippery subject.

MINNA SÄÄVÄLÄ
University of Helsinki (Finland)


The interactions of Brazilians with telenovela are explored in this book through a rather overdetermined focus on describing telenovelas, advertisements and the interplay between characters and actors as a ‘telenovela flow’, and through a discussion of the literature on media and anthropology. The extensive descriptions of telenovela flow and its significations are related to subsequent individual accounts of Brazilians, but the connections are privileged in terms of previous textual analysis and description. While this brings together some interesting material and argument, it detracts substantially from the focus on the everyday settings of Brazilians vis-à-vis telenovelas. In this regard, the book demonstrates a particular problem of interdisciplinarity, namely that of seeking to make meanings through one approach in order to offer conclusions for another.

This book is based on the author’s PhD thesis. As a Brazilian born in Belo Horizonte, the site of her research, she explores how she conducted research ‘at home’. There is a good discussion of how public and private separations flow into class divisions, which adds to the account of how the research was carried out. This material is somewhat overshadowed by the focus on examining the telenovelas which dominates a significant part of the analysis. The book begins with excerpts from a telenovela which foreground the issue of race in Brazil. The fictional account shows the reactions of a white woman who has given birth to black twins following artificial insemination. She suggests that they would fare better in Europe than in Brazil because they are black; this focuses on their ethnicity as problematic. The race issue is then put aside to be dealt with again much later in the book, and in indeterminate ways similar to how other possible thematic issues emerge and are addressed. These issues crisscross the description to offer fascinating glimpses of context vis-à-vis Brazilians’ interactions with telenovelas and suggest directions for grounding the material by shifting the focus to develop more explicit themes.

Intriguingly, Machado-Borges mentions in her introductory chapter that Brazilians did not appear to want to talk about telenovelas, making her initially question her research focus. Through this
self-scrutiny and participant observation she was able to appreciate implicit forms of interaction, ‘fragmented and mixed with other topics and thought associations’ (p. 21). This led her to consider how people talked around telenovelas where their conversations related to a telenovela flow. The book then shifts to a history of the telenovela industry to show how it leads to the flow, so it is not until the last three chapters (in particular, chapter 6) that all the rich ethnographic material is brought out.

Chapter 2 details the history, while making claims for how telenovela as ‘sensuous spectacle’ relates to social mobility (p. 47). There is a brief reference to how each television network is visible through a person or family, but the discussion moves on to telenovelas’ writers and their publicness, watching practices and how the telenovela industry is organised. Chapter 3 adopts a similar style. It starts by examining how a Brazilian references her dress for a wedding in relation to a character in a Mexican telenovela. The chapter then discusses theoretical concepts, details the development of media studies, the work of Raymond Williams and that of Mikhail Bakhtin and ‘translinguistics’, and considers the relevance of the film Terminator 2. The author discusses interpellation as a ‘precise instrument’ for studying telenovela flow (p. 78). Chapter 4 considers the connections of telenovelas to other media, looking at how telenovelas’ actors and actresses appear in advertisements. The chapter shifts to fan magazines and discusses fiction and reality, and beauty and the body.

Chapters five and six provide case studies as examples of how the telenovela flow and the everyday intersect. Machado-Borges refers to the ‘myth of racial democracy that still influences how many informants understand Brazilian society’ (p. 143). She notes the lack of connections between ‘race and beauty’ and how people avoided talking about racism: there is room to explore why racism was avoided in everyday conversations and articulated on telenovela as a study of which telenovela aspects were not represented in the everyday (p. 187). This may be further considered in terms of how the ‘telenovela flow as dialogic’ here also has to engage with its emergence outside of media representations and how it is informed by the everyday and its absences.

NARMALA HALSTEAD
Cardiff University (UK)


This book is a quite complete account of data and interpretations of private life in Egypt of the sixteenth to eleventh centuries BCE, both of the author herself and those already well established in Egyptology and some related social sciences including anthropology. The author employs the methods of anthropology, cross-cultural research and gender history in order to give the most comprehensive synthesis of relevant evidence of four main types: documentary, iconographic, archaeological and anthropological.

In the first chapter (‘The interpretative framework’), Meskell discusses the notion of ‘private life’, its content in different historical periods and the difficulties the researcher faces while attempting to access and perceive another culture’s private spheres. The author supposes that Egyptians had some concepts of private life as a specific and definite sphere of life in general. She criticises interpretations of Egyptian experience based on Western classificatory patterns such as economics or legal systems, and proposes to use a properly Egyptian vision of life cycles. However, while her own method makes it possible to describe the Egyptians’ private life as it is represented in the sources, it does not turn out to be productive as an analytical tool.

The second chapter (‘Locales and communities’) describes the archaeological evidence on some New Kingdom settlements. Taking into consideration the undoubtedly atypical and unrepresentative character of the sites with the most extensive material (Deir el Medina, Amarna), the author provides a brief account of each site’s population number, basic social strata, living conditions, economic activities, settlement and dwelling types. Meskell asserts the key mental and geo-political importance of the ‘border and boundary’ concept for the Egyptians, but says nothing about Egyptocentrism based on religious conceptions in this case. Discussing travelling to distant areas, she contends that Egyptians accomplished it not so infrequently as it is usually supposed, and treats ‘The tale of Sinuhe’ and ‘The tale of the shipwrecked sailor’ as supporting arguments, since both are stories about catastrophic travels, which their makers would be happy to avoid. In the same chapter, the family is treated as patrilineal and patrilocal, without providing any evidence or argument to back this up.
In the third chapter (‘Social selves’), Meskell examines the conception of personhood, in such vectors as the body, sociality, consciousness and self-experience, but lack of analysis of the psychological sphere – the most expressive one – obviously diminishes the chapter’s value. In Egypt, Meskell argues, fertility, regarded as the male’s responsibility, and gendered desire for a son corresponded both to emotional motives and to a social system which demanded the support of parents and then their funerary cult’s maintenance by children. However, this part looks too descriptive. For example, the author relates in detail what the sources tell about pregnancy, birth-giving, postnatal treatment of mother and child, and infant mortality on the one hand, and some magico-medical and religious practices related to all this on the other, but does not analyse the ways in which the former and the latter influenced each other.

In the fourth chapter (‘Founding a house’), the author discusses such phenomena as marriage, adultery, domestic violence, divorce, remarriage and problems of servile groups of foreign and local origin. Meskell argues that the equality of women to men declared in the sources was nothing more than an ideological cliché. In particular, she justly points to the scarcity of women’s tombs or stelae separated from those of their husbands, and to grave forms of women’s economic exploitation. This is a quite a realistic and well thought out approach proved by relevant and demonstrative evidence.

The chapters on ‘Love, eroticism and sexual self’ and ‘Embodied knowledge’ focus on sexualisation of the female body, the culturally specific erotic canon, the representation of gender inequality in art, relations between sexuality and fertility, and homosexuality. Embodied knowledge is defined as a way of learning through ‘bodily experience and the groundedness of corporeality’, enclosed in visual codes, aroma representations, stressing hair, the social meaning of clothing and the beauty canon in general. The degree to which the evidence is analysed is not high again, but in this case the author should not be blamed: the methods elaborated in world Egyptology up to now are still insufficient for making a deep analysis of the topics Meskell deals with in this chapter.

The last chapter (‘Cycles of life and death’) deal with different attitudes to the afterlife including traditional mortuary practices and ideology, forming an essentially transcendent ‘mausoleum culture’ on the one hand, and a sceptical attitude (such as the one reflected in ‘Harper’s song’) on the other hand. The author also concentrates on practices of mourning processions as a gendered female prerogative, the crucial importance of vivification of sexual functions for rejuvenation, on the inclusion of the deceased into society, and on the specifics of social memory and commemorative practices. The chapter represents and analyses adequately this-world attitudes to death, but the author deals too briefly with religion and theological conceptions of the afterworld in determining what was awaiting the deceased after his or her rebirth.

So in cases when the study concentrates on the material and micro-social sides of everyday life, a vivid and detailed picture is given, but as for interpretations of the Egyptians’ concepts and mentality, the author unfortunately often limits herself to general descriptions not using the possibilities that could be provided by deeper analysis of the data at her disposal.

ANASTASIA A. BANJSCHIKOVA
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This study of factory working conditions and women’s lives in Shenzhen, one of China’s Special Economic Zones, is rooted in a deep commitment to an activist social analysis. Pun, now an assistant professor and founder and president of the Chinese Working Women Network, worked in an electronics factory from November 1995 until June 1996. She lived in the women’s dormitory and maintained the same rigorous schedule as the other 500-plus factory workers, despite the factory management’s attempts to make exceptions for her (i.e. not requiring her to work overtime shifts).

The book is a work of memory and after-thought culled from the experience of being a factory worker (p. 19). An eleven- to twelve-hour workday in the factory left her with little time, and even less energy, to take extensive fieldnotes. The result does leave room for more ethnographic details on the structure of the factories, urban reform policies and political discourses. Nevertheless, the book is admirably provocative and pointedly critical of the conditions that yielded her arguments. Pun’s
analysis of her time as a dagongmei (‘working daughter’) opens up an exploration of the global capital forces, culturally-specific histories of work and class, and shifting negotiations of women’s social roles in China, built out of a first-hand understanding of the physical and psychological demands placed upon women factory workers.

There are three central themes developed throughout the book. First, Pun locates the historical and cultural roots of dagongmei identity. Dagongmei are rural women who leave their villages to work in factories manufacturing goods for the global market. According to Pun, the women are subjected to the triple oppressions particular to their situation: by global capitalism, state socialism and familial patriarchy (p. 4). These factories that have sprung up in China’s Special Economic Zones represent, on the one hand, capital opportunity for foreign investors. Simultaneously, becoming dagongmei is perceived as an opportunity for rural women to increase their personal financial assets and escape the expectations of a patriarchal Chinese family structure. The focus on the desires of the women who strive to become dagongmei is the strength of the book. By emphasising that the women who come to factories seeking work know what they are getting into, Pun shows them as self-aware and calculating actors in the changing socio-economic field of reform era China.

Chapter 1 explicates a genealogy of class, from Maoist rhetoric to post-socialist marketisation, emphasising the role of the bukou (household registration) system in determining an individual’s future by using birthplace as a locality marker for one’s occupational potential (rural peasant or urban dweller). Chapters 2 and 3 take various perspectives on the bodies of the women workers – first examining the personal motivations of the women themselves through recounted life stories, and then analysing how the factory management and transnational corporate administrations view and manipulate the women as productive bodies.

The second central theme explores an ‘ethics of self’ produced on the factory floor between dagongmei and the factory management. The women negotiate overlapping social hierarchies based upon kinship ties, ethnic identification, linguistic groups and wages received. Adopting a Foucauldian analysis, Pun demonstrates how the process of becoming dagongmei involves a self-technologising by the women, who internalise the positive ideal of a new sense of self encapsulated by the term dagongmei. Concurrently, factory management enforce a hierarchy of social difference by demeaning peasant life and invoking gender expectations as techniques of social control within the factory space.

Chapters 5 and 6 continue the stories of the dagongmei, allowing their voices to be heard on the topics of marriage, family life and suffering in the factories. A scream emitted by one woman during sleep provides the metaphor for Pun’s final thesis that the experiences of rural women in urban factories are producing a ‘minor genre of resistance’ (p. 165). The possibility of resistance is located in the vocalised scream of a sleeping dagongmei – the individual suffering of the 500-plus factory workers, audibly rendered in one woman’s unconscious cry, is acknowledgement enough of a collective situation.

This book contributes to the study of modern industrial labour, but more importantly, it sheds light on the desires and motivations of a particular class of contemporary women in China. Pun’s analysis juggles the political context of reform China with the cultural environment of the women who embark on the journey to becoming dagongmei. Throughout, the reader is made aware that this journey is not one undertaken by the women alone. Pun’s commitment to the lives and social world of the women factory workers demonstrates how an ethnographic sensitivity can translate into activist sensibilities.

JENNY CHIO
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This book navigates a complex territory with great clarity, thorough attention to detail, and a profound awareness of the real life consequences of different theoretical and policy positions. Saugestad presents us with a lucid ethnography of the interaction between three parties: the majority Tswana population (in the form of the government of Botswana), the ‘international community’ (in the form of NORAD, the Norwegian Agency for International Development, for whom she worked as a consultant) and the emerging Basarwa indigenous peoples’ movement (in the form of the ‘First People of the Kalahari’). At its heart this book explores the ongoing racism, impoverishment and
discrimination experienced by the Basarwa of the Kalahari, identifies how the majority population continues to perpetuate this inequality through an insistence that all citizens are already equal and examines the changing ways in which such structural discrimination has been countered. In examining the role of NORAD, Saugestad shows how well meaning outsiders can strengthen inequality if they seek to counter it in ways which won’t upset the status quo. For example, in terms of infrastructure achievements, drilling new boreholes for the Basarwa for ‘free’ can fuel majority resentment and discrimination because it is seen as ‘favouritism’ rather than just compensation, and at the same time may well make ‘previously inaccessible areas attractive for grazing’ (p. 161) leading to Basarwa being displaced by more powerful outsiders. Unless the structural relations of injustice are addressed, such poverty alleviation policies (and analysts who seek to understand the situation simply in terms of economic exploitation) only serve to strengthen the majority view that the problem of the Basarwa is not one of justice but ‘one of poverty only’ (p. 171), in the process further disempowering the Basarwa.

Saugestad places her analysis of the emergence of an indigenous peoples’ movement among the Basarwa in two broader contexts. Firstly, nation-building in Botswana involved the creation of an apparently culturally neutral ideology which in fact established a cultural hegemony in which the dominant Tswana culture was represented as the measure of adequate citizenship. Secondly, Saugestad demonstrates that indigenous peoples’ rights have emerged in international law in response to empirical realities on the ground. The dialectic between local, national and international discourses has created a way of articulating previously hidden histories, and of creating a framework within which negotiations to resolve those ongoing histories can occur. This can be of huge benefit to the majority as well as the minority party since it enables problems to be addressed rather than deepened. Saugestad writes that ‘the concept of “indigenous peoples”, as it has emerged in international discourse, was actually coined to address the very types of problems that Botswana is facing, and to contribute to their solutions’ (p. 171). The blanket denial by the Botswana government of such a hidden history of land appropriation and discrimination, and their denial of Basarwa’s right to represent themselves, is no different to the denial previously engaged in by other liberal democracies. The parallels between the arguments presented by the Tswana majority and those presented by anthropologists who also seek to deny the legitimacy of indigenous peoples’ rights is instructive.

Saugestad outlines the obstacles to Basarwa attempts to organise and represent themselves. These include government misrepresentation of their demands for dialogue as being demands for secession from the nation state. In fact, their demands are much more challenging than this. Like other indigenous peoples, they are seeking neither separation nor assimilation but integration, defined as ‘a process by which diverse elements are combined in a unity while retaining their basic identity’ (Thornberry in Saugestad 2001: 161). As Saugestad points out, ‘integration means that the majority must also change’ (p. 161). The implications of this are that the previously dominant partner has to recognise the history of injustice upon which its position has in part been built, and recognise that just as it has limited the life chances of the subordinated party, this denial has also placed severe limitations on the development of the dominant party. This relationship between a dominating party which has depended on subordinating the other, while claiming the subordinated other is only able to gain worth through its interaction with the dominating party, is a key aspect of the relations of domination which flow from such dualisms of domination. This is evident in numerous histories of colonial, class, gender, sexual, human–environmental and adult–child relations. It is also evident in current conflicts such as that in Palestine/Israel. Resolution of relations between structurally unequal parties cannot be sought by a denial of difference. It requires the development of forms of participatory democracy which see society as enriched through mobilising and including diverse histories and potentials rather than through subordinating some as ciphers for the more powerful. These strike me as few of the implications of Saugestad’s study, one grounded both in thorough fieldwork and in a profound, clear, even-handed and engaging analysis.

JUSTIN KENRICK
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Originally published in 1988, The Maasai of Matapato. A study of rituals of rebellion argues that
the central institution for political action among the Maasai of the Kenya–Tanzania borderlands is the formation of their men into age-sets. Two thematic questions are prominent in this work: what is the ‘indigenous career structure of Maasai manhood’ and how do the Matapatoi grapple with the enigmatic question of generational succession?

Spencer is one of the few anthropologists who have convincingly brought the study of age organisation out of the formalism of existing models. Readers will appreciate his apt use of case studies to bring our attention to time as vicariously lived. The empirical description of Matapato age organisation, spread out over fifteen chapters, is comparative in orientation but very specific in its particulars. This framework contrasts the Maasai system with the Samburu primarily, but also compares the Matapato system to other East African communities.

Comparison gives the book its central theoretical concern. Since Evans-Pritchard’s (1936) declaration that Nuer age-sets functioned only to shore up male identity and ‘cut across’ alliances made by kinship, anthropologists have struggled to make sense of what age-set and generational organisation were good for. Spencer’s work is suggestive of a solution through his analysis of the dynamics between the patriarchal family enterprise and the formation of age-sets. This is a key contribution of this book to the larger literature on age organisation, echoed perhaps by more recent French ethnographies on the subject (for example, the work of Peatrick and Tornay).

Spencer organises his book around the process whereby an age-set is formed and forces the secession of individuals, sons and their mothers from the family enterprise and patriarchal control. They do this by creating separate communities of moran (warrior grade) and their mothers, called manyat, where they are responsible for the husbandry and security of cattle. The competing aspirations of the rising youth, now moran, and their elder fathers and firestick patrons, as well as women and girls, are the source of social tensions peculiar to the Maasai. The moran, their mothers and an assortment of girls continue to live in these separate communities for about fifteen years, after which they are expected to disband the manyat, making room for younger moran, and return to the family enterprise alongside their fathers.

To describe how the Maasai work through the inevitable conflicts that this process engenders, Spencer revives Max Gluckman’s (1963) notion of the ‘rituals of rebellion’. Spencer was one of the first ethnographers to stress that age-sets were formed through a gradual process of lobbying and agitation among the rising generation. Here he views the formation of age-sets among the Maasai as being achieved through ritualised protest against the demands of patriarchy. This analysis in turn leads him to link Maasai dilemmas in the politics of maturation with arguments drawn from Freud’s Totem and taboo and Plato’s Republic. These theoretical forays lend the book a mildly dizzying complexity that is probably reflective of the lived experience of many Maasai working their way through the system themselves and adding comment or debate upon it as they do.

The empirical chapters are organised in such a way that the reader gets a step-by-step understanding of how the family enterprise is in diachronic pace with the developmental cycle of age-sets. After a detailed description of Matapato pastoralism and its vicissitudes (Chapter 1), the relation of stock to investments in marriage (Chapter 2) and the primary significance of children to the success of the family enterprise (Chapters 3 and 4), the book goes on to describe the ritual processes through which successive age-sets come into being and the values enshrined by membership in an age group. Later chapters explore the tensions and exhilaration of life in the midst of the moran at the manyat. It is this main body of the book that Spencer’s insights into Maasai age organisation and its tensions are most evident and spelled out with precision (Chapters 5–9). In particular, the description of the 1977 eunoto festival (in which an age group meet together for the first time and through which they organise to eventually disband and marry) is the highlight of this ethnography. The later chapters (Chapters 10–15) deal generally with the processes whereby moran settle down into their own elderhood and details the particular ambivalences between fathers and their sons that accompany the inevitability of their fathers age-sets’ demise and the uncertainty of ageing.

MARK LAMONT
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This is the second edition of a work which, despite the many difficulties it has encountered along the way – owing to the debate it has created and the
discomfort it has caused to many – now reappears with a few minor modifications. The controversy raised by the work is understandable, not only because of its approach to the subject – the construction of the discipline of Mexican archaeology and the latter’s reliance on the State’s administrative apparatus and bureaucracy – but also because it places Mexico’s National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), the country’s most prestigious institution, in a tight spot. After a laborious information-gathering process fraught with difficulties, Vázquez León lays before us an anthropology of archaeology seen through a hermeneutical-critical and ethno-methodological prism. The fundamental problem is that, despite apparent changes, there still prevails in Mexico a colonial conception of the country’s cultural heritage that is rife in the practice of archaeology and dominates the latter. The centralisation of heritage and the management of the inheritance of the past have conditioned archaeological thinking and the nationalist conception has imposed itself on the practice of archaeology. In the end, we discover that the Mexican archaeological tradition is determined by the very institutional-administrative context in which it is put into practice.

The book invites us to discover how the tradition of Mexican archaeological thinking is rooted firmly in the heritage-based vision of the Pre-Hispanic past. The concept of Mesoamerica and the extent to which this view has been spread have exercised a considerable influence on what is considered the ‘normal’ development of this thinking. Behind these socio-cognitive limits which perpetuate the myth of ‘national origin’ and act as a theory and praxis constraint on the national archaeological monumental zones, lies the state monopoly of archaeological heritage, and at the same time the subordination of archaeological practice to a hegemonic heritage-based discourse. Archaeology as a discipline and the administration of the archaeological heritage become entwined and the myth of power justifies and guarantees the work of archaeologists. The legal framework, the administrative structure, the bureaucratic construction of a status hierarchy and the feudalisation of the profession make up the context in which archaeology is conducted. It is a context in which the power of the INAH and its domination of archaeological activity has led the institution, mistakenly, to appropriate the monumental heritage of México – and this permutation has become the prevailing disciplinary culture of Mexico’s archaeologists. The result has been the legal confiscation of archaeology, albeit (as the author reminds us) for those archaeologists who are not members of the INAH.

In the face of this, we could be forgiven for thinking that we are faced with a duality, widely accepted by Mexican archaeologists, between the INAH’s state archaeology (political–nationalist) and the university archaeology of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (academic–scientific). However, as the author shows us, both institutions share a common socialisation in a common disciplinary culture by way of the INAH’s National School of Anthropology and History (ENAH). In actual fact, behind the government/university polarisation of archaeologists and the corresponding distinction between practical and theoretical archaeology, there arise symbolic identities which players use to compete for prestige and power. This gives rise to a shared archaeological tradition in which Mesoamerica represents the umbilical cord that unites and identifies all those who share it. Despite this, it is hoped that regional archaeology – currently a minor activity, but which appears to be growing, with a diversity of objects and institutions – will eventually become a force for renewal that will bring about the theoretical–conceptual change so badly needed in Mexican archaeology.

Throughout the work there are references to the dilemmas and paradoxes of an archaeology practiced by institutions, groups and individuals who uphold the tradition. The belligerent metaphor ‘Arqueología es guerra’ (‘Archaeology is war!’) helps to understand the complex universe in which Mexico’s archaeologists exist and work. Taking as examples specific archaeological projects used as case studies, the author reveals the current situation of archaeology in Mexico. For Vázquez León, the future of archaeology involves turning the traditional concept on its head, requiring all the players to stop seeing society as an enemy and to start conceiving the discipline as something beneficial for one and all.

If there is one particular defining feature of this work, it is the courage with which it tackles the construction of a scientific discipline – archaeology – which in Mexico is set in an institutional context that places serious constraints not only on the way in which knowledge is organised but also on the way archaeology is practised. This new edition of the work is highly relevant, and comes at a time when the radicalisation of modernity and all its attendant processes (elimination of territory, homogeneity, differentiation and the prevalence of hybrids) calls for the deconstruction of anachronistic monopolies.
of heritage. That way, hopefully, in much the same way as the author has achieved it, the Leviathan of Mexican archaeology will awaken and spring forth from its cage.

**BEATRIZ SANTAMARINA CAMPOS**

*University of Valencia (Spain)*


In 1991, Greg Urban and Joel Sherzer published an edited collection called *Nation-states and Indians in Latin America* (Austin: University of Texas Press). The essays in the book examined how Amerindians were affected by contact with Latin American nation states and how nation states were themselves altered as a result of these encounters. The book’s aim was to challenge classical anthropological studies that analysed Amerindians as isolated groups.

Warren and Jackson’s edited collection, *Indigenous movements, self-representation and the state in Latin America*, very much follows the lead of Urban and Sherzer, and pushes the agenda even further. The essays in the book examine the changes that lie behind the rise of indigenous movements in Latin America. They include consideration of the impact of globalism on the relationship between nation states and indigenous communities, and between indigenous communities themselves. This can be seen particularly in the relationship between indigenous groups and larger political movements, such as socialism. It can also be seen in the way that indigenous groups have learned to manipulate mass media, international organisations and bureaucratic structures. Related to this is an examination of the discourse used by indigenous leaders, national representatives, anthropologists and environmentalists. An example is the indigenous appropriation of terms like ‘culture’ and ‘biodiversity’ in negotiations with the state. The use of discourse is analysed alongside a focus on the problems of translation, representation and authority. The issues of representation and authority are also analysed with respect to the conflicts that can occur between local communities and national indigenous leadership.

One of the strong points of this book is its critical attitude. The concepts which are found in the title of the book – ‘indigenous’, ‘movements’, ‘representation’ and ‘the state’ – are not taken for granted but closely questioned. The aims of anthropologists and the ethics of their research methods are also discussed. This particularly comes to the fore in the essay written by Víctor Montejo, who is not only an anthropologist but also a Mayan leader. Another strength is the editors’ decision to restrict their focus to a few sample countries: Brazil, Guatemala and Colombia. This allows us a comparative base, with the benefits of a richer ethnographic content. The essays on Colombia, written by Jean Jackson and by David Gow and Joanne Rappaport, focus on issues of discourse, authority and the politics of knowledge. The essays on Guatemala centre on the Maya. Montejo looks at Mayan leadership and self-representation, while Kay Warren analyses the 1999 indigenous rights referendum. The essays on Brazil cover a variety of Amazonian groups. Terry Turner looks at a ritual of reconciliation among the Kayapo and addresses issues such as the politics of representation. Laura Graham focuses on issues of language and authenticity among Xavante indigenous leaders. Alcida Rita Ramos brings together the Brazilian and Colombian strands in her essay, which examine strategies of self-representation. Thankfully, though the essays in this book only focus on three countries, Warren and Jackson’s excellent introduction discusses the wider context of indigenous movements in Latin America.

In summary, this is an excellent book that I would highly recommend. It is well written and very thought provoking, and is certainly going on the reading lists for at least two of my courses. Though the focus is on Latin America, I think that this would be an enlightening read for anyone interested in indigenous movements in other parts of the world.

**NICOLE BOURQUE**

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