



## Book Reviews

**When Experiments Travel: Clinical Trials and the Global Search for Human Subjects.** *Adriana Petryna.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009. 258 pp.

**ROBERTO ABADIE**

City University of New York

Reading *When Experiments Travel*, I was immediately reminded of John Le Carre's *The Constant Gardener*, a popular novel—and later a successful movie—that describes the ethical abuses in conducting clinical trials among disenfranchised Africans. The author, famous for his spy novels, criticized both the pharmaceutical companies and Western governments and aid agencies for exploiting the poor for commercial and national gain. Although fictional, this novel—as often literature does—anticipated the shift of clinical trials research from developed to developing countries currently way underway.

Although this issue captured the literary imagination, until recently it failed to attract anthropologists' interests. Petryna's wonderful ethnography is a very serious attempt to remedy this situation. Her book is about "the business of clinical trials" (p. 5) looking in particular to what she calls "the global experimental enterprise." The book's main goal is to document the social organization of phases 2–3 of clinical trials with a special emphasis on how this specific type of knowledge is produced and governed. In trying to answer the question of how clinical trials are possible, the author embarks on a multisited ethnography that leads her from trial sites in the United States to Poland and Brazil following a seemingly endless trail of scientists, clinical trial administrators, entrepreneurs, lawyers, regulators, and patients.

Although anthropologists have been paying attention to the way drugs are consumed, the production site has been, until recently, largely unexplored. By describing the way regulatory practices, capital, scientific and technical expertise, and geographic locations come together in their search for subjects, Petryna makes an outstanding contribution to the emerging field of the anthropology of pharmaceuticals and, in particular, to the clinical trials research. Another major contribution is to the field of bioethics. Her carefully crafted description of the way research sites, reg-

ulators, and patients engage with the complex ethical issues driven by the increasing globalization of clinical trials research contrasts—and contributes—with the more abstract, formalistic treatment usually found in the field of bioethics.

Before drugs can be marketed, they have to be tested both for safety and efficacy. After the drug safety is assessed in animal tests, it is then tried in a small group of healthy paid human subjects in phase 1 trials. If the drugs prove to be safe they should then be tested for additional safety and efficacy in phases 2–3, usually involving thousands of patients with the disease or condition the drug is supposed to address. If the drug is found to be safe and effective, it then goes into the market. Following its release, it enters phase 4, or postmarketing surveillance. No clinical trials are conducted at this stage where millions of patients might consume the drug. Tracking the number of clinical trials is extremely difficult but according to Petryna, in 2008 there were more than 65,000 clinical trials sponsored either by the federal government or private parties. And increasingly, these trials have moved abroad where regulations are lax and patients are more likely to be enrolled.

A major transformation in the social organization of clinical trials research is the shift from academic sites to industry-sponsored contract research organizations (CROs) that started in the 1980s and consolidated during the 1990s. These outsourced businesses are paid by the pharmaceutical industry to recruit patients and to run the daily operations of the trial sites including, for example, hiring their own institutional review boards. Although the data analysis is sometimes performed by them, they are supposed to hand the trial's data to their pharmaceutical owners. As Petryna documents, in this business, the ability of a CRO to survive and thrive is related to its ability to conduct trials quickly and cheaply. Competition among CROs for trial patients is crucial to their success. Like in phase 1 trials, these companies are looking for an idealized patient that seldom exists, the "naive treatment" patients that, unlike those in the United States, have taken few or no drugs during their lives. Structuring a trial with such population can boost the trial's results, leading to a more likely drug approval. Patients enroll searching for medical care or closer medical supervision and are depicted by Petryna not as unwilling "guinea pigs" but as actors that like the others involved in

this pharmaceutical nexus have their own motivations to join.

One of the most interesting concepts of the book is the idea of ethical variability defined as “how international ethical guidelines are employed as the search for global research subjects expands” (p. 32). Moving beyond the universalistic and normative bioethics ethos, Petryna’s inquiry “points to the tensions of promoting equal standards for all research and in altering those standards to fit certain values and needs” (p. 33). Her research illustrates how a formalistic and bureaucratic ethical framework may be not enough to protect vulnerable research subjects. As the author notes, “industry and regulatory concerns about ethics seem to matter at the level of data production.” In fact, CROs don’t even see patients, for them they are only “data” to be manipulated to ensure the protocol “integrity” and “portability.”

After episodes like Vioxx and more recently, Avandia, in which pharmaceutical companies were found to manipulate clinical trials results to maintain billion dollar drugs into the market despite well-known risks to the public, the whole clinical trial enterprise is put into question (Elliott 2010). These events challenge the ethics of pharmaceutical research and show that the industry risk assessments cannot be trusted, opening new venues for anthropological inquiry. As a result of lawsuits and the collaboration of whistleblowers, there is a trove of data about how the industry scientists and managers dealt with issues of risk, profits, and markets. Petryna’s pioneering work on the social organization of the global trial enterprise represents a contribution and, also, an invitation to examine these issues abroad and at home.

## Reference cited

Elliott, Carl  
2010 *White Coat Black Hat: Adventures on the Dark Side of Medicine*. Boston: Beacon.

**The Anthropology of Labor Unions.** E. Paul Durrenberger and Karaleah S. Reichart, eds. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2010. 239 pp.

## SPENCER L. COWLES

Eastern Mennonite University

*The Anthropology of Labor Unions* is an edited volume composed of short ethnographies depicting the struggles, successes, and failures of individual actors and organizations functioning primarily in a unionized labor environment. They are intended to examine “how, and under what circumstances, unions do or do not achieve their goals” (p. 5). These ethnographies span a wide horizon of labor organizations and industries, from the United Auto

Workers (UAW), representing workers at an auto parts manufacturing plant in Detroit, to Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) representatives working with migrant workers in rural North Carolina, to the more localized activity of the State Healthcare and Research Employees (SHARE) organizing health care workers in central Massachusetts.

In their introduction, the editors argue that these ethnographies “move toward a definition of an anthropology of unions” (p. 1). At first glance, this may appear to be an overly ambitious objective for a 239-page volume. However, because these ethnographies are so highly particularized by numerous factors, this volume does effectively demonstrate that no two labor union settings are quite the same. The editors and most of the authors clearly view such a localized viewpoint as a baseline reality that is fundamental to any effective analysis and understanding of a labor story. And, yet, despite the highly contextualized nature of each ethnography, there are a number of commonalities and avenues of analysis that provide a framework for a generalized approach to the anthropology of labor unions. I will suggest two.

First, because labor stories are so deeply situated, the range of actors is far wider than the worker, the union, and the employer, the three parties that usually populate analyses of organized labor. There are a number of other parties involved that include families of union members, their communities, local organizations that exist either to support or to oppose organized labor, churches and clergy, government entities, and a broad array of individuals and groups not generally associated with organized labor that support the movement as a means of achieving social justice.

For example, “Miners, Women, and Community Coalitions in the UMWA Pittston Strike” highlights the role of women during a labor strike in the highly gendered coal industry by examining the “increasing interdependence of work, community, and gender relationships” (p. 18). It depicts the actions of an activist-oriented community organization versus a union service model in achieving workers’ objectives, and raises questions about the effectiveness of a strictly bilateral, union–employer, bargaining model. This “auxiliary” organization, which was formed and operated by coal-mining community women, received UMWA recognition and cooperation only after it had gained enough power to be an important factor in union–company negotiations. This account demonstrates the potential ability of a community coalition, as opposed to organized labor’s outsider status, to bring management to the negotiating table in good faith.

Second, workers’ experiences with, and perceptions of, organized labor varies greatly. In a number of cases, workers have been poorly served by their unions. They find themselves caught between an uncaring employer that does not appropriately value their work or their dignity and union

officials who are often more concerned with their own self-interests than with those of the workers they represent. These negative experiences are evident in an account of a highly democratic union local election in which the incumbents, characterized as “progressive leadership” with a reputation for fairness and democracy are defeated by a “self-interested clique” because of low turnout and a united oppositional slate. In another chapter, the local UAW at a manufacturing plant views scarce jobs as its property to distribute to well-connected individuals and to be “sold” back to the company in the form of buyouts that permanently eliminate these jobs in the interest of an uneasy truce between the union and the employer.

Experiences are by no means uniformly negative, however, most especially when a union moves beyond the traditional service model of union representation. Under the service model, paid union employees represent union members in settling grievances with the employer and in contract negotiations. Union members are largely passive, engaged in a limited and impersonal exchange with the union in which they pay their dues and the union provides its “contracted” services—but no more. Many of these accounts raise questions about whether this model of organized labor is sustainable. The newer union model involves engaging union members and others as activists in the larger purpose of achieving broad social justice rather than settling for negotiations about carefully circumscribed issues such as wages, benefits, and job security.

Lydia Savage’s “Small Places, Close to Home: The Importance of Place in Organizing Workers” in this collection is perhaps the case study that most clearly demonstrates how unionism must change to be effective. Savage’s account of a successful organizing campaign at a public hospital in central Massachusetts uncovers the depth of particularity required to interpret why this campaign was successful. To understand what these hospital workers, particularly working mothers, had to gain by joining the union effort, union organizers had to, first, understand their life situations and, second, deal with employees not as a “bargaining unit” but as individuals who wanted union representation for different reasons. For example, many of these women were single mothers or partners of individuals engaged in jobs that had rigid working hours. Because the hospital already offered fairly good wages and a working environment with a low rate of turnover, what most of these employees sought was scheduling flexibility that would allow them to care for their children. An appeal to better wages, greater job security, or stricter job rules simply wasn’t going to capture their imagination. By talking with employees one by one, union organizers were able to understand what they did want: to achieve greater voice in the way their work was scheduled and to build a community of respect with the employer that would move them beyond the perpetual state of conflict that had characterized their experience of work.

In summary, these ethnographies demonstrate that anthropological understandings of labor are a lens for identifying the complexities of labor relations and, as such, have an important role to play in successfully organizing workers precisely because each labor story is such a highly situated field of inquiry.

**Suffering and Sentiment: Exploring the Vicissitudes of Experience and Pain in Yap.** C. Jason Throop. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010. 329 pp.

**SUSANNA TRNKA**

University of Auckland

Jason Throop’s *Suffering and Sentiment* is an insightful and compelling examination of pain, personhood, and sociality on the island of Yap. A highly readable and engaging book, it is noteworthy not only for its evocative ethnographic depiction of an often-overlooked part of the Pacific but also for its masterful contribution to the growing scholarly literature on pain.

The book opens with a theoretical overview that situates Throop’s analysis in the current scholarly literature on experience, pain, and social suffering in general. Throop then introduces readers to Yap (Federated States of Micronesia), in particular, setting the stage for the more detailed exegesis of Yapese sociality, relations to land, and the values that follows. The four themes of pain, experience, subjectivity, and healing are developed across the remaining chapters.

Much of the rich theoretical analysis is laid out in the book’s introduction and conclusion. Engaging with theoretical perspectives on experience drawn from Emmanuel Levinas, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and William James (among others), Throop suggests that in Yap the transformation of “mere-suffering” into “suffering-for” one’s community is central to making meaning and value out of moments marked by physical pain. Such transformations are, moreover, not unusual. As Throop explains, he didn’t arrive in Yap with a predetermined plan to focus on the topic of pain but was first alerted to the centrality of suffering in Yapese understandings of morality and personhood through his initial fieldwork encounters. Adapting a concept promoted by Csordas’s work on embodiment, Throop suggests that the Yapese orientation to pain needs to be understood as a central facet of their “collective somatic modes of selective attention.” Focusing on temporality and the effects of narrative depictions that separate the suffering subject from his or her pain, objectify that pain and situate it within a moral context, Throop then offers a fascinating account of how pain experiences can be shifted from “granular” or disjunctive modes—that is, pain as world shattering—to coherent, meaningful events.

A particularly compelling explication of such processes occurs in the chapters devoted to Yapese configurations of pain and suffering and to an extended case study of traditional healing. By means of a close linguistic analysis of Yapese terminologies for pain, work, virtue, and endurance and their usage in both everyday talk and interview contexts, Throop details how morality and suffering come to be recounted as fundamental aspects of personal biographies and accounts of moral action. The key to this appears to lie in the transformation of pain into an index of labor undertaken on behalf of others (as has similarly been noted in other cultural contexts). By transforming suffering into a purposeful mode of exertion, physical pain—and the discourses and embodied practices that surround it—come to mark merit and virtue rather than loss and distress. In a particularly illuminating example, Throop maps out how this occurs through the healing of a young girl who broke her arm when she ignored her household duties to play with her friends only to fall out of a tree. Although her injury was not caused by physical work, it was only by enduring the acute and repeated pain produced by having a traditional healer reset her joints that the girl could return to her irreplaceable role as a dancer in the tourist performances that were a significant source of income not only for her family but also for the wider community. The strength and fortitude she demonstrated during these healings was therefore viewed as exemplifying her willingness to suffer not for her own well-being but for that of her family and the community. By means of a collective ethical reconfiguration of the events of both the girl's past and her (imagined) future, her injury and its healing were thus transmogrified so as to assign intentionality to her pain, situate her suffering within a moral framework, and recast her as an upstanding member of a wider social group.

In addition to readers interested in theoretical work on the topics of pain and suffering, Throop's engaging ethnography of this small Micronesian nation is a welcomed resource for scholars and students of the Pacific. Of special interest is the book's contribution on the broad topics of sociality and personhood in the Pacific, particularly as delineated in the chapter "Privacy, Secrecy, and Agency." Here, Throop makes a very perceptive argument as to how knowledge is experienced in Yap as both socially powerful and a private possession, with its disclosures constituting a privileged form of social action. As a result, secrecy, deception, and what Throop calls "local orientations to truth" are enacted through communicative acts that purposefully "foster ambiguity" (p. 141). Throop concludes that in a context in which there is a very high social expectation that individuals will exercise control of their emotions, thoughts, and feelings to enable outer appearances of calm and control, agency comes to be enacted through strategic disclosures of private knowledge and one's "true" thoughts and feelings.

Whether one reads *Suffering and Sentiment* for its ethnographic portrayal of contemporary Micronesian social forms or for its insights into pain and physical distress, this book has a lot to offer students and scholars interested in the anthropology of suffering, theories of experience, and the Pacific.

**Ugly Stories of the Peruvian Agrarian Reform.** *Enrique Mayer.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009. 300 pp.

**JASON ANTROSIO**

Hartwick College

Enrique Mayer's *Ugly Stories of the Peruvian Agrarian Reform* delivers a wonderfully human account of Peru's tumultuous agrarian politics. Mayer captures a history that continues to have enormous contemporary relevance—the book should be read and discussed widely. Unfortunately, the title is troubling—it may be meant as provocative or playful, but it potentially places the work within a genre that would jeopardize its contribution.

Until the 1950s, Peru was a largely agrarian society locked in a traditional structure of landholding inequality. A small group of elite families controlled the best and largest farms, while the poor majority lived in precarious conditions. Following rural unrest and slow-moving reform, a military government in 1969 abruptly inaugurated an ambitious program of expropriation. The state seized large estates and transformed them into enormous cooperatives, a reform heralded as a revolution equivalent to the freeing of slaves (p. 3). It was both revolutionary and without bloodshed (p. 236).

The revolution was brief. By the mid-1970s many cooperatives were already crumbling or under siege. Somewhat incredibly, the agrarian reform seems to have no contemporary supporters. Mayer relates, "I found no one, not one person who wanted to tell me that he or she was happy with the way the agrarian reform worked itself out" (p. xviii). The expropriated landowners and conservatives denounced agrarian reform as communism, drawing parallels to the cooperatives in China and the Soviet Union (p. 96). However, because the Peruvian state was attempting to use technology and economies of scale in the service of a profitable business endeavor, analysts and leftist groups called the reform "state capitalism" (p. 131). Most peasant agriculturists, supposedly beneficiaries, did not receive land and would eventually stage further land invasions to dismantle the cooperatives (p. 24). Finally, as the government withdrew support and technical assistance, cooperative employees and members became bitter.

Despite the enormous importance of these events, both in Peru and as an example of agrarian change, there has been comparatively little published on the human

impact of the reform. There are one-sided accounts from particular actors, as well as dry social science literature featuring tables of hectare measurement or well-worn Marxian debates (p. 239). There was also a dearth of research in the 1980s, during the deadly era of the Shining Path insurgency. It remains a divisive political point whether the agrarian reform encouraged insurgency or instead prevented the Shining Path from taking over the country (pp. 233–234).

Mayer's book is an impressive contribution. Mayer collects a wide-ranging gamut of perspectives based on testimonies and personal accounts, providing national scope while remaining sensitive to regional particularities. The book draws on his life experience, years of visits and fieldwork, and an immersive and interdisciplinary knowledge of the literature, from political science to history to economics. It is an amazing achievement of a lifetime of work, a splendid example of how anthropology can combine empirical, historical, and theoretical material. It is also a testimony to perseverance through at times agonizing fieldwork and multiple writing attempts.

Written in an accessible style, *Ugly Stories* should be useful for undergraduate courses on Latin America, agrarian issues, social change, and economic anthropology. Mayer integrates media, film, and social science materials, exploring literary genres and foregrounding the testimonies of others: each chapter begins with a “cast of characters” who come to life with vivid prose. The book opens a window into a now-forgotten period of revolutionary fervor and ideological commitment, and it is interesting to note how many Peruvian anthropologists played a part in these changes. Mayer also is able to ground contemporary neoliberal globalization in its historical context. There are some quirks—for the most part the specialist literature is referenced in relatively few endnotes, but several endnotes are so long it seems an alternate book might be lurking in the final pages. Additionally, there are some curious descriptive adjectives—the personal involvement is sometimes poignant, but in other places Mayer seems too close to the proceedings.

The title is provocative but troubling. A book announcing itself as “ugly stories” risks supporting a political current that seeks to discredit any kind of government-led reform, especially in agriculture. For those with an inkling of knowledge about the Peruvian case, it is known for drastic measures, fanfare, and failure. Although there is a truth in that story, it should not be used to support ideas that human nature is impervious to reform, or more specifically that peasant farmers can never succeed in cooperative agriculture. At several points Mayer states that he wants “to paint a more positive view of the agrarian reform than the one that currently is in fashion” (p. xxi). Indeed, many stories have positive elements, including defenders of the reform and even a “beautiful story” from a surviving cooperative

(p. 174). Mayer examines cases of spectacularly grand failure, but concedes in an endnote that “not all cooperatives were like this; particularly smaller ones did live up to the government's and their member's expectations. However, contentment does not produce interesting ugly stories” (p. 262). The book could have been titled, with sufficient irony, *Beautiful Stories of Agrarian Reform*.

The title is also problematic because the Peruvian expropriations were not what most consider genuine agrarian reform. The reform concentrated agricultural holdings, rather than parceling them (pp. 20–23, 112). Moreover, many of the memories and stories in the book are as much about the dismantling of reforms as they are about the reform period. As Héctor Béjar writes in a review of the Spanish-language version (2009), it could equally well be titled *Ugly Stories of the Agrarian Counter-Reform*. Or the book could be called *Ugly Stories of Agrarian Capitalism*, because it is also about attempts to impose versions of capitalist enterprise on the countryside.

In the preface, Mayer hints of also writing in Spanish but does not discuss the publication of *Cuentos Feos de la Reforma Agraria Peruana*. William Mitchell's review considers the English title to be an unfortunate gloss of the Spanish version, and the title is Mitchell's “one quibble” (2010). I obviously consider the title to be more than a quibble—in addition to the issues mentioned, it raises questions of how the book is positioned in Peru, where it has been reviewed in popular media. An article in Peru's *La República* calls the title “sumamente engañoso” (extraordinarily deceptive), suggesting that there may be more playfulness in the Spanish title (Hinojosa 2009). It would be valuable to include more consideration of such issues in the English-language text, even if the two texts were published simultaneously.

These issues are not just academic or past history. Although the Peruvian case may be unusual in its ideological fervor and fanfare, a look at contemporary agriculture reveals a previously unimaginable trend toward “peasantization” of farmland, from Latin America and the Caribbean to Eastern Europe and even the United States. After all this time, peasants and rural life have once again become central to contemporary concerns and development initiatives, including World Bank conferences on “Agriculture for Development.” As in Peru, many large-scale agricultural holdings have devolved into small and medium-sized farms, although inequality and poverty remain pressing concerns (pp. 230–232). New transnational agricultural links, such as Peruvian farmers supplying asparagus to U.S. supermarkets, present opportunities and pose new threats (p. 107). Mayer has already beautifully articulated how peasant households are not equivalent to individualized or unrelated units, but the question remains of how to harness peasant dynamism to meaningful reform. Mayer's book may be a useful warning to not become

obsessed with top-down plans, models, and organizational charts, but is it really the right time to tell *Ugly Stories* about reform? After all, “no agrarian reform can exist without a dream of what it will be like in the future” (p. 239).

## References cited

- Béjar, Héctor  
2009 Comentarios a los Cuentos Feos de Enrique Mayer. *Socialismo y Participación* 107(October):171–178.
- Hinojosa, Ghiovani  
2009 Evocando a Velasco. *La República*, February 8: 12–14.
- Mitchell, William P.  
2010 *Ugly Stories of the Peruvian Agrarian Reform* by Enrique Mayer. *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 15(2):482–484.

**Tradition, Revolution, and Market Economy in a North Vietnamese Village, 1925–2006.** *Hy Van Luong*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010. 333 pp. + maps, images, appendices, notes, references, index.

## ALLISON TRUITT

Tulane University

Hy Van Luong's *Revolution in the Village: Tradition and Transformation in North Vietnam, 1925–1988* ended at the cusp of Vietnam's reintegration into the global market economy. In this revised and expanded edition, Luong updates his study to examine how two decades of economic reforms have altered social relations in Sơn-Dương, a village on the Red River Delta northwest of Hanoi. This revision was inspired not by those reforms per se. Rather, Luong's return visit in 1998 coincided with political turmoil in which villagers withheld their levee and agricultural taxes. Luong subsequently returned to Sơn-Dương in 2004 to conduct a household survey and again in 2006. The result is a welcome update to his original village-study.

Although Sơn-Dương is less easily characterized as an agrarian society today than it was in the 1980s, it still retains characteristics that make it an exemplary northern Vietnamese village. Luong shows how local traditions play a major role in how villagers experience and respond to the country's reintegration with the global market economy. The book retains its structure with the addition of three chapters and an expanded conclusion. The introduction presents several theoretical paradigms, including the rational peasant model and world-systems theories. While largely unrevised, this overview addresses a question still worth asking: Why have Western theoretical models failed to explain the success of the Vietnam revolution? Greater comparison with recent scholarship would have been welcome. While he mentions scholarship published in the almost 20-year period between editions, he does not provide

substantial discussion, including his own impressive corpus of research (but see Luong 2006).

The second edition extends Luong's central claim, namely that the “native sociocultural framework” (e.g., communal land holdings, male-centered hierarchies, Confucian distinctions between manual and mind labor, and rigid group boundaries marked by endogamous marriage patterns) has shaped how villagers have both experienced and responded to large-scale transformations in the 20th century. As Luong shows particularly well in chapters 2 and 7, the fundamental tension structuring village life between collectivism (e.g., communal land holdings and strict group boundaries) and male-centered hierarchies (e.g., patrilineage) is ultimately productive in that villagers have multiple frameworks through which to interpret their encounters with colonialism and capitalism. Luong designates these frameworks as “precapitalist,” even though his analysis ultimately demonstrates that they are coeval with capitalism. In his theoretical reflections, he describes the foundation for mobilization among these villagers against perceived party-state injustices as an example of “alternative civilities” (p. 277), one that cannot be reduced to the Western-derived model of “civil society” but is nonetheless as effective.

In part 1 Luong situates Sơn-Dương in a long history of resistance as the village was located “on the route of attack and counterattack” between a French-controlled town and a major guerilla base (p. 37). He then draws a portrait of village life from the riveting life history interviews of Nguyen Van Bang, whom he met in Toronto. Luong then shows how elite sons, in particular, were excluded from metropole discourses of “Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity,” which spurred their participation in nationalist movements.

Part 2 examines post-1945 village life, including how villagers of Sơn-Dương were recruited into the Viet Minh. Most people conceptualized the revolution in terms of national liberation rather than the Marxist-focus on class conflict. A near majority of Party members, for example, were from the privileged classes in Sơn-Dương until 1950 when quotas were imposed on candidates for Party membership (p. 150). By 1981, the Vietnamese state authorized the household contract system, which not only increased agricultural productivity and food production but also helped reconstitute the sociocultural reality based on a hierarchical model of kinship (p. 203).

Part 3 includes three new chapters based on subsequent site visits and a 2004 household survey. The household surveys show that socioeconomic differentiation among households cannot be attributed to land holdings or agricultural production but, rather, to new sources of wage-based employment and remittances. Part of this finding may be specific to Sơn-Dương. The land distribution in 1994 was relatively equitable, reflecting the moral value villagers placed on collectivism (p. 224). In the face of this growing differentiation, villagers resurrected both

rituals and institutions that reinforced patrilineal ties. Notably, the one mutual assistance society to persist since the colonial period was the Buddhist association for elderly women, which Luong attributes to the dense social ties cultivated through endogamous marriage patterns (p. 233). Even male Communist officials had to reckon with their female kinfolk. The virtue of collectivism has, in turn, intensified social ties, a dynamic evident in large weddings, fueled by the willingness of villagers to offer cash gifts (pp. 238–239).

Chapter 8 turns to an analysis of the political revolt in Sơn-Dương village. The crisis began in 1996 erupted when a group of villagers accused local officials of taking advantage of policies designed to help “war dead and war invalid” households (p. 247). Such grievances were not limited to Sơn-Dương, but signaled a broader struggle for political legitimacy in northern Vietnam. Luong argues that this turmoil in the province, while often attributed to corruption and poverty, is better explained by reference to the “local sociocultural framework” which emphasizes relative equality coupled with a proliferation of social ties that bind villagers to one another through kinship-, village-, and religion-based local associations (p. 260).

In his concluding “Theoretical Frameworks,” Luong argues that if the rational peasant model cannot account for why villagers participated in revolutionary movements, then Marxist paradigms simply explain away people’s attachment to village life in terms of core capital accumulation. How generalized then are his findings? Local traditions, as he points out, vary significantly across regions in Vietnam. In southern Vietnam, there has been a lack of agrarian unrest despite its more highly stratified society along class lines. He attributes this difference to the “tight social networks within strongly demarcated village boundaries” (p. 276) in northern Vietnam, which not only stimulated villagers to join revolutionary movements but later empowered them to protest against the perceived corruption of party officials.

The updated version retains its place as a historically informed study grounded in the experiences and understandings of northern Vietnamese villagers. It would make an excellent companion text for courses on contemporary Vietnam or comparative revolutionary movements. And for scholars and students who read the first edition in the 1990s, this edition is worth a second read.

## References cited

- Luong, Hy V.  
1992 *Revolution in the Village: Tradition and Transformation in North Vietnam, 1925–1988*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press.  
2006 Structure, Practice, and History: Contemporary Anthropological Research on Vietnam. *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 1(1–2):371–409.

**The Occult Life of Things: Native Amazonian Theories of Materiality and Personhood.** Fernando Santos-Granero, ed. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009. 256 pp., 27 b/w photos, 6 illus., 3 tables.

## NEIL L. WHITEHEAD

University of Wisconsin

This is an important and thoughtful book that brings to the fore the ways in which other systems of epistemology and ontology shape the materiality of the world. Given the broader importance of the study of materiality in anthropology, this work should remind scholars of how much is still to be learned from Native Amazonian cultures and better integrated into theory and case study. As with earlier work stemming from ethnographies and histories of landscape and the idea of the “natural,” this volume is poised to influence a whole generation of scholarship on Amazonia and beyond.

The work is well served by a clear and thought-provoking introduction by the editor Fernando Santos-Granero in which he rightly points out that the study of materiality in Amazonia has been somewhat late in coming to fruition when compared with other regions of the world. This is at least in part owing to the nature of historical processes and the intellectual history of anthropology itself, because the violent erasure of both cultures and persons over the last 500 years meant that 20th-century anthropology turned to material artifacts as a cipher for those vanished persons and their cultural practices.

Ceramics, feather work, basketry, and blow-pipes were all taken as the rubble out of which the reclamation and rebuilding of the Amazonian past might be accomplished and it was these ideas that informed the major collation of “material culture” in the Smithsonian Institution’s *Handbook of South American Indians* published in the 1940s. Although this faulty understanding has now been offset by such collected works as the *Cambridge History of Native American Peoples*, as well as the tireless efforts of various individual scholars, a reconfiguration of our understanding of the material has not been so prominent until now.

The work consists of ten chapters, all written by leading scholars in their field, that amply and persistently fill out the themes outlined by Santos-Granero in the introduction. Decorated bodies (High-Jones, Miller); baby-slings and magic stones (Santos-Granero, Walker); masks; and flutes, pots, textiles, and texts (Guzman-Gallegos, Hill, Neto) all appear not as museological objects with classificatory provenience but, rather, as actors and agents in the unfolding of sociocultural life. In turn, the elision of ontologies among persons, spirits, and things (Erikson,

Lagrou) means that the Cartesian template for discriminating amongst such categories simply does not exist in Amazonia.

This means that questions of “Valuables, Value and Commodities” (Turner) have to be critically recast because Amazonian conceptions utterly confound liberal-capitalist notions of exchange-based theories of market value. This is not at all to suggest that Amazonians are somehow “naïve” in the face of a predatory modernity, although this suggestion has been doing the cultural work of conquest since Columbus first exchanged hawk-bells for gold on the beaches of the Caribbean, but, rather, it is an illustration of how narrowly Western modernity interprets value, shrinking all beauty and meaning to its market value.

For these reasons, this volume not only achieves the important intellectual goal of more properly and expansively representing indigenous Amazonian resilience in sustaining alternative schemas for materiality and the materialization of desire, thought, and action through the spirit world but also provides an implicit critique of our own enslavement to “things”—not only because we want to possess them but also because we do not understand them. This is the meaning of the title to the work—“the occult life of things.”

One theme of the work that might have merited more attention, or at least suggests that further lines of research should be followed up, is the whole class of “textual” objects. In Guzman-Gallegos’s chapter on the Runa of Ecuador, these texts are those of the national government and their magical properties are accordingly “closely associated with particular constellations of power” (p. 216). However, both magical writing and paper-based texts have a wider importance as tokens of the long history of colonial conquest in the region. Here, the magic of the state (after Coronil and Taussig) is precisely manifest in its textual production and the shamanic counterproduction of writings and papers, as well as such phenomena as autocartographies in pursuit of land rights or testimonials in pursuit of political goals.

Such texts are an important part of Amazonian modernity that connects the “indigenous” to the colonial populations of landless farmers, miners and rubber-tappers, *caboclos*, and *quilombos* who likewise deploy magical theories of practice to sustain themselves in face of a dominant materiality of power and exploitation. So, too, the modernist “immateriality” of the Internet reminds us that virtual worlds are not the exclusive domain of the indigenous, and that indigenous people are no less “wired” and online than others. Perhaps then this potentially connects us all in a way that might allow the occult life of things to be made more widely manifest and so, as with the Native Amazonians revealed through this excellent volume, a means for our own emancipation from the tyranny of an otherwise obsessive possession of, and by, things.

**An Alliance of Women: Immigration and the Politics of Race.** Heather Merrill. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006. 272 pp.

LILITH MAHMUD

University of California, Irvine

In the last two decades, most social studies of Italy, anthropological or otherwise, have converged on a single topic: the phenomenon of immigration that has transformed a country of emigrants into a country of immigrants. In the scholarly “gold rush” to immigration, it is hard to imagine that there could be room for one more. And, yet, Heather Merrill’s intervention into such a crowded field of scholarship is as original as it is needed.

*An Alliance of Women* focuses on the experiences surrounding Alma Mater, a cultural center founded in Turin by an alliance of local feminists and immigrant women in the early 1990s, and that has since grown into one of the major organizations of its kind in Italy. In addition to providing social services to immigrant women and cultural courses to teach locals about diversity in an increasingly multiethnic city, Alma Mater was also designed to be a center for creative and oppositional politics, in which feminist ideologies and practices could be reframed.

In Merrill’s study, Alma Mater functions as a central marketplace for the encounter of a variety of social actors, from labor activists to undocumented workers, feminists, academics, politicians, journalists, and immigrant women from different parts of the world. Merrill follows some of them closely into their homes and work lives, to protests and neighborhood riots, to write an ethnography of mobility that is as attuned to social networks as to their attending built space.

Chapters 1 and 2 introduce the readers to the sociopolitical and architectural landscape of race and gender first in the city of Turin and then inside Alma Mater. Merrill focuses in particular on the reorientation of long-standing feminist organizing in Turin to address the experiences of immigrant women and to face the challenges brought about by an increasingly racist and neoliberal restructuring of civil society. As Merrill writes, “from its earliest inception, Alma Mater was a multiethnic, international, and antiracist women’s organization. . . . The organization’s location, in an old working-class quarter on the outskirts of Turin, has become a microcosm of complex backgrounds and negotiations among Italians in this industrial city” (p. 22).

Chapters 3 and 4 trace the industrial history that made Turin a Fordist city in Italy, but that also produced one of the most vibrant labor movements in the country, spearheaded by Antonio Gramsci and by the many other Italian Marxists who called Turin their home. Merrill examines the neoliberal restructuring of labor in Turin’s “post-Fordist” economy, as factory jobs have increasingly been replaced

by high-tech jobs, rising unemployment rates have affected the city's class composition and its neighborhoods, and a "global division of labor" has transformed the experience of being a worker in Turin. It is in the multiple contradictions of living in a neoliberal, proworkers city that Merrill locates the specific challenges that immigrant laborers face, caught between the often-racist structures of unions and labor organizing and the promises of a deeply exploitative underground economy.

Chapter 5 turns to the construction of race through and in physical space by focusing on racial tensions in a neighborhood populated by many African migrants. Many transitioning neighborhoods in urban centers throughout Europe have been sites of violent ideological clashes, often exposing the inadequacy of liberal antiracist discourses and the prevalence of structural forms of racism. In this case, however, Merrill examines some of the racist and antiracist events that took place in a neighborhood of Turin to analyze the historical construction of race in Italy, through the nationalist and racist discourses of Italy's colonial past. Merrill writes that "there is a myth in Italian society that even if Italians did engage in colonial endeavors, Italian colonialism was more humane, tolerant, and different from other colonialisms" (p. 103). Indeed, racial discourses in Italy are characterized by a pervasive denial and minimization of colonial history, and by an axiomatic belief that Italians are not racist. Carving out an ideological space for antiracist work is therefore as important in the Italian context as is the groundwork effected by Alma Mater and other similar organizations.

Chapters 6 and 7 address explicitly the organizational strategies and ideological restructuring that allowed Turin's historic feminist movements, produced dialectically within labor movements and the Communist Party, to conceptualize racial difference and to create a site like Alma Mater. In the process, Merrill offers an insightful review of the rise of feminist movements in Italy. If global economic processes are certainly not gender neutral, Merrill's account of the making of Alma Mater—a third-sector, feminist NGO—shows how labor can be gendered within a specific set of neoliberal and postcolonial racial and class ideologies.

*An Alliance of Women* is an ethnography of gender, labor, and mobility that leads readers on a rocky journey through different sites of social action and also through different scales of representation. At times thickly nuanced in its descriptions of a personal encounter, and at times broadly stroked in its ethnographic account of postcolonialism or neoliberalism, the book's greatest strength might also be its weakness in the eyes of some anthropologists. The author's approach, however, is intentionally interdisciplinary. Merrill borrows from cultural anthropology and from human geography the ability to tell a compelling story about a particular neighborhood organization while also addressing very large patterns of global mobility and transnational

feminist practices. This book will certainly be of great interest not only to feminists and to Italianists but also to anyone trying to understand the effects on the ground of shifting global economic policies, of labor movements, and of political organizing within NGOs.

**Life Histories of the Dobe !Kung: Food, Fatness, and Well-Being over the Life-Span.** *Nancy Howell.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010. 234 pp.

#### CHRISTOPHER KUZAWA

Northwestern University

To many anthropologists, a life history is a narrative of an individual's experiences across his or her life. To an evolutionary biologist, a life history describes the life-cycle characteristics that differentiate species from one another, classically including traits such as growth rate, age and body size at maturity, litter size, birth spacing, mortality rate, and life expectancy. Although uniquely human characteristics like bipedal locomotion and brain size have traditionally been the focus of much scientific and popular attention, it is less well appreciated that our life history is also highly unusual when compared to other mammals or even other primates. For instance, humans invest intensively in each of their offspring, who depend to varying degrees on caretakers and food provisioning for roughly two decades. Most human populations also manage to have higher fertility rates than do other great apes, implying that we not only produce expensive, high quality offspring but also get to eat our cake too by having larger families to boot. Another unusual human life history trait is our lifespan. In chimpanzees, all bodily systems senesce at about the same pace, and cessation of reproduction occurs at the age of natural death, or around 45–50 years of age. Although reproduction in human females also ceases around 50 years of age, aging in other systems is delayed such that the typical human female will live two or three decades beyond menopause.

How did the human suite of unusual life history traits evolve? Of course, few details of past lifeways are recorded in the fossil record, and thus we are resigned to inferring the past using imperfect data. Although many details remain murky, one thing is fairly certain: until the first agricultural settlements roughly 10,000 years ago, nearly all human ancestors lived as nomadic foragers. In light of this, contemporary foraging populations have received attention for the clues that they provide into the types of subsistence strategies viable for a species with our lifespan, nutritional needs, and social characteristics. Such populations are of course not evolutionary holdovers or remnants of a pre-modern past, and there have been long-standing debates about the status and histories of many foraging populations. What seems clear is that all modern foragers have been in long-standing economic entanglements with other

groups, sometimes coercive, including pastoralists, horticulturalists, colonialists, and the global economic system more broadly. Some may have had ancestors who practiced different subsistence strategies in the past and were forced to forage only after being pushed into marginal ecologies. Indeed, despite their ecological and cultural diversity, contemporary foraging populations all inhabit (or, in many instances, inhabited) environments that are unsuitable for agriculture, such as rainforests, deserts, and polar regions. Such populations are not living fossils—they are simply examples of human societies that support families by relying to varying degrees on hunting and gathering in the unproductive environments in which mixed foraging strategies are practiced today. They thus give us insights, albeit imperfect, into patterns of subsistence, fertility, migration, and social provisioning that work well enough to persist across multiple generations in such settings.

Although the scholarship on modern foragers has revealed an immense diversity of ecologies, economic ties, and subsistence strategies, it has also highlighted commonalities. Key among these is what appears to be a universal reliance on elaborate forms of food sharing. The !Kung (Ju/'hoansi) of the Dobe region of Botswana are famous for being the first predominantly foraging population to be studied intensively by a group of anthropologists in the 1960s and 1970s, and among whom sharing was widely documented at that time. As part of this research team, Nancy Howell was the author of the demographic analysis of this group published in 1979. In *Life Histories of the Dobe !Kung: Food, Fatness, and Well-Being over the Life-Span*, published in 2010, she revisits old data to address a new set of questions: How did the Dobe !Kung manage to keep the caloric balance sheet out of the red? At what ages do dependents become net producers? At what age have individuals provided more to the group, in total, than they've consumed until that age? How important are kin, and residing in proximity to different types of kin, such as grandmothers, to one's nutritional well-being?

Howell deftly addresses these and other questions in this nicely written book. The picture that emerges from her analyses is of a society in which complex customs of sharing help distribute resources to buffer the vagaries that accompany living in such a marginal environment. She finds that individuals do not produce more than they consume on a daily basis until their twenties, and that they do not make up for their cumulative caloric debt until their forties (females) or fifties (males). Thus, it is their elaborate customs of sharing, and particularly the flow of resources from individuals of advanced age to younger ages, that make their strategy viable in the long run. Sharing among households not only provides a buffer against bad times but resource transfers are also culturally structured to facilitate their flow from productive life stages to dependent life stages. To her credit, she does not ignore but grapples sta-

tistically with those members of the group, primarily young men, who were working on Herero settlements. In the concluding chapter, she also critically evaluates the fit between her findings and hypotheses for the evolution of altruism and sharing, such as reciprocal altruism and kin selection.

After completing her analysis of the structure of provisioning across the life course, Howell culminates the book with a novel hypothesis. Humans are unusual in being hairless and depositing body fat below the skin rather than primarily around the organs. Other great apes not only deposit their fat in internal rather than in visible deposits, but they are also covered in fur. Howell hypothesizes that visible fat stores may have evolved in humans as a component of our strategies of food sharing, for they allow us to size up an individual's nutritional status and health at a glance. By her reasoning, humans use subcutaneous fat as an honest cue to gauge who would benefit most from additional caloric resources, and who is doing just fine already. This is a fascinating idea that is amenable to empirical testing.

I found this volume to be nicely written and very readable. It will be widely read and cited among graduate students and researchers with interests in contemporary foragers, and also among those with interests in human life history. It provides us with a detailed look at how one highly marginalized population managed to survive, and the essential role that sharing and provisioning played in that strategy. It may only present us with a single population data point, but it is a well-characterized and fascinating one worthy of our attention.

**Black and Indigenous: Garifuna Activism and Consumer Culture in Honduras.** *Mark Anderson.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009. 277 pp.

**KERI VACANTI BRONDO**

University of Memphis

*Black and Indigenous* is a well-documented and important contribution to Garifuna ethnography, and studies of blackness and indigeneity in general. Anderson works to undo past analyses of Garifuna identity that viewed Indian (Island Carib) and black (Afro-American) as binary oppositions, with the former representing deep cultural roots and the latter being caught between tradition and modernity (p. 12). Instead, by combining careful historical analysis with contemporary ethnography of Garifuna organizational activism and lived experiences in Sambo Creek, Anderson demonstrates how, for Garifuna, “indigenous” and “black” are entangled categories. His analysis reveals Garifuna's long-standing reliance on transnational migration as an economic strategy and the ever-growing role that the consumption of brands, symbols, and goods associated with Black America play in shaping contemporary

identity constructions. Anderson's central contribution to Garifuna ethnography is to assert that Garifuna be understood in terms of "black indigeneity" or "indigenous blackness," supplanting debates about the degree to which they are more or less black or Indian.

Sambo Creek serves as Anderson's entry point into the study of local uses and meanings of racial and ethnic categories. Sambo Creek is a historically Garifuna community on the north coast of Honduras that has expanded to include a near equal number of mestizo residents. *Black and Indigenous* begins with a discussion of how the crisis in anthropology over the meaning of culture and "community" arose at the very same time that ethnic activists embraced essentialized notions of culture. It was in this moment that Garifuna activists encouraged Anderson to live in Sambo Creek—a "Garifuna community"—as a means to understand "Garifuna culture." What he finds, however, is that local constructions of Garifunanness are extremely complicated; at times contradictory and unstable; and informed by notions of diasporic blackness, nativist attachments to place, understandings of tradition, class differentiation, and historical racism and marginalization.

The connotations and uses of identity terms in Sambo Creek are fairly consistent with the literature on racial construction in Latin America. Reproducing persistent negative stereotypes of Garifuna economic and cultural traditions, Mestizo neighbors frequently label Garifuna as lazy and interested only in consumption and music. A history of land displacement, facilitated by a corrupt and racist political system, and neoliberal economic development model, contribute to interethnic tensions. In recent years, however, there has been a general shift in attitude toward a collective self-evaluation as "Negros" who have been historically marginalized and exploited because of their blackness, and who no longer will remain passive (p. 68). This awakening was influenced by ethnic organizing, and social relationships produced through transnational migration.

The central chapters on Garifuna identity construction and organizing may well be the strongest in the book. Anderson is ever careful to repeatedly point out that the history of the black movement in Honduras has yet to be written, and that his book is not meant to fill this void. Nonetheless, Anderson pulls together a range of important historical sources to demonstrate the important role of Garifuna activists in the formation of the Honduran ethnic movement.

Chapter 2—"From Moreno to Negro"—focuses on the first half of the 20th century, a period in which Garifuna identification was closely tied to the rise of an indo-Hispanic nationalist discourse emerging in response to the labor movement and Hondurans' uneasy relationship to West Indian banana laborers. Drawing heavily on prominent Honduran historian Dario Euraque, Anderson revises the seminal ethnohistorical accounts of Nancie Gonzalez by arguing that Garifuna did indeed identify as black before

the 1950s. Anderson argues that Garifuna occupied an ambiguous position as "native blacks"; they were racially black but culturally other, and not to be confused with foreign black laborers who represented a threat to the nation (p. 30). By the 1950s, Garifuna self-representation shifted from emphasizing "Black diasporic differentiation toward Black diasporic affiliation," or "from *moreno* to *negro*" (p. 100).

Although Garifuna activism was initially formulated in response to racial discrimination, by the 1980s activists had expanded their alliances to unite with indigenous peoples under an umbrella of ethnic autochthony, the subject matter of chapter 3. Several forces contributed to the formation of an ethnic politics of autochthony and the rise of state multiculturalism. By the end of the 20th century, Garifuna had experienced a transition from near exclusion from the national folklore to being incorporated into Honduran national identity and tourism. Media discourses and state-sponsored cultural policies and programs promoted this celebration of Garifuna cultural identity. At the same time, autochthonous peoples in Honduras (as in other Latin American states) were beginning to organize and make demands on the state, bolstered by international legal definitions of indigeneity (esp. the ILO 169) that articulated an indigenous identity representation as one associated with native presence, territorial attachments, the maintenance of cultural differences, and historical marginalization. The lack of recognition of Garifuna land rights provided a catalyst for them to organize under a model of indigenous rights. Anderson writes, "Garifuna, simply as Blacks, had no institutional means to claim collective land rights; but as an ethnic group similar to *indígenas*, they could pursue a land agenda" (p. 120). Ethnic activism did result in land titling initiatives, which were promised as a result of the March of the Drums in 1996. Unfortunately, subsequent land titling programs have fallen short, with communal titles heavily critiqued as useless, restricting communities to settled areas and excluding historically utilized territories.

In chapter 4, which reviews distinctions between the ethnopolitics of the two primary Garifuna organizations, Organización de Desarrollo Étnico Comunitario (ODECO) and Organización Fraternal Negra Hondureña (OFRANEH), Anderson pushes the identity politics literature in a new direction, expanding on Charles Hale's work on "neoliberal multiculturalism." Anderson's analysis of Garifuna activism against the World Bank's 2004 *Proyecto de Administración de Tierras de Honduras* (PATH; pp. 138–151) shows how although cultural rights might be defined in development programs in ways consistent with elite interests, the discourses inserted on participation can be picked up and used to articulate a counterargument. OFRANEH activists, thus, are using the World Bank's discursive emphasis on "participation" as a tool of political struggle to challenge and debunk the PATH program and related neoliberal development models.

In the final chapters of the book, Anderson explores everyday identity differentiations within structures of power associated with political-economic transformations under neoliberalism, especially the emerging tourism industry and ever-burgeoning transnational migratory networks. At the local level, Garifuna engage with discourses and practices of both blackness and indigeneity. Chapter 5—"This is Black Power We Wear"—examines the symbolic power offered by fashions associated with "Black America," styles that project an image of resistance, masculinity, and power. Garifuna activists, however, are critical of the increasing emphasis on consumerism and prevalence of foreign goods, concerned that such practices will lead to acculturation. Instead, they promote a traditional, rooted, indigenous subject, an identity also embraced and fostered through official state multicultural projects and the tourism industry. Garifuna *Sambeños* worry far less about tradition and more about social relationships and class disparities. Readers see this through the case of a local struggle to reclaim ancestral territory, covered in chapter 6. Although Garifuna frequently refer to ancestors when they speak of territorial and cultural heritage, their efforts to recuperate land emerged out of concerns for basic human dignity and sociality.

In sum, *Black and Indigenous* is a nuanced and important addition to the identities literature in Latin America. Anderson does justice to *Sambeños* and activists alike by refusing to simplify identity construction, highlighting the gaps and tensions among different trajectories of identity formation.

**The Trashing of Margaret Mead: Anatomy of an Anthropological Controversy.** Paul Shankman. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009. 299 pp.

**JULIA E. LISS**

Scripps College

The tabloid-like title of this book belies Paul Shankman's thoughtful and serious analysis and his effort to be even-handed. Shankman is an anthropologist who has done research in Samoa and on the Derek Freeman–Margaret Mead affair; the book appears in a series, *Studies in American Thought and Culture*, and is probably directed primarily at historians. It should be of interest to anthropologists wanting a narrative summary of events, including the context for Mead's research and writing of *Coming of Age in Samoa*, and to historians needing to understand the controversy within the longer history of anthropology, Mead's role as a public intellectual, and the culture wars of the 1980s. Both can measure how interpersonal battles and jealousies can distort intellectual debate. Paul Shankman has done an admirable job synthesizing the events and issues, introducing new information, and providing an interesting argument about how this event exploded on the public scene in 1983

with the publication of Derek Freeman's book, *Margaret Mead and Samoa*. He also attempts to provide a more accurate view of Samoan culture, partly by synthesizing Freeman and Mead's own data and supplementing it with historical perspectives and newer research.

The book is divided into five well-organized sections. The first takes up the emergence of the controversy, followed by analyses of Freeman and Mead, their personalities, scholarship, and historical context. A fourth section examines the view from Samoa—regarding the controversy, as represented in popular culture, and as seen in subsequent ethnographies. This reinterpretation concludes with the charges of a hoax on Mead and the stakes of the nature–nurture debate that served as rallying cries for Freeman's book. Even as he makes the role of personalities and reputations apparent—particularly Freeman's persistence, self-interest to the point of distortion, and sometimes "delusional" behavior—Shankman provides a context that also goes beyond the two main characters. Ultimately, one asks not only "was it really that important?" (p. 229) but also "what can we learn about why it occurred and its effects?"

The media firestorm that accompanied the advance publicity for Freeman's book, five years after Mead's death, is probably well known to this audience. Shankman supplements this story with Freeman's earlier research in Borneo and Samoa, including conflicts and personal crises but with no clear research agenda or animus regarding Mead. He reconstructs Freeman's encounter with Mead in the 1960s, including some peculiar discussions but none that suggest, as Freeman himself did, that he was determined to contradict her conclusions about Samoa. Mead was an important public figure, but *Coming of Age* was no longer a significant text, and research in the area, Shankman argues, had gone in different directions. But Freeman spoke to informants who told him that Mead had behaved scandalously. He began to work up his critique and, after some difficulty, *Margaret Mead and Samoa* was published by Harvard in 1983, followed by an expanded critique in *The Fateful Hoaxing of Margaret Mead: A Historical Analysis of Her Samoan Research* (1999). "Freeman's involvement with Mead and Samoa," Shankman concludes, "was partially academic, but it also included a complex intersection of his personal history, intellectual development, and proclivity for controversy" (p. 69). Moreover, it was based on dubious and in some ways manipulative distortions of testimony from supposed informants that fed into existing controversies among evolutionary psychologists, sociobiologists, and political conservatives. Freeman's authoritative argumentation convinced many, but it also drew the ire of many anthropologists, even though they may have shared skepticism of Mead's popularizing and of *Coming of Age* itself.

Shankman's efforts "to extricate Mead's reputation from the quicksand of controversy" (p. 19) emphasizes her position as a young scholar, inexperienced but with

intellectual resources, including some facility with the language and accumulation of data that are still worthy of reexamination. Significantly, her work combines detailed observations and more speculative conclusions, most likely driven by Mead's desire to write a popular book. Also significant, this popular purpose involved a critique of U.S. society, encouraging her to contrast Samoan and U.S. societies. These generalizations and opinions do compromise Mead's professional accomplishment and reputation, Shankman concedes, but they do not reveal a "hidden agenda" (p. 111); rather, they demonstrate her purpose as a social critic of U.S. society, precisely what marked her role as a public intellectual. Shankman emphasizes Mead's professional monograph, *Social Organization of the Manu'a* as a work of significant scholarship that is also far less known than *Coming of Age*. Whereas popularizing garnered attention, tapped into contemporary concerns about sexuality and individual freedom, and made the book historically important—and therefore a source for later debate—it has little to do with Samoa itself.

Shankman then examines Freeman and Mead's evidence to formulate a more accurate depiction of Samoan society. Central to this reexamination is Samoan criticism of Mead's work as scandalous, focused inappropriately on sexuality. Nonetheless, Shankman concludes, it is plausible that Mead was correct that adolescent Samoan girls were more sexually active than those in the United States at the time. Freeman, for his part, may not have differentiated between norms, beliefs, and actual behavior and neglected historical change, overestimating how Christian moralism reinforced ideals of virginity, and ignoring his own evidence to make a contentious point against Mead. Mead, in contrast, seems to have understood that traditional ideas of virginity were attenuated, even as she underrepresented evidence of historical change that was otherwise apparent in her data. Shankman's reexamination has two purposes: to refocus attention on Samoa and to resuscitate Mead.

The controversy is significant as an episode in intellectual and cultural history. It demonstrates the vagaries of academic celebrity, the risks of popularizing, and the fraught effort to connect academic to public life. As Shankman emphasizes, Margaret Mead remains an important figure of 20th-century intellectual life, and this role, more than *Coming of Age*, was threatened by this controversy. Her book is nonetheless an important touchstone of cultural criticism in the 1920s. Shankman's study successfully historicizes the controversy around Freeman and Mead and returns Mead to her place as an important figure in the history of anthropology and 20th-century intellectual life.

## References cited

- Freeman, Derek  
1983 Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of

an Anthropological Myth. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

1999 The Fateful Hoaxing of Margaret Mead: A Historical Analysis of Her Samoan Research. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

**Islam in South Asia in Practice.** Barbara D. Metcalf, ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009. 474 pp.

## ROBERT W. HEFNER

Boston University

Although long overshadowed by the Middle East, over the past 20 years South Asia has achieved new prominence in Islamic studies. There are good reasons for the region's ascendance. A full third of the world's Muslims reside in the seven nation states that make up South Asia. Well before the colonial era, the subcontinent was a leading center for Muslim scholarship, and it played a major role in the rise of early modern movements of Islamic reform. As Barbara Metcalf observes in her preface to this volume, India was also "characterized by the longest and most intensive experience of European colonial rule anywhere" (p. xix). The experience nurtured some of the modern Muslim world's foremost political thinkers, and generated some of its most sustained engagements with Western education and science.

It might appear quixotic for any single book to attempt to capture the vastness of this history, but this is precisely what Metcalf sets out to do in this book. Metcalf is professor emeritus of history at the University of California, Davis, and professor of history at the University of Michigan. Over the past 30 years, her scholarship has acquired a reputation for its careful interweaving of fine-grained textual and biographical study with broad social history. All of these skills are apparent in this new volume on the practice of Islam in South Asia. The volume is one in a series edited by Donald Lopez, which aims to go beyond canonical texts so as to examine the ways in which textual practices are woven together with social circumstances in different religious traditions. This aim is especially welcome in the academic study of Islam, in which, as Metcalf notes, the assumption that "a given religion presents timeless universals or positions that hold in all times and places" has been particularly pervasive (p. xix). This collection seeks to "shift the lens toward Muslims and away from 'Islam,' and recognize that 'Islam' is always processed through human eyes" (p. xix).

Metcalf's preface also comments on the widespread tendency to diminish Islam's place in South Asia by identifying it as a foreign intrusion or, alternately, a benignly tolerant but not-really-Islam syncretism. The preface is followed by an introduction, which provides a concise but engaging overview of the history of Islam in South Asia, from the earliest arrival of coastal Muslims in the eighth century to today. This is the finest short summary of Islam in the Indian subcontinent that I know of.

The body of the book consists of 34 chapters by 29 contributors. Each contributor presents a translation of one or more historical texts, most never previously translated into English. The author–translator sets the text’s social and historical scene with several-page commentary, typically linking the text’s meanings to broader issues in the history of South Asian Islam. The chapters are in turn grouped into five major thematic sections, each of which opens with a four–five-page introduction by Metcalf. The combination of Metcalf’s introductions with the translated documents and commentaries makes for a far-ranging and multivocalic introduction to the world of South Asian Islam.

The eight chapters in the book’s first section consist of songs and prayers of devotion to Allah, the Prophet Muhammad, Shi’a imams, and Sufi saints. The variety is dazzling: we hear songs of devotion recited by women working in the Deccan in the late medieval period, Shi’a *nauha* laments for children killed on the battlefields of Karbala, and chronicles about the life of the 16th-century Mughal emperor Akbar. The book’s second section, “Holy and Exemplary Lives,” focuses on “specific living holy men from the fourteenth century to the twentieth” century (p. 135). From a manual of mediation and ritual by one of the late-19th-century’s most influential holy men to voting appeals in modern Pakistan, the chapters trace the relationship between exemplary figures and their followers, underscoring the often-contradictory understandings of normative religious practice in different Muslim classes and communities.

The chapters in the book’s third section, “The Transmission of Learning,” touch on educational and religious disciplines, highlighting “communication through the production of pedagogic texts” (p. 187). The texts included are those produced by three modern Islamic institutions: formally organized madrasas, mass-based preaching (*da’wa*), and cell-organized social movements, like the Jama’at-i Islami, South Asia’s most important Islamist movement. The texts’ recurring preoccupation with intra-Muslim controversies reminds us that some of the most bitter contestation in modern times has pitted, not Muslims against Hindus, but Muslims against fellow Muslims who profess a different variety of Islam.

The chapters gathered in section 4, “Guidance, Sharia, and Law,” explore the institutions and authorities that provide guidance on religious matters in light of ethical parameters of the shari’a. The authorities surveyed include Islamic judges, informal courts, and fatwa-issuing bodies. This section could be used to great effect in university courses seeking to introduce students to the diverse ways in which Islamic law is reproduced, interpreted, and performed. The chapters in the book’s final section, “Belonging,” examine the “authorities and arguments that define the basis of community” (p. 371) in South Asia. The modes of affiliation are illustrated in what is again a rich variety of materials, ranging from

narrative poems from 13th-century Bengal to Jama’at-i Islam discussions of the compatibility of secular democracy with Islam.

Although this book addresses the history and variety of Islam in South Asia, the issues it treats are relevant for anthropologists of Islam working anywhere in the world. Appropriate for adoption in higher-level undergraduate and graduate courses, this book captures the richness of South Asian Islam in all its breathtaking diversity. This volume is one of the best introductions available from any part of the world to the genealogy and diversity of Muslim civilization.

**Islam and the Prayer Economy: History and Authority in a Malian Town.** *Benjamin F. Soares.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005. 306 pp.

#### ADELINE MASQUELIER

Tulane University

Meticulously written and painstakingly researched, *Islam and the Prayer Economy* is an important work of scholarship that contributes substantially to our understanding of Islam in Africa. Drawing on a rich combination of archival and ethnographic materials, Benjamin Soares provides a sweeping—yet also remarkably detailed—portrayal of Islamic institutions and Muslim practice from the precolonial period to the present in a provincial Malian town. His aim is to document two sets of intersecting historical developments: first, the impact of the French colonial presence on the practice of Islam and, second, the distinctions that perdure between Muslims despite the ongoing normativization of Islamic religious practices. Guided by Talal Asad’s concept of discursive tradition, Soares examines changing understandings of Islam and “being Muslim” within contexts of competition for religious authority between the Tijaniyya and Hamawiyya Sufi orders and reformist Muslims. Rejecting the notion that changing ideas about Islam and Muslimhood are necessarily expressions of fundamentalism or political Islam, he explores evenly the broad spectrum of Muslim practices that have taken roots, taking pains to highlight the historical specificity of religious discourses without losing track of the wider context of Islamic awareness out of which they emerge. These disparate approaches to Islam, he insists, defy easy categorization and must be seen against the backdrop of shifting relations among religious, social, and political institutions.

The town of Niore du Sahel is the setting for his study. As a small, economically marginal center, Niore might be altogether unremarkable were it not for the fact that it is home to religious figures of wide renown. Soares does an excellent job of showing how the town has capitalized on its reputation, attracting both elite and ordinary

Muslims from far away during annual rituals. By tracing the development of the two Sufi traditions over time (with particular emphasis on the tumultuous colonial period and on the last decade of the 20th century), Soares provides an illuminating perspective on the workings of charisma and the struggles over legitimacy in Nioro.

Far from waning after Shaykh Hamallah was exiled and his followers became the object of systematic repression at the hands of the colonial administration, the influence of the Hamawiyya only grew. In Nioro, the Hamawiyya's rise to prominence during the colonial period went hand in hand with the decline of the Tijaniyya. As he traces intersecting shifts in religious authority and hierarchy, Soares beautifully demonstrates how understandings of Muslim sainthood, far from being immutable, are historically contingent and may be subject to debate. Today, the institutional basis of Sufi orders has been shrinking, yet this does not mean that Muslim saints are less prominent. On the contrary, Soares suggests, they have acquired a new visibility through the personification of their authority. The leadership of Muhammadu, Hamallah's younger son and current leader of Hamawiyya, is thus articulated on understandings of charisma and authority that differ strikingly from the saintly qualities associated with the Hamawiyya's founder. Muhammadu's fame and that of other local saints must be assessed in the context of what Soares calls a "prayer economy" that links Nioro to the wider political economy of the region. In such an economy, followers receive religious commodities (prayers, blessings, and amulets) in exchange for their gifts. Those who make sumptuous gifts to prominent religious leaders earn relatively unrestricted access to these individuals and their commodified services while the wealth that saints amass only increases their prominence and their attractiveness. In a radical departure from the definition of saintly authority operating during Hamallah's time, Muslim saints have emerged as "free-floating signifiers," whose prestige hinges on their ability to market themselves to an ever-expanding network of devoted followers who in turn compete through their capacity to bestow wealth.

In documenting the vital role of commodification in the transformation of religious authority, Soares undermines lingering assumptions about the marginalization of Muslim saints and the meaning of Sufi traditions for ordinary Muslims. The practices of these religious entrepreneurs are severely condemned by reformist Muslims for whom Sufism in all its guises (incl. the economy of secret knowledge Soares refers to as "esoteric sciences") is *bid'a*, unlawful innovation, and has no place in Islam. Although *ahl al-Sunna* reformists have encountered serious challenges in their effort to establish a visible presence in Nioro, they have nonetheless had a sizable impact on the tenor of religious discourses, not least because their sustained critique of orthodoxy has forced Muslims to justify,

and in some cases, Islamicize their practices. As he traces the distinct strands of debate through which Muslims in Nioro variously affirm their Muslim identity, Soares is careful not to overrate the differences between rival factions. He convincingly shows that even as reformists and adepts of Sufi practices disagree vehemently about the boundaries of Islamic tradition, affirmations of the mutual disparity of their doctrinal views are belied by their shared participation in the fee-for-service economy and their mutual reliance on the power of esoteric knowledge. Yet, although the reader is treated to an extensive discussion of the reformists' vision of Muslim society and of their place in it, details on who exactly these reformist Muslims are are comparatively scanty.

Over the past few decades, the emergence of a public sphere in Mali enabled by new technologies of print, audio, and video media as well as the expansion of religious education has facilitated access to Islamic knowledge and promoted the homogenization of Muslim practices. By helping foster a supralocal sense of shared identity, it has encouraged Muslims to abandon particularistic practices that do not accord with the supposedly universal norms guiding Muslims conduct in the wider world. Paradoxically, it has also enabled the emergence of public Muslim figures who style themselves after Sufi saints but who, unlike more conventional saints, capitalize on the public sphere to broadcast their pious message. Muslims in Nioro are well aware that there are distinct approaches to Islam, and that for some, attachment to a saint with a devoted following is an integral dimension of being Muslim while for others, one can be a Muslim without allying oneself to a prominent dispenser of blessings or participating in debates about the correct way to be Muslim. In the end, the standardization of Muslim practices has been countered every step of the way by the diversification of the religious field, giving rise to an expanded, multifaceted Islamic culture which contradicts Mali's official status as a secular state. Particularly useful for me was Soares's treatment of the discursive practices through which Muslims come to define themselves in relation to each other, to the Malian state, and to the *umma*—the global Muslim community. Sadly, women as religious leaders and as ordinary Muslims are largely absent from the account. The reader is afforded little sense of the gendered experience of Islam and the place of women in the spiritual economy of Nioro du Sahel.

These minor criticisms notwithstanding, *Islam and the Prayer Economy* is a seminal analysis of religion and authority in a Muslim community. Soares's engagement with ethnography is always informed by a deep historical understanding of Muslim tradition and offers important insight into how we should think about Islam and Muslim practice in Africa. This book is both a very useful introduction for nonspecialists to the field and an insightful study for more seasoned scholars. It should be required reading for anyone interested in religion in Africa and in contemporary Islam.

**Death in a Church of Life: Moral Passion during Botswana's Time of AIDS.** Frederick Klaitis. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010. 349 pp.

**JULIE LIVINGSTON**

Rutgers University, New Brunswick

Who would have thought that one of the most powerful ruminations on love in recent years would come from a Motswana grandmother preaching in a small apostolic church in Old Naledi, a high-density neighborhood in Botswana's capital city? And yet that is exactly what Frederick Klaitis has offered us in his brilliant account of the Baishepi church and the moral passion of its leader, Mma Maipelo. With this ethnography of care in "Botswana's time of AIDS," Klaitis elucidates the philosophy and activities of this small church, which center on efforts to promote love and care, and to prevent jealousy and scorn among church members and the wider communities in which they live. Klaitis also worked in other churches and neighborhoods, to broaden his knowledge. But it is through Baishepi, not only as a religious institution but also as a home, that he depicts the intimacy and public nature of domestic life in Old Naledi, where plot owners have been living next to one another for decades.

Although many scholars (incl. me) have pursued jealousy, witchcraft, and moral rupture as crucial themes in contemporary Africa, Klaitis moves in the reverse direction. Without denying the importance of such negative forces, he focuses instead on the tremendous energy that goes into refusing or avoiding these dilemmas. He reminds us that efforts to cleanse or repair relationships in the face of jealousy, witchcraft, or scorn are about a deep commitment to and a longing for love and care. He describes a world in which emotions are not personal possessions or states so much as a field of interpersonal activity. At a time when widespread death, illness, competition, and poverty threaten to magnify interpersonal resentments, love is rendered as a form of patience in which people refuse to dwell on personal insult, and a domain of action in which people provide care for one another.

Klaitis spent 25 months immersed in the life of the church, preaching in Setswana, singing hymns, participating in networks of care, attending prayer sessions and funerals, and in long-term dialogue with Mma Maipelo and other church members over their theological and moral commitments. This was at the height of the AIDS epidemic, when long, horrible illnesses and deaths were common, and when the stakes of religious ethics and community articulated by people like Mma Maipelo were extremely high. Klaitis practiced "love as a [research] method" as a member of this apostolic church, and his affection and respect for the church and particularly for Mma Maipelo are clear.

But he brings a tremendous honesty to his writing and does not hide the tensions and moments of failure in this world he so carefully describes. Scorn, jealousy, resentment, and doubt all are present, and Klaitis, like Mma Maipelo, tackles them head on. The result is a book that stands at the most productive intersection of the anthropology of religion and medicine.

*Death in a Church of Life* is organized through a series of chapters that explicate and deepen the central concepts of love and care. Together, these chapters (on domestication, body, voice, dying, and funerals) build a theory of emotion as material, embodied, social, and moral activity. One of the most interesting discussions is about voice, which Baishepi members describe as the manifestation of spirit housed in the flesh. The book includes an online annex, with two recorded preaching sessions that are discussed in the book and transcribed in an appendix. In listening to them, the bodily quality of preaching and singing comes through clearly, evidencing the critical relationship between textual hermeneutics and embodied experience in apostolic Christian practice.

Klaitis introduces the concept of "housed relationships" to refer to the ways that moral sentiments are emplaced in buildings, yards, churches, houses, and graves. He then locates this discussion in the political and economic context of urban housing policy in Botswana, so that the reader can see how material, emotional, and social dimensions of space are related to one another in decisions about where to seek or provide care for the sick, or where to attend church.

Similarly, he discusses care as a moral domain of relentless social activity that merges the material dimensions of bathing, feeding, and visiting with the emotional need to perform such actions with patience and compassion. Importantly, Klaitis concretely ties love and care for the sick and dying to love and care in the wake of death. Sickness and death can cause people to wonder about the root cause of misfortune, who wishes well and who might take pleasure in harm, just as care can demonstrate the morality of those who are providing for the ill. But while care for the sick is about sustaining commitment, about energy, about trying, care after death is about giving up, about letting go, and not allowing grief to fuel resentment and jealousy. Just as scorn (or a failure to care properly) can linger in bad feelings among survivors after a death, so too can funerals be sites where animosities are inflamed or manifest. This discussion of care and scorn, which cuts across the chapters, underscores how funerals are critical sites in which successful efforts at past care are assessed and in which giving up is achieved, or conversely, past scorn and a clinging to hurt and resentment produce socially toxic effects.

Frederick Klaitis has written a profound and deeply human account of love and care. For scholars of Botswana, this is a long-awaited contribution from one of the most insightful researchers in the field, and it does not disappoint.

This book should be required reading for all Africanists, for scholars of religion, of the emotions, and for medical anthropologists seeking to understand AIDS or the meanings and practices of care.

**Singing to the Plants: A Guide to Mestizo Shamanism in the Upper Amazon.** *Stephan V. Beyer.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009. 544 pp.

**MICHAEL WINKELMAN**

Independent Scholar

Beyer's book developed from trips to the Amazon out of an interest in jungle survival that extended to a personal absorption with Amazonian spirituality. Although purportedly about "mestizo shamanism of the upper Amazon" (p. xi), it covers a broader context, including: part 1, "Shamanic Healing"; part 2, "Ayahuasca"; part 3, "Context and Sources," which loosely contends the Amazon Basin is a culture area; and part 4, "Meeting Modernity," which discusses international legal aspects and specific legal cases of ayahuasca in the United States. Beyer proposes the book is based on his teachers (Roberto Acho Jurama and dona Maria Luisa Tuesta Flores), but the coverage is much less about them and his experiences with them; rather, it is an effort to allege a general ethnology of the use of ayahuasca in the Upper Amazon.

Beyer's book provides an interesting and readable portrayal of many aspects of contemporary ayahuasca practice in the Upper Amazon and a glimpse of the broader cultural and international contexts of ayahuasca practices. Beyer's scholarly efforts are indicated by approximately 1,800 endnotes and 60 pages of references. He also relates some interesting contextualization provided by modern laboratory and clinical research (e.g., on the psychoactive ingredients).

Beyer proposes that this book is necessary because "we now know much more about shamanism than when Mircea Eliade published his famous overview in 1951" (p. xi). In deference to some notion of a universally distributed shamanism, Beyer frequently provides examples from various parts of the world that are similar to Amazonian ayahuasqueros' practices. Beyer, however, does not define shamanism or explicitly tell us why we should consider these practices to be shamanism.

Although Beyer does not use any empirical framework for a systematic analysis of shamanism or ayahuasca use, he does frequently note some pattern among Upper Amazon ayahuasca users to argue that certain characteristics are not defining features of shamanism. For instance, Beyer challenges conceptualization of shamanism proposed by Eliade involving shamanic soul flight, noting that in contrast the ayahuasqueros "summon the soul back to the body" (p. 158), rather than seeking it through out-of-body

flight. The lack of centrality of shamanic soul flight in these ayahuasca practices leads Beyer to conclude that soul flight cannot be a defining feature of shamanism because Beyer's "shamans" do not do that. Perhaps he should conclude that these practices do not constitute shamanism. Beyer documents the variation and specialization among the Upper Amazon groups and people who use ayahuasca and shows that many features of mestizo ayahuasca practices are fused with Hispanic and Catholic elements; this should make us question whether the term *shaman* should be applied here.

This is a problem that vitiates Beyer's book. What is a shaman, and why should the term be applied to these ayahuasca practices? Beyer ignores ethnological literature and empirical criteria that establish universal principles of shamanism (e.g., Winkelman 1992, 2000) in favor of an approach that basically considers a shaman to be whatever he happens to attribute to it in the moment. Beyer often makes a point about a general aspect of ayahuasca use by citing sources for a specific practice or belief among a number of Upper Amazon groups. But there is no systematic regional ethnology to establish that pattern among Upper Amazon cultures.

A lack of attention to relevant anthropological and ethnological literature is exemplified in his discussion of possession, which he uses to dispute characterization of shamanism that note the lack of possession. Without defining possession, Beyer tells us that shamans are possessed because ayahuasca users incorporate spirits or because their "darts" may act outside of their control. Such features are not the concepts established in systematic cross-cultural research (e.g., Bourguignon and Evascu 1977; Winkelman 1992).

A particularly troubling claim by Beyer is that Upper Amazon ayahuasca use constitutes the only true hallucinogenic origins of shamanism: "I think there is reason to believe that the extended Upper Amazon culture area may be *uniquely* characterized by the use of psychoactive plants and fungi in shamanic work" (p. 286). This statement is accompanied in the same paragraph by reference to "Mazatec shaman Maria Sabina" and her use of psychoactive mushrooms! He discounts other patterns of shamanic hallucinogen use by noting comments that such substances were used "by nonshamans attempting to emulate shamans" (p. 287) or by weak shamans. He ignores however the many cultural groups where hallucinogens have central shamanic applications.

Among the other shortcomings, one notes several chapters of two to four pages in length on sex, magic stones, herbalism, and vomiting; frequent inserts on topics not directly related to understanding ayahuasca use such as clothing, house construction, mestizo music, South American literature, snakes and snake-bite mortality, arrow poisons, dugout canoes, grubs and other culinary delights,

soccer, fishing, and hunting; and a frequent repetition of material from earlier chapters.

Unfortunately, Beyer's efforts at analyses of the patterns of ayahuasca use in the Upper Amazon and their relationships to shamanism are impressionistic, lacking a systematic analysis to establish the regional patterns and their relationship to cross-cultural patterns of shamanistic practices. Beyer's methodology is more characteristic of 19th-century anthropology than a scholarly examination of the patterns of Upper Amazonian ayahuasca use and whether it should be considered shamanism.

## References cited

- Bourguignon, E., and T. Evascu  
1977 Altered States of Consciousness within a General Evolutionary Perspective: A Holocultural Analysis. *Behavior Science Research* 12(3):197–216.
- Winkelman, M.  
1992 Shamans, Priests, and Witches. A Cross-Cultural Study of Magico-Religious Practitioners. *Anthropological Research Papers*, 44. Tempe: Arizona State University.
- 2000 Shamanism: A Biopsychosocial Paradigm of Consciousness and Healing. 2nd edition. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC–Clio.

**Islands of Privacy.** Christena Nippert-Eng. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010. 390 pp.

## ILANA GERSHON

Indiana University

Christena Nippert-Eng is a sociologist interested in the constantly renegotiated boundaries between what is public and what is private in the United States. She conducted a series of imaginative interviews, primarily with then middle- or upper-class U.S. citizens during the George W. Bush years—a period when asking about privacy had political resonances as the U.S. government began openly eroding rights to privacy. In the United States, terms such as *public* and *private* are often taken to stand for absolute opposites—public is open to anyone whereas private is reserved for one person's space or use. This is a clear semantic distinction that people's practices inevitably undermine. As Nippert-Eng discovers, in practice, "a 'good' privacy exists when the things they want to be private are as private as they want them to be" (p. 8). Privacy thus requires constant social labor as people must perpetually attend to the accessibility they wish to grant to some and the inaccessibility they wish to have with many others. This vision of accessibility is not stable, and people are constantly reevaluating the kinds of privacy they want with specific other people. In addition, this labor is ever thwarted by numerous factors: by how families and workplaces organize themselves; by legal, corporate, and government policies and practices;

by the structures of media used to communicate; and by other people's refusal to cooperate. What is striking when reading this thoughtful and careful book is precisely how explicit and nuanced Americans are about this labor. The people Nippert-Eng interviewed were able to discuss with great sophistication the numerous techniques they use to try to produce the ever-shifting privacy they want, and to engage with other people's similar efforts.

Nippert-Eng begins unpacking the labor privacy requires by turning to how secrets are maintained and revealed. She discusses how keeping secrets can be twofold, one must often hide the contents of the secret as well as the fact of the secret itself. When a secret consists of knowledge being concealed, the very fact that knowledge is being concealed can often lead to a revelation of the secret itself. This is not always the case, for example, when people hide gifts in a house, everyone else in the house may well know that gifts are hidden, and must implicitly coordinate with the gift-concealer to not find the gifts. Secrets are owned, and here Nippert-Eng begins to touch on the ethical conundrums that arise when ideas can be property. In addition, according to those she interviewed, secrets are a burden, often requiring considerable skill and foresight to maintain. Being competent at keeping secrets is not always a desired talent, and people often respond to the burden of secret keeping by promptly forgetting all details that they are told, or being well known as incompetent liars. Nippert-Eng discusses at length how much talent and coordination underpins keeping a secret, the "extraordinary wealth of skills and techniques—of field craft—that must be mastered in order to do it well" (p. 89).

After pointing out the skills and coordination required by secrets and privacy, Nippert-Eng turns to the materiality of the channels through which knowledge is circulated or, as importantly, not circulated. She has a chapter in which she reveals how creative she is as an interviewer, as she asked everyone she spoke with to unpack the contents of their wallets or purses and discuss how public or private each item might be. This technique, it turns out, inspired wide-ranging commentaries from stories of early instances of identity theft to people's analyses of the role of corporations and government in their everyday lives. She then, in a particularly teachable chapter, examines how the designed aspects of various technologies, such as e-mail or cell phones, will affect people's privacy. She has vivid accounts of how people delegate certain channels for specific tasks or types of contacts—for some, e-mail becomes a channel for work, while cell phones may be a channel only for family and one's closest friends. People are inventive in discovering ways to control other people's access to a particular channel, using cell phones to avoid telemarketers or having multiple e-mail accounts that signals the kind of access granted. Nippert-Eng found that people highly valued how much a channel might conceal their availability, which

depends as much on the ways the channel was structured technologically as on how people tended to use the channel (p. 184). In short, as people evaluated all the ways that they could now communicate with others, one of the most important considerations for people was how much a channel allowed them to control both their availability and the appearance of availability.

Reading this book, I was repeatedly struck by the Americanness of her interviewee's views and practices, and I often wondered about how people in other cultural contexts might produce privacy. This is a tribute to Nippert-Eng's skill as an ethnographer. She has a remarkable gift for uncovering topics or engaging with objects that elicit complex and revealing information about how people in the United States manage their privacy. As privacy becomes not only an increasingly politically charged question but also as technologies rapidly change an increasingly designed aspect of life, hopefully Nippert-Eng's book will encourage anthropologists to conduct equally inspired fieldwork on privacy outside of the United States.

**Gifts: A Study in Comparative Law.** *Richard Hyland.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. 708 pp.

**JANE I. GUYER**

Johns Hopkins University

This book runs to over 700 pages: 71 pages of bibliography, 40 pages of index, and 595 pages of text, in 1,366 numbered paragraphs, to facilitate legal reference. The thousands of notes are conveniently placed at the bottom of the pages, rather than at the end, to be consulted immediately by those many scholars from disciplines other than the law who will search for, and find, wholly new perspectives on this classic topic of scholarship, this pervasive practice of daily life, and this deeply contested factor in political and public arenas. For us in anthropology, this book outruns Marcel Mauss's essay on "The Gift" (1990; French original 1924–25) by a factor of seven. The magnitude of Hyland's work justifies, and extends in wholly new directions, our own efforts to do justice to Mauss's prescience and inspiration.

Finding very quickly, from the preface, that the text is beautifully crafted, I gave in to the temptation to read the beginning and the end first: paragraphs 1–3 and 1,366. This tactic proved very rewarding, and I would encourage others to tailor their own approach to the text. Indeed, the possible reading styles—from the modernism of reading from beginning to end to selective refraction on intriguing unique instances—reflect the overall theme itself, namely the intricate tensions and ephemeral resolutions between law as a regularizing force and gift as a tactic of life. The book starts—in the first sentence—in the French Revolution, when gifts were forbidden, to enforce the purism of

equal citizenship against "favoritism, feudalism and geographic particularism" (para 3 [following the practice in the index, references are here to paragraphs, not pages]). The argument then weaves through cases ancient and modern, historical and ethnographic, to conclude in the final paragraph that "The law and the giving of gifts are largely incommensurable fields of human activity. Nonetheless, because the transfer of property is common to both domains . . . attempts to reconcile (them) have produced an intricate and instructive tapestry of comparative law, one that includes some of the most fascinating constructions ever imagined by the legal mind" (para 1366). Close to the heart of the matter lies the anthropologists' view, descended from Mauss and figuring very early in Hyland's exposition (para 13), that "the gift is the ultimate shape-shifter" (para 25), based on its "virtually incomprehensible intermingling of freedom and obligation" (para 24). There is no attempt here at reductionism, no sweeping of cases under the intellectual rug, no overindulgence in paraphrase and voiceover. The reader is simply drawn into the enduring "conundrum" (para 24), which has challenged lay and specialist expertise into situated attempts to connect practices, rules, authorities, and the stakes in play.

Having been drawn in, one can turn with special appreciation to the chapter titles that organize this recalcitrant material. Gratifyingly for anthropologists, there is no regional or historical architecture to the text. It moves, rather, through the powers imbued in the gift: from "the concept" to "capacity" to "promise" to "making the gift" to "revocation" to "place," as a process, like a life cycle, that emerges and eventually rests. In fact, the ever-presence of life and death is intimated on the first page. The gift most dangerous to society, according to the French Revolutionaries, was the gift from parent to child. Neither "death" nor even "inheritance" figure largely in the index, but their presence is deeply felt. Those who give are not "giving up," as Mauss pointed out. They are accruing something else, within the "total prestation": the right to a return, perhaps comfort in old age, qualifications for the life hereafter, a name and reputation, gratitude; in other words, their own projection of the triumph of life over decrepitude and death. In the face of cultures about death, the law's ambition for precision and timelessness meet their match.

Hyland's sense of these anthropological framings is profound and this renders what is otherwise a legal compendium as an enormous resource for our own comparative endeavors. I was particularly drawn to the theme of "ingratitude" and revocation. The gift is so much less contested by law in our ethnographic cases that we have paused rather briefly, at least theoretically if not ethnographically, over what can go wrong in the temporal spaces between the obligation to give and to accept, between acceptance and repayment. These spaces must be occupied by standing forward, witnessing, recognizing, taking measure, taking hold,

judging, expressing, thinking, planning, and recording for the future—all of these being somehow fixed in the law of contract but drawn out over time with the gift, because the gift also entails sustenance toward ongoing self-realization in life, for both giver and receiver. We learn from Hyland's analysis that "ingratitude" is one legally recognized condition that links, as well as contrasts, contract and gift. A contract cannot be unilaterally revoked, whereas a gift may be taken back in some instances (and systems) because the identity of the giver remains actionable across conditions arising in the arc of life, such as impoverishment, indebtedness, or the birth of new children (para 1072). Ingratitude is the "first legally recognized grounds for revocation" (para 1116), the first version of this being a former slave's apparent ingratitude for manumission in ancient Rome. The exposition passes through some fascinating situations, from a donee's subsequent "attempt to kill" the donor to the legal implication of the donor's "forgiveness." It should not be surprising, by the end, to find that revocation law contains many "inconsistencies," some of them precisely tied to intersections between legal regularization and the unpredictable arc of life.

This brief example of ingratitude and revocation shows how inspiring this book can be to anthropologists: to scholars of law and practice, for Hyland's detailed exposition of the continuing tensions of incommensurability; and scholars of transactions, for his frame-by-frame—in historical context, in vernacular languages—tracing out of the phases and stages that make up the interactional processes to which we give such portmanteau analytical terms as "the gift." For us, this is a book to read, and also a reference book to keep taking down from the shelf, as often as such problems cross our paths . . . which promises to be increasingly often.

## Reference cited

Mauss, Marcel  
1990[1924–25] *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. W. D. Halls, trans. New York and London: W.W. Norton.

**Journey into America: The Challenge of Islam.** Akbar Ahmed. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2010. 528 pp.

## KAREN LEONARD

University of California, Irvine

Well known before coming to the United States as an anthropologist and government servant in Pakistan, Akbar Ahmed's book is billed, on the jacket cover, as "the most comprehensive study to date of the American Muslim community." Professor Ahmed and several of his students

traveled to some 75 U.S. cities in nine months, interviewing Muslims and non-Muslims and visiting mosques and Muslim institutions; they received various grants and donations (incl. a generous grant from the Department of Homeland Security) to fund the trip. The resulting book is rather idiosyncratic, with the author's views of U.S. history and society shaping the material. The team administered a questionnaire to 2,000 people, half of them Muslim, but the questionnaire is neither appended nor are any results presented quantitatively or even systematically. Because Ahmed's and the team's participant-observation and interview accounts are also presented anecdotally, the methodology and findings cannot really be assessed.

Ahmed sees himself as following in de Tocqueville's steps, seeking to understand and explain the United States. He relies on certain touchstones as he reviews "American Identity" in part 1: the Mayflower, Plymouth Rock, and Jamestown; the Founding Fathers (particularly Jefferson); Scots-Irish culture; and then Darwin and Jesus. Yes, "Darwin versus Jesus" is the title of a subsection (p. 24), and throughout the book Ahmed sees U.S. identity as torn between these two, as he defines them: between competitiveness, or the struggle for survival of the fittest, and true Christianity, or compassion and universal love. He also proposes three basic "identities" defining U.S. society: primordial, pluralist, and predator, all three derived from the white settlers at Plymouth and Jamestown. These ideas form the "anthropological framework" for the volume. Toward the end of the book, it is clear that he believes that true Islam, also stressing compassion and love, can help bring calmness and peace to the United States.

A very positive aspect of this book is the attention paid to African American Muslims, too often omitted from academic or journalistic accounts of Muslim Americans. Ahmed discusses racism at length, and, in part 2, "Islam in America," he places African American Muslims as the first of three groups. The second group is immigrant Muslims, and the third is Muslim converts. In this third section, he mistakenly asserts that the gender ratio of converts is four females to one male (p. 304, footnoting to a single article); he highlights female converts, white and Latino. Actually there are many more men, African American men, converting to Islam in the United States, many of them doing so while in prison. Discussing female converts, Ahmed links "original American identity" to notions of modesty, shame, and honor as in Plymouth and Jamestown (p. 331), seeing this as analogous to the respect with which Islam treats women. (He did not seem to seek out or encounter U.S. Muslim women engaged in the "gender jihad" underway in the United States and elsewhere.) He traces a decline of U.S. morality from early frontier society through the materialism and indulgence of the 1960s and 1980s (Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson) to the consumerism of the 1990s. To Ahmed and his team, Mardi Gras in New Orleans

represented a complete lack of moral boundaries, as did Las Vegas (pp. 335–340). Another of Ahmed's keys to U.S. culture emerges most strongly in this chapter as he repeatedly cites the *Girls Gone Wild* films and videos as symptomatic of a society without shame or honor. He invokes the idea of a clash of civilizations between Islam and the West and suggests that U.S. converts to Islam can counteract the idea of such a clash.

In part 3, the first chapter focuses on Jews and Muslims and the second on Mormons and Muslims. In the first, Ahmed and his students report on the anti-Semitism and Islamophobia they encountered. I am quite sure there is a serious misunderstanding here of statements made by Dawud Walid, an African American leader of the Council on American–Islamic Relations (CAIR) and a prominent interfaith activist in Detroit, Michigan (p. 384). That disservice, coupled with the superficial coverage of the well-known Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services or ACCESS, in nearby Dearborn, reminds us that Dr. Ahmed and his students were doing their fieldwork rapidly, probably without reading everything available on the contexts for their interviews and visits. The chapter on Mormons finds much to admire about this minority faith in the United States and reports some interesting survey results (pp. 420–421), notably that Mormons were the religious group most concerned about immorality and the breakdown of the family. Remarking that both Mormons and Muslims cling to their religious and cultural practices “in the face of a larger encroaching American culture,” Ahmed finds the similarities between Mormons and Muslims “gratifying” (pp. 427–428).

The final chapter, “The Importance of Being America,” likens the founders of the United States and Pakistan, Jefferson and Jinnah, to each other. Ahmed considerably overstates, in my view, the relevance in Pakistan today of Jinnah's views on democracy and women's and minority rights. Ahmed's recommendations to Americans and American Muslims to promote mutual education and better understanding are constructive. Then, as the book ends (pp. 467–468), he writes of the fairness and sense of justice of Muslims with a tribal background, evidenced in writings by Rudyard Kipling, John Masters, and British officers serving in Pakistan's tribal areas before 1947. Mentioning that Jinnah brought back colonial administrators after independence, he asserts a Scots-Irish empathy with South Asian Muslim tribals, stating that “it is this [British colonial] fairness and sense of justice that Muslims find missing in Americans” (p. 468).

Provocative and idiosyncratic, the book certainly conveys the diversity among American Muslims. It also struggles to portray regionalism and diversity in the United States, but in this it is less successful. Thus, Ahmed was nonplussed when a gathering of predominantly young Muslim professionals in Los Angeles derided the idea that Plymouth

Rock and the Mayflower were sacred symbols of the United States. Rather than listening to their dismissal of notions crucial to him, he judged them ignorant of the importance of the Plymouth settlers in U.S. mythology (p. 100). Eager to speak about Islam and supportive of interfaith dialogue, Professor Ahmed has achieved some prominence in eastern U.S. academic and political circles. Readers may well enjoy following his journey into the United States.

**Blood and Culture: Youth, Right-Wing Extremism, and National Belonging in Contemporary Germany.** *Cynthia Miller-Idriss*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009. 233 pp.

**JENNIFER RIGGAN**

Arcadia University

Cynthia Miller-Idriss's *Blood and Culture: Youth, Right-Wing Extremism, and National Belonging in Contemporary Germany* makes a valuable contribution to a growing body of ethnographic research on everyday experiences of nationalism and citizenship. Miller-Idriss has meticulously researched the ways in which students and teachers at three German vocational schools create and made sense of the shifting meanings of the nation and national belonging. As Miller-Idriss points out, while scholars now widely view the nation as an imagined and socially constructed entity, we still know relatively little about precisely how national imaginaries are created and recreated in response to sweeping historical events and political change. *Blood and Culture* enhances our understanding of the ways in which citizens reimagine their nation in response to particular historical moments.

Germany's highly contested national history presents an ideal context in which to explore citizens' reconstitution of national imaginaries in the face of historical and political change. Miller-Idriss shows that understandings of belonging to the German nation, long thought to revolve around notions of German “blood” or ethnicity and a romantic notion of the German *Volk*, have been redefined in complex and multifaceted ways as a result of key historical trends in the last several decades. These trends include younger Germans' fading sense of personal responsibility for World War II and the Holocaust, the unification of Germany, and an increase in immigration. Miller-Idriss examines the beliefs and experiences of her research subjects against the backdrop of the changing narrative of nationalism in Germany, new citizenship policies, and public discourse about these policies.

The book is organized into seven chapters that follow a brief preface in which she lays out her central argument and provides an organizational overview of the book. The introduction and chapter 1 situate *Blood and Culture* in the

literature on national identity and citizenship by making a case for more studies that explore how national imaginaries are produced in specific contexts. Miller-Idriss rightly points out that many studies of nationalism treat nations and national identities as if, once constructed and imagined, they are fixed and unchanging. Using a detailed historiography of the development of German nationalism, she aptly illustrates the ways in which national imaginaries change over time. Building directly on chapter 1, chapter 2 details shifts in citizenship policy and looks at how legal definitions of who belongs to the nation and ensuing reactions to these policies reflect and rework notions of national belonging.

Chapters 3 through 6 draw from Miller-Idriss's ethnographic research to complicate and enhance the arguments made in the first two chapters. These chapters focus on several interrelated issues—the contested notion of national pride, the rise of the right wing, and generational differences in national imaginaries and conceptualizations of citizenship. Chapter 3 explores divergences in different generations' beliefs about the nature and necessity of national pride. The older generation, who came of age in the 1960s and 1970s, rejected the very concept of the nation. For this generation, who are primarily represented by teachers in this study, national pride was an empty concept at best, and a dangerous one at worst. However, for the younger generation, who sought to reclaim the nation, national pride was seen as natural and necessary. Furthermore, while the older generation equated national pride with fascism, the right wing, and past atrocities, the younger generation believed that there was much about Germany to be proud of.

Drawing on this discussion of pride, chapter 4 presents a complex and insightful discussion of the nations' right wing. Right-wing-influenced beliefs were held by quite a few students in the study, including those who did not identify themselves as such. Miller-Idriss explores the continuum of right-wing beliefs and cultural practices, showing that many youth adopted the symbolic trappings of the right-wing scene but engaged little in politics, while others engaged in political activities as well as lifestyles and still others espoused right-wing political values but did not associate themselves with right-wing groups or lifestyles. She also argues that the mainstream taboos against national pride may have inadvertently pushed students who felt national pride toward the right wing, where pride was embraced.

Taken together, chapters 5 and 6 present an interesting commentary on how these two generations seemed to repeatedly misinterpret each other. Chapter 5's exploration of the teaching of civics education in vocational schools highlights rifts between teachers' values and students' beliefs. The older generations' attempts to impose particular meanings on the nation (or, in cases, to strip the nation of meaning), often left the younger generation feeling ex-

cluded, marginalized, and deprived of national identity. Chapter 6 turns to generational ideas about the role of "blood" versus culture in determining national belonging. Many members of the younger generation, regardless of political beliefs, believed that ascribing to German cultural values was more important than having German blood. At one level this culture-based sense of belonging to Germany seems more inclusive than older notions of blood and belonging; however, the definition of German culture was often so narrowly defined that it, too, served to exclude outsiders and impose hegemonic notions of being German. This shift from blood-based to culture-based definitions of citizenship raises broader questions about who has the power and the legitimacy to define what is German and who belongs in Germany. Miller-Idriss suggests that these questions are not yet being addressed in her research setting. Chapters 5 and 6 show that while teachers fixate on concerns about expressions of national pride and their assumptions about the dangers of defining Germanness through notions of blood purity, many of their students are actively constructing a new definition of belonging that revolves around culture. Thus, the definition of what constitutes belonging is contested and consistently reworked in a surprising, unpredictable, yet still often hegemonic manner.

*Blood and Culture* provides insights that will stimulate other ethnographers of nationalism and citizenship to think more specifically about the mechanisms through which national imaginaries are produced in and through everyday realities. The exploration of different generations may provide a useful framework through which to understand how national imaginaries are constituted in many contexts. Additionally, Miller-Idriss's deconstruction of national pride, which is particularly salient to the German context, is also applicable to other cases. The book is a clearly argued and empirically grounded study of national identity and citizenship and makes a compelling contribution to the interdisciplinary literature on nationalism and citizenship studies in general. It leaves us with a picture of the German nation as constantly engaged in the process of not only reimagining itself as a nation but also deconstructing and reconstructing itself as its citizens acknowledge the changing nature of the concept of "belonging" to the nation.

**The Ruptures of American Capital: Women of Color Feminism and the Culture of Immigrant Labor.** *Grace Kyungwon Hong.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005. 190 pp.

**CHERYL RODRIGUEZ**  
University of South Florida

The first decade of 21st-century America, although remarkable and progressive in many ways, was also a decade characterized by devastating social and economic

contradictions: the election of the first black president juxtaposed with the precipitous rise of public performances of racism; the rapid expansion of technological knowledge and the widening of the educational achievement gap between white children and children of color; increased accessibility to property ownership and the betrayal of property owners by banking institutions; and the ongoing need for immigrant labor juxtaposed with the legalization of discriminatory practices against immigrant workers. This was a decade characterized by political and social events that underscored the influence of race, gender, and class on life in the United States. Far from transitioning into a postracial space, America held firmly to an identity grounded in white economic dominance. That dominance is called “American capital,” which has become synonymous with global capital. Grace Kyungwon Hong examines diverse 19th- and 20th-century texts that document the evolution of the global economy and, in particular, the plights of racialized women and men in that economy. According to Hong, the shift in the United States from a national identity to a global identity has also shifted the complexities of racialized, gendered, and class “practices.” While these practices may be understood by their relationship to the state, there remains a need for an intersectional analysis to understand not only how women of color have been affected but also to understand how women of color have resisted “segregation, criminalization, and the privileging of white domestic space” (p. xi).

Hong begins her extraordinary exploration by first paying homage to second-wave feminist knowledge. Hong revisits Cherrie Moraga’s classic preface in the canonical text, *This Bridge Called My Back* (2002). Hong views Moraga’s chapter as a methodology, analysis, or a “women of color feminist practice.” This methodology serves to illuminate the complex juxtaposition of white privilege and embedded racialized practices. As a methodology, women of color feminist practice contests normative notions of identity as well as simplistic and singular identifications. There are two important ideas about women of color practice in Moraga’s chapter that have been very influential to feminist scholars. First, the idea that different racial and gender formations are not produced in isolation but relationally. Second, the idea that the women of color position is not one of victimization but, rather, resistance. Hong views women of color feminism as a “reading practice” that demands an intersectional analysis of privileges, relationships, and identities. The emphasis on intersectionality is not a new or unique concept; however, Hong’s interweaving of divergent literature (essays, short stories, novels) as a means of analyzing systemic and persistent forms of discrimination is quite compelling. For example, in part 1 of the book, Hong explores “developmental narratives” found in the novel, the autobiography and in the historical narrative. She ar-

gues that texts such as Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and Henry James’s *Daisy Miller* characterize the culture of rugged individualism that influenced the growth of today’s consumer society. In the following chapter, Hong contrasts this analysis with an examination of the fragile claims to property ownership by people of color through an analysis of the fiction of two women of color writers, Hisaye Yamamoto and Toni Morrison. In her analysis of these texts, Hong examines the different histories of racialization, dispossession, and gendered labor exploitation experienced by Japanese Americans and African Americans. She concludes that in spite of their marginalization and oppression, each of these groups has the capacity to define and create community.

In her last chapter, Hong considers “racialized immigrant women’s specific relationship to late twentieth-century global capital” (p. 108). Through analyses of the concept of “pastiche” in Jessica Hagedorn’s *Dogeaters* (2002) and the “mundane fantastic” in Helena Maria Viramontes’s *The Moths* (1995), Hong explores the complexity of consumer culture. Hong uses the aesthetic concept of pastiche to examine the consumerist desires stimulated by neo-colonial capital and the juxtapositions that emerge from colonial and commercial encounters. Using the example of Imelda Marcos as the consummate consumer, Hong argues consumer desires can never be satisfied. The “mundane fantastic” refers to the contradictions of immigrant labor that emerge from transnational capital. This contradictory pairing of two opposite concepts (mundane fantastic) is the only way to make sense of “global capital’s contradictions, excesses, and ruptures” (p. 109).

The *Ruptures of American Capital* forwards a unique and complex analysis of consumer culture that disrupts rather than sustains the narrative of global capital. Throughout the book, Hong uses literary analysis to offer a very original interpretation of today’s political economy and its historical influences. Hong demonstrates the multiple contradictions of capital and the ways in which women of color feminism provides an alternative epistemology to “contest capital’s global phase” (p. xix). The contradictions and juxtapositions will endure, but Hong shows us that there is more than one narrow framework for understanding them. In fact, there are ongoing sites of struggle, contestation, and knowledge production by racialized and marginalized women. As we move into the second decade of the 21st century, there is much to be learned from women-of-color feminism and immigrant women’s culture.

## References cited

- Hagedorn, Jessica  
2002 *Dogeaters*. New York: Theatre Communications Group.
- Moraga, Cherrie, and Gloria Anzaldúa  
2002 *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Berkeley, CA: Third Woman Press.

Viramontes, Helena Maria

1995 *The Moths and Other Stories*. Houston: Arte Publico.

**A Matter of Life and Death: Hunting in Contemporary Vermont.** Marc Boglioli. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009. xiv + 156 pp., notes, references, index.

**RANE WILLERSLEV**

Aarhus University

**BJØRN A. BOJESEN**

Aarhus University

“How can you go out and shoot Bambi?” a Pittsford woman rhetorically asks Marc Boglioli, author of *A Matter of Life and Death: Hunting in Contemporary Vermont*. His answer follows like a bullet: “Simple, it’s dinner” (p. 32).

Ever since Thomas More equated hunting with butchery in *Utopia* (1997), Western hunters have faced this paradox: How can our hunger possibly justify the killing of fellow animate beings? The practical attitude—to go on hunting without asking too many philosophical questions—has become harder to sustain in the United States, Boglioli argues. Demographics are marked by urbanization and an ever increasing number of people are living city lives with urban senses and sensibilities. With shopping malls everywhere in the country, hunting has lost its subsistence relevance and is frequently discarded as an anachronism or reduced to an outlet for male aggression. In short, people whose chief experiences of wild animals come from television, are shouting “murderers!” at rural hunting folks.

In his latest book, Boglioli sets out to prove the urbanites wrong. Based on 18 months of fieldwork in Addison County, Vermont, the book puts human faces on the men and women so often deemed heartless killers by America’s urban elites. The crux of Boglioli’s argument is that it is indeed possible for White rural hunters to consume and respect animals at one and the same time. His informants—28 male and 22 female hunters—all express a sincere affection and respect for the animals they kill. (Although more so for edible creatures like deer and grouse than for competing predators like coyotes.) The killing is often accompanied by a feeling of sorrow for having taken the life of a beautiful being. This should not be confused with guilt. According to the hunters’ view, they have done nothing wrong: Nature is a resource, and it is humanity’s role or even obligation to actively engage with it (as opposed to being a mere observer). It is the hunter’s lot to kill—and eat—animals; otherwise, the herds will outgrow their habitat and the animals themselves will suffer. While this self-image of hunters as “stewards of nature” may in fact be a recent invention, shaped by environmentalist pressures, the utilitarian aspects of the

hunt are deeply entrenched in the American tradition of self-reliance. Hunters who refrain from eating their prey are sure to provoke anger.

The hunt, Boglioli argues, is a complex process that cannot be reduced to the moment the trigger is pulled and some animal collapses on the ground. Hunting includes everything from the skills of scouting, tracking, and chasing prey to the celebration of companionship among the hunters. As José Ortega y Gasset famously said in his *Meditations on Hunting* (1985): “One kills in order to have hunted.” Many hunters have reportedly been hunting for years without ever killing a deer.

Another issue in Boglioli’s book is the customary division between the “noble savage” and the “ignoble Westerner.” While hardly anyone raises an eyebrow at, say, a Native American chasing a deer, Euro-American hunters seem to be a legitimate target for critique from animal activists and the American public in general. “[The] division of ideas from actions helps create and perpetuate artificial boundaries between ‘Western’ and ‘Indigenous’ people by denying them the common ground of common practices” (p. 129).

Like the Vermont hunters, many so-called indigenous hunting peoples also consider themselves to be Nature’s guardians. What sets the two apart, though, is their spiritual attitude to animals. Whereas animist cultures regard the natural environment as imbued with spirits, none of Boglioli’s informants claim the animals they kill to be spiritualized beings. Still, several white hunters are reported to thank their prey for having offered their lives to them. One hunter even carried the ashes of his dead father around in a necklace pouch. Whenever he killed a deer, he would offer a prayer of thanks, and then sprinkle some of the ashes on the gut pile left behind. Boglioli, however, does not touch on the animism question in any deeper way. Having argued for a need to diminish the Western–Indigenous boundary, it would also have been interesting had he made his Vermonters subject to models of analysis about animal personhood, conventionally applied to indigenous hunters, like the aboriginal peoples of Siberia (Willerslev 2007) or the Ojibwa hunters described by Tim Ingold (2000).

The thrill of the chase, the need to get away from the flatness of everyday life, and feelings of companionship with other hunters may at the end of the day explain why people in the 21st century still go hunting, and why they find it meaningful.

Surely, only 9 percent of American hunters are women. The typical hunter, Boglioli tells us, is male, middle-aged, working-class, white, and his father was a hunter, too. Vermont is no exception. Small boys learn to hunt because they are expected to carry on the tradition, while girls are not raised that way. Yet this pattern is changing: an increasing number of women have started hunting, often inspired by a male partner’s enthusiasm for the activity. Boglioli finds

no remarkable differences in the attitudes of female hunters toward the game and animals. However, women hunters have a harder time being accepted, and the choice to act out the hunting dream is still something of a political manifestation for many women.

Part of the import of Boglioli's research is its ethnographic novelty. Albeit a theme with a certain recurrence among historians and sociologists, Boglioli is only able to list one ethnographic treatise on the subject of Euro-American hunters: Stuart Mark's *Southern Hunting in Black and White* (1991). In addition, Boglioli has written a remarkable book that is guaranteed to give the reader—whether (s)he belongs to the pro- or antihunting moiety—some food for thought. At 156 pages, however, this highly interesting read occasionally feels too short, like an appetizer one enjoys while waiting for the venison.

### References cited

- Ingold, Tim  
2000 *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. London: Routledge.
- Mark, Stuart  
1991 *Southern Hunting in Black and White*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- More, Thomas  
1997[1516] *Utopia*. Ware, UK: Wordsworth Editions.
- Ortega y Gasset, José  
1985 *Meditations on Hunting*. New York: Scribner.
- Willerslev, Rane  
2007 *Soul Hunter: Hunting, Animism and Personhood among the Siberian Yukaghirs*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

**One People, One Blood: Ethiopians-Israelis and the Return to Judaism.** *Don Seeman*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009. 240 pp.

### TAMAR RAPOPORT

Hebrew University, Jerusalem

The Israeli government recently decided to allow 8,000 “Ethiopian immigrants” of the *Feres Mura* (henceforth, FM) to migrate to Israel over the next four years. The FM stands at the heart of Seeman's most praiseworthy, scholarly, and sophisticated book. What differentiates the FM from other “Ethiopian Jews” is that they are the descendents of Jewish families who converted to Christianity a long while ago. In recent times, however, they are seeking to return to Judaism and Zion, to be recognized in Israel as homecomers, and to be incorporated within the Jewish national collective. The small FM group (more than 20,000 immigrants have come to Israel since the early 1990s) is a millstone around the neck of Jewish-Israeli collective identity. They are viewed and treated with suspicion and ambivalence, while the Jewish collective remains constantly preoccupied

with the question of “Who is a Jew?,” and, particularly, “Who is an Ethiopian Jew?” Seeman's book, however, ushers the reader into analytical territory that goes far beyond the dilemmas of Jewish identity and the Jewish state.

The book thoroughly discusses the dilemmas implicated in issues of genealogy and kinship, homecoming and belonging, religious conversion and authenticity, collective boundaries and nationalism, primordial and collective identities, as well as religious agency and constraints. While reading Seeman's learned and polished ethnography, I was absorbed in the distinctive dilemmas and lifeworlds of the FM, the multiple constraints they confront, and their constant struggle to be recognized as Jewish.

Aiming to further develop the “anthropology of religion,” the book comprises an introduction and seven chapters, each of which intertwines theoretical analysis with empirical material. The multisited, situated ethnography, spread over a decade, is an exemplar of a comprehensive and fascinating study. I was struck by Seeman's close rapport with his informants and his empathy toward the FM community. My nonexhaustive review is therefore unable to do justice to the breadth, depth, and richness of the book.

The book offers an in-depth historical discussion of the intricate process and meaning of the Ethiopian Jews' conversion to Christianity about 150 years ago, which was carried out by European missionaries who were working passionately to evangelize them. The historical analysis also elucidates the scientific-ideological discourse at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries regarding the authenticity of kinship and belonging of the FM. It thereby demonstrates how race is actually constructed. In this context, Seeman's discussion of the evaluation of the authenticity of conversion and belonging on the basis of visible bodily practices and characteristics is captivating.

However, the discourse of the FM's Jewish-religious authenticity has not been restricted to the “visible body”; it also deals with their “purity of the heart.” Seeman's discussion of the dilemmas to do with this intricate moral “measurement,” which refers to the mysterious puzzle of the intentionality of religious conversion, is eye-opening. The suspicion regarding the FM's purity of body and heart is enhanced by distrust concerning the authenticity of their motivation to convert and immigrate to Israel. However, as Seeman shows, motifs should be studied as processes, and not in an unequivocal and dichotomous manner.

The discussion of the “Blood Affair” (of 1996)—a constitutive event that made the Ethiopians visible in the Israeli social and political arena—is another demonstration of Seeman's insightful analysis. This affair centered on the discovery that the blood donated by Ethiopian immigrants in Israel was being secretly poured away by the blood bank that formally justified it in terms of fighting HIV. The revelation that the entire group was considered polluted, the concealment, and the racialization sparked fury among

the Ethiopians and led to violent demonstrations that expressed their difficulties and frustration. This affair embodies the entire ensemble of issues at the nexus between nationalism, politics, and bureaucracy and is but a single instance of the broader discrimination of Ethiopians in Israel.

In the case of the Blood Affair, in addition to the tagging of the black body through its external visibility, the internal propriety and purity of the body was also tagged, casting aspersions on the Ethiopian individual and collective body and soul. Seeman mainly dwells on the otherness of the FM's body in their native land, and less in their chosen land. However, the primary identification of Ethiopians by Israelis is based on their skin color, which constructs their otherness and prevents them from "passing" as genuine Jews. Visibility as others, therefore, has profound implications (bureaucratic, political, media-related, and so on) for the racialization of the Ethiopians, and their relocation process.

The "immigrant body" embodies and creates the meanings of the migration process both in the new society and among the immigrants' themselves (Rapoport and Lomsky-Feder 2010). Only in Israel the black body signifies for the Ethiopians their racial and Jewish otherness; only there do they "discover" their blackness, which serves to create internal distinctions among themselves, and between them and other groups in the Israeli "visibility field."

In her article, "On the Margins of Visibility: Ethiopian Immigrants in Israel," Lisa Anteby-Yemini (2010) asks whether they will one day be able to be "invisible" in Israel. A partial answer was recently given to me by a graduate "Ethiopian student" of mine, who told me that only in the United States she feels at home, and that she wished to migrate there. Asking her why, she replied: "Over there I look like everybody else, I don't stand apart as an other, it's much nicer and easier. I came to Israel as an enthusiastic Zionist, I thought I'd come home, they promised that here we'd be like everybody else—but I was let down as the Israelis doubt the authenticity of my Jewish blood and heart." The official demand that they go through a halakhically stringent Jewish conversion is aimed at dispelling such doubts. Seeman discusses how in the politically loaded conversion process, the FM have to cope with unfamiliar and contradictory cultural and religious expectations directed to them by Israeli and Jewish actors (in Ethiopia) who hold different interests and interpretations of Judaism, religiosity, and conversion. To convince those actors of their Jewishness, members of the FM maneuver between the expectations of them and their simultaneous acceptance and rejection.

A complementary to Seeman's "anthropology of religion" approach to conversion is put forward by Michal Kravel (2009) based on the "anthropology of the state" perspective. Kravel analyses how the shared performance of the state and the converts, in which both sides are pre-

tending, winking knowingly at one another serves both the Israeli national project and the converts. At these border zones, the distinctions between truth and lie, exposure and concealment, pretense and autonomy, and change and passing are blurred. I suggest that a conjunction between Kravel's and Seeman's approaches that will draw simultaneous attention to both its performative and bureaucratic characteristics could invigorate the study of conversion, both theoretically and empirically.

I feel privileged to review this book; I gained much from returning over and over again to the wide-ranging, excellent study, which goes to the heart of the various subjects that it deals with. It is a critical and political book that is wary of political intolerance and tongue-lashing, a book that was written from the heart (and mind) and that approaches the FM with an open heart.

I highly recommend the book to colleagues and graduate students who are interested in the anthropology of religion and religion conversion, immigration and belonging, the politics and bureaucracy of racialization, Jewishness, Jewish identity and Israeliness, as well as exemplary ethnographic research and writing.

## References cited

- Anteby-Yemini, Lisa  
2010 On the Margins of Visibility: Ethiopian Immigrants in Israel. *In* *Visibility and Migration*. Edna Lomsky-Feder and Tamar Rapoport, eds. Pp. 43–68. Jerusalem: Van Leer (Hebrew).
- Kravel Tovi, Michal  
2009 The Exchange of Identities: Between the State and the Subject in the State-Run Conversion Project in Contemporary Israel. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, Hebrew University (Hebrew).
- Rapoport, Tamar, and Lomsky-Feder, Edna  
2010 The Adjustments of the "Immigrating Body" on its Way from Russia to Israel. *In* *Visibility and Migration*. Edna Lomsky-Feder and Tamar Rapoport, eds. Pp. 69–96. Jerusalem: Van Leer (Hebrew).

**Race and Sex in Latin America.** Peter Wade. London: Pluto Press, 2009. 310 pp.

## ANNE S. MACPHERSON

The College at Brockport, SUNY

In this pioneering monograph, Peter Wade addresses a core set of issues in Latin American scholarship by synthesizing significant elements of a now large and multidisciplinary field, and by incorporating insights from his research in Colombia and his reading of theoretical texts. It will be useful to Latin Americanist scholars and graduate students in anthropology, history, sociology, gender and cultural studies, and literature and will certainly spark responses from scholars eager to engage Wade's arguments. It could also

be used, cautiously, with senior undergraduates who have some background in the study of Latin America.

The book is clearly organized into seven chapters. The first two are primarily theoretical, laying out Wade's definitions of race and sex and his complex take on their connections, which draws on social and psychoanalytic theories. The next two are primarily historical, one on the colonial period, the other on the national period to about the mid-20th century. The final pair of chapters discusses a variety of issues in the contemporary period, including interracial marriage, sex tourism, race and sex in social movements, and Latino/as in the United States. The conclusion nicely summarizes each chapter's main arguments and reveals more of Wade's politics and biography, which readers not familiar with his corpus of work might find useful to read first. Indeed, throughout the book the conclusions of sections and chapters achieve a clarity that is sometimes lacking in the detailed summaries and analyses of particular authors, some of whom Wade turns out to fundamentally disagree with.

Wade does an excellent job of explaining the origins and workings of the colonial honor system, of showing how it endured in an altered form in the postindependence period, and of tracing its partial survival in modern social movements. He is also particularly strong on analyzing the ambivalent character of ideologies and practices of *mestizaje* as containing both racially liberatory and racist elements. This analysis feeds into his sobering critique of more recent versions of official nationalism that purport to be embracing difference while ending hierarchy, and of the gender politics of black and indigenous rights movements. Wade is well-versed in a pan-Latin American literature, although his deeper knowledge of scholarship on some countries, like Brazil and obviously Colombia, is evident. Likewise, while cogently summarizing similarities and differences in how black and indigenous people have been constructed in processes of defining and articulating race and sex in Latin America, Wade for some stretches dwells more on issues of blackness and black sexuality. In the chapter on the colonial period, for example, rural indigenous communities and their racialized-sexualized connections to the hacienda and mining economies are not discussed. Wade does consistently integrate discussion of race and homosexuality into his analysis.

Any book of this nature—ambitious, wide-ranging, synthetic, and theoretically sophisticated—is going to provoke critical engagement. I offer the following three sets of points to the important dialogue Wade has furthered with this book and would be interested to see how he might address them in a second edition.

While Wade rejects a biological-cultural distinction between sex and gender and views both as cultural and histor-

ical constructs, he does want to maintain some distinction between the two concepts and argues that “it is not quite the same to write a book about how race relates to gender as it is to write about race relates to sexuality” (pp. 10–11). Yet what he ultimately thinks *gender* means—as distinct from its second-wave feminist coinage to distinguish it from biological sex—is unclear, even as he uses the word throughout the book, sometimes as “*sex/gender*.” A more developed discussion of sex–sexuality and gender as two related sets of cultural constructs would be welcome. His definition in the first chapter of *race*—an equally tricky concept—is far more satisfying.

Wade argues cogently that some versions of psychoanalytic theory, particularly on the formation of self in social contexts of extreme hierarchy, can help to explain the ambivalent dynamics of fear of and desire for “the other” in Latin American history and society. Still, elite white-Creole fear of the indigenous, black, and mixed majority did not only stem from childhood identity-formation but also from actual subaltern resistance. Thus, the postindependence elite's ambivalence toward the new nations' peoples could be valuably framed in terms of the Andean Revolt and Haitian Revolution of the late 1700s and of the vital role played in securing independence by nonwhite, nonelite women and especially male soldiers. That ambivalence, which sometimes found form in official *mestizaje*, was not just an updated “scientific” version of the colonial honor code, but also a reaction to a period of profound upheaval in Latin American society, one that deserves mention in a book of this scope. Wade's analysis of Evo Morales's penchant for appearing with white Bolivian beauty queens is fascinating, but the indigenous military leader Bartolina Sisa—raped, executed, and quartered by terrified Spaniards in 1782—is also part of his and Aymara women's political iconography, and of the tortured history of *mestizaje* in the Andes.

The iconography of *Race and Sex in Latin America* comprises four images: the cover photo of a white male tourist photographing a possibly *mulata* female carnival participant (both scantily clad), two 16th-century engravings symbolizing the conquest in clothed white male/naked indigenous female terms, and one 18th-century *casta* painting of a black wife attacking her Spanish husband. In his concluding chapter Wade argues that suspicions such as that “writing about race and sex from my particular perspective [i.e., a white, male, British, middle-class perspective] . . . inevitably tends to reproduce a (neo-)colonial objectification of racialised, sexualised objects of knowledge—for example black and indigenous women” (p. 248) are unfounded. The rich and thought-provoking text of this important book absolutely supports that argument, but the very quality of the text demands a more varied and less clichéd set of images.