

Rastafarianism movement. By linking musical parameters to the myth of flight, McDaniel interprets the rhythms of the Big Drum ritual as host to mental travel that “inspires the connaissance, the fascination with homeland, the revival of ancestral connectedness” (p. 124). More than just evoking a sense of merging with a distant homeland through ritual performance, McDaniel notes that the Big Drum ritual offers a medium through which lost (personal) histories can be reclaimed. One’s ancestral identity can be uncovered through becoming aware of the particular rhythms to which one is drawn: “Even today old heads declare that, if the knowledge of origin is lost, one may redeem it through a subjective attraction to a national rhythm” (p. 71).

McDaniel discusses the concept of nation in song in chapter 1 by looking at Cromanti, Igbo, Manding, Kongo, and Dahomey texts, melodies, and rhythms. She follows the ritual order by identifying the diverse West African strands of which the Big Drum ritual is comprised. She then explores and assesses the extent to which the ritual can be read as a historical text. Historical incidents absent from other kinds of narratives may be recorded in song texts; these texts also provide a tool for remembering family and lineage connections. Obscure words are seen as containing elements of ancestor veneration through which they convey “fragmented spiritual messages” that are nevertheless “charged with possibilities of alternative and conflicting interpretations” (p. 69).

Divergent notions of history could have been explored more fully to highlight the problems associated with projects aimed at reassembling fragmented histories. McDaniel’s preoccupation is with discovering what has been preserved, and she employs diverse approaches to uncovering history. Yet music history can also convey a lot about the myths through which people represent their musical culture; such historical accounts can reveal the ways in which people are involved in negotiating current social realities. The Big Drum ritual has undergone changes that are not examined. For example, McDaniel hypothesizes that the 1920s saw the end of Big Drum composition (p. 152) and briefly notes that “in contemporary Carriacou there is secrecy surrounding the nation drum rhythms that evolved” (p. 86). She attributes the reticence of drummers to talk about their practice in part to their “awareness that the nation rhythms are in disarray” (p. 86). I

would have liked more information on the relation between past and present elements of the ritual and on the drummers’ perceptions of musical changes. Throughout the study, in fact, I wanted to read more about how the “culture bearers” who contributed to McDaniel’s project talk about the Big Drum ritual and how they think about history.

One of the culture bearers, Lucian Duncan, is presented as a “chief source of song material” (p. xi). Her contributions become apparent in chapter 4, which focuses on musical analysis and is very informative with regard to practitioners’ ideas about their ritual practice. In particular, it would be interesting to know to what extent the culture bearers agree with McDaniel’s interpretations. Making available the interview material collected from the “old heads” in a changing Caribbean musical climate is itself a significant project. McDaniel also locates the Carriacouan Big Drum ritual in a wider Caribbean sphere by following the migration of Carriacouan workers to other centers. In doing so, she looks at calypso and parang in Trinidad. This exploration is useful in relation to explaining some of the musical interactions that feature in the Carriacouan repertoire, but the complexities of contested histories and of interethnic interaction in the Trinidadian context are missed.

McDaniel provides extensive and excellent transcriptions of song texts, melodies, and rhythms. Overall, she contributes significantly to understanding the potential of music and dance to effect personal transformation, to knowledge about the Big Drum ritual of Carriacou, and to scholarship on diasporic performance, practice, and experience.

**Plundered Kitchens, Empty Wombs: Threatened Reproduction and Identity in the Cameroon Grassfields.** *Pamela Feldman-Savelsberg*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999. ix + 257 pp., illustrations, photographs, notes, glossary, references, index.

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Hear, Nature, hear! Dear goddess, hear!  
Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend to  
make this creature fruitful!  
*King Lear* (Act I, scene iv: 300–301)

Much as King Lear’s curse of infertility for his daughter is related to disorder in the social

world, concerns with reproductive health and cultural identity in the Bangangté Kingdom of western Cameroon reflect a preoccupation with similar disturbances. The book's title, *Plundered Kitchens, Empty Wombs*, refers both to thefts of food from women's kitchens and to women's fears of "stopped up fertility" (p. 24) and stolen pregnancies, also associated with a Bangangté king whose ill health coincides with political and economic decline experienced by his subjects. Paradoxically, Bangangté women's perceptions of empty wombs and infertility are belied by the number of children they actually bear.

In order to understand this paradox, Feldman-Savelsberg deftly interweaves several anthropological approaches—medical, demographic, and historical—with a detailed symbolic analysis of procreation, cooking, and gender relations. She sets forth the book's main argument in her introduction. Women's "rhetoric of misfortune" (p. 3) and their culturally specific symbolic representations of procreation and food are part of a wider Bangangté cosmology that links women's human reproduction with men's social reproduction. Meanings attributed to infertility by local women must be considered in order to unravel the connections between social structure, reproductive health, and demographic outcomes.

In chapter 1, the author gives a concrete example of social structural factors that shaped one royal wife's experience of infertility. The special circumstances of this woman, who grew up in urban Douala, provide a backdrop for discussing ideas about social status, modernity, tradition, and witchcraft. Feldman-Savelsberg considers these ideas in chapter 2, examining Bangangté social organization and identity from the perspective of kin groups, households, the community, and the kingdom. For rural Bangangté women, children and food are critical elements in drawing people from different social arenas together. Yet migratory pressures, Western education, and increasing participation in a global economy have led to a competing complex of identities that undermine women's contributions to sociality.

The analysis shifts in chapter 3 from these broader concerns to the specifics of procreation, cooking, and a gendered reciprocity. This reciprocity is expressed in a particular gendered division of labor and space that is viewed as contributing to healthy fertility. A

breakdown in this reciprocity may lead to misfortune, such as infertility and illness, which Feldman-Savelsberg discusses in chapter 4. She explains how beliefs about socially acceptable behavior—particularly the tranquility associated with "being of one heart" (p. 48)—support the idea that emotional states of anger and jealousy impinge on reproductive processes at both personal and social levels. The presence of these ubiquitous antisocial emotions (often conceptualized as witchcraft) reinforce women's belief that witchcraft and infertility have increased in recent years, coinciding with their perceptions of increasing social and political disorder.

Yet as Feldman-Savelsberg makes clear, such disorder is not new to western Cameroon, where residents have experienced precolonial warfare, colonial occupation, and civil war. The heterogeneous colonial history of this region, first under German and then under French rule, is reflected in the history of health care, discussed in chapter 5. The political, economic, and social disruptions introduced during colonial rule—particularly forced plantation labor, migration, and new diseases—contributed to a colonial concern with an alleged population decline (p. 147). Mission hospitals subsequently introduced biomedical maternal health programs. Thus the threatening sense of social changes experienced by Bangangté women is not new but rather is seen by these women as having escalated as members of the Bangangté Kingdom tried to find a place in the centralized state of Cameroon. In chapter 6, Feldman-Savelsberg considers rural women's expressions of their fragile fertility, economic vulnerability, and need to find a means of renewing themselves in light of these changes. She concludes with the observation that their demographic and health concerns must be considered as part of a specific social and political context that includes a plundering political elite and an underpopulated royal compound where a dearth of fertile women dependents is related to a loss of political power.

Feldman-Savelsberg presents a complex picture of reproductive health and social and political change in one African society from the perspective of rural women. Her nuanced analysis of procreation and food makes an important contribution to the study of fertility and gender relations in contemporary Cameroon. She also contributes to recent discussions of

witchcraft and modernity in Africa. While it might seem greedy to ask for more details among these riches, the material on illness and cure sometimes seems a bit thin. An inclusion of relevant West African literature might, for example, have benefitted the analysis of *trompes bouchés* (plugged tubes). Also, more might have been made of metaphors of curing. Similarly, while the author mentions Carol Delaney's hypothesis (*The Seed and the Soil*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) of the connection between a monogenetic explanation of conception and gender relations, the implications of the Bangangté belief "that women and men contribute equally to the substance that makes a new human being" (p. 85) are not fully examined. Nonetheless, *Plundered Kitchens, Empty Wombs* links the voices of rural women, colonial officials, and state politicians in an artfully constructed and engaging text that represents an exemplary model for future studies in medical and demographic anthropology.

**Shifting Languages: Interaction and Identity in Javanese Indonesia.** J. Joseph Errington. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. viii + 216 pp., figures, maps, tables, notes, bibliography, index.

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With a population of more than 200 million, Indonesia is the home of hundreds of minority languages. Most are being replaced by Indonesian, a language first introduced by Dutch colonial rulers and since used and promulgated by the state and its institutions. Among the groups affected by the increasing prevalence of Indonesian are the Javanese, an ethnic group of 60 million plus that dominates Central and East Java. Errington focuses his attention on this group. With close analytic detail, he describes the shifting contact between Indonesian and Javanese languages. He shifts his focus back and forth between how one language replaces another over the long term (language shift) to how multilingual speakers juxtapose items in an immediate interactional process (code switching). *Shifting Languages* is a rich, dense, and illuminating analysis of conversational and other discourse practices that has implications for linguistics as well as for scholars of ethnicity and nationalism.

Errington develops his analysis of the Javanese/Indonesian relationship in three main sections. In chapters 2 and 3, he examines language-related modes of territoriality and village-city relations. Errington contrasts the speech styles of two villages and their respective relationships to language usage in Surakarta (Solo), a city perceived by the Javanese as an exemplary center of Javanese language usage. Using extracts from conversations, he describes the various speech styles for which Javanese is well known as well as "the differing significances they take on in different communities and interactional contexts" (p. 35). For example, he examines how group styles of personal pronouns define and convey notions of power and solidarity. At the same time, he considers the broader issues of language and ideology espoused within the exemplary center of Surakarta and how the city influences and changes the language of the smaller nonexemplary communities. Chapter 4 is a bridge to the closer linguistic analyses in chapters 5–7 and 8–10. In this chapter, Errington evaluates Indonesian as a national language, both linguistically and sociohistorically. Drawing on the work of Ernest Gellner, he discusses Indonesian's potential role as a "resource for modernist, nationalist ideology" (p. 51) and its burgeoning influence on the speech of exemplary centers and peripheral communities.

In the second major section, chapters 5–7, Errington focuses on narrow linguistic exchanges in various discourses and demonstrates how Javanese and Indonesian shape, reshape, and modify one another. As discursive examples, he focuses on authoritative public speech and thought in texts of official Indonesian and formal Javanese, such as a wedding address and a village meeting. Based on his analysis of these textual types, Errington suggests Javanese is not necessarily disappearing but rather evolving into a new version that enhances traditional contexts "with an aura of exemplary dignity" (p. 65). In chapter 6, he moves his attention to personal pronoun and kinship usage, claiming that Javanese kinship terms have been incorporated in Indonesian to reflect shifts in status and class. On the other hand, in Indonesian the full range of pronouns is ignored, thereby conveying a "flatness" (p. 83) in the national language. Continuing in chapter 7, Errington explores syncretic language use by examining discourse particles