

Exile to Paradise: Savagery and Civilization in Paris and the South Pacific, 1790–1900. Alice Bullard. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000. 290 pp., appendix, notes, illustrations, bibliography, index.

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Alice Bullard has written an ambitious and well-researched treatise on the Third French Republic's attempts to "civilize" the rebellious and "savage" Parisian Communards. Portrayed as the essential anticivilized savages by the government of Adolph Theiers, the socialist Communards who survived the cleansing of Paris by the French military in the bloody weeks of March–May of 1871 were deported to New Caledonia. There the deportees encountered the indigenous Kanak "savages," the desolation of exile under the repressive colonial administration, and the despondency and nostalgia that characterized their transformation from continental Europeans to modern individualists. Central in this historical review is a discussion of the conservative government's strategic use of the term *savages* to characterize both the Communards, who sought to defile civilization, and the New Caledonian Kanaks, who had never experienced it. Both sets of "savages" suffered from moral ineptitude that could be rectified by an intense encounter with nature, in the case of the Communards, and an intense encounter with Europeans, in the case of the Kanaks.

Bullard's grasp of political theory, philosophy, history, and contemporary discourse in postcolonial textual analysis is impressive. She weaves into her text the perspectives of Michele Foucault on power and knowledge, descriptions of colonialism reminiscent of Frantz Fanon (whom she mentions in passing), the idealism of Norbert Elias, and Theodor Adorno's model of "negative dialectics." Bullard entwines the narratives of the deported Communards with the historical record and with fictionalized accounts of exile and repatriation, occasionally citing the works of Victor Hugo. She depends perhaps too much on interpretation of fictionalized accounts written by deportees and

insufficiently on historical ethnographic accounts, but I admit my bias here as an anthropologist. Focusing as she does on the Communards, her analysis of the colonization of New Caledonia does not capture the complexity of the event, and she omits significant discussion of the variety of colonial and imperial agents (free settlers, convicts, missionaries, and administrators) who were involved in France's appropriation of the islands. At times, the detail presented becomes burdensome and its relevance to the issue at hand questionable. One example is the chapter that deals in more detail than necessary with Charles Renouvier's discussion of desire, the development of consciousness, and the harmony of moral being.

Bullard's initial chapter is a very thorough discussion of the philosophical bantering in the late-19th-century French intelligentsia about the differences between civilized "man" and variously defined savages (including non-European peoples, peasants, the lower classes, Eastern Europeans, or, in short, any non-upper-class Parisian). What Bullard does not do sufficiently in this context is explore the discursive and indexical meanings of the dialectic between savagery, on the one hand, and civilization, on the other. Rather, she attributes to those administering the Third French Republic an awareness of differences between the savagery of Communards and that of the Kanaks. A direct discussion revealing the hegemonic significance of the Third Republic's appropriation of the "civilized"–"savage" duality to legitimate their control may have been more illuminating than Bullard's review of the philosophical discourse on civilized "man" in 19th-century France. I had hoped for a discussion of the idiom of development and progress as a 20th-century trope similar to Arturo Escobar's (*Encountering Development*, Princeton University Press, 1995). Although Bullard dances around this issue, she does not address issues of power, hegemony, and knowledge as directly or as cogently as she could have.

The chapter entitled "Fatal Nostalgia" epitomizes the entire text. *Nostalgia* refers to the psychosomatic illnesses suffered by deportees in New Caledonia. At times, the illness was fatal. The illness,

similar to that occasionally suffered by American pioneers, was a consequence of people with centuries of local and community-based identities having been suddenly marginalized from community and nation, confined to limited quarters or placed in alien surroundings, and denied the rewards of fruitful labor. On the one hand, Bullard provides a brilliant discussion of the 19th-century malady nostalgia, but on the other hand, she depends more on rather tedious interpretations of text than on allowing the deportees their own voice by citing directly from their written memoirs and correspondences. Bullard seeks to illustrate the difficulties of exile but verges on the preciously melodramatic. For example, after citing a passage from Louis Barron's narrative on exile, she assaults the reader with: "The movement from the objectified sensory organs ('the body,' 'the eyes,' 'the ears') in this passage, to the universal ('one has no light'), and finally, after a direct inclusion of the reader's experience ('your feverish brain keeps you awake,' 'mosquitoes . . . prevent your sleep'), to a flight out across a dark and ominous plain with the flying rodents of the island—first breaks the distance between writer and reader, then carries the reader out into the forlorn and forsaken nighttime of exile" (p. 196). These sorts of diversions are, unfortunately, too common in an otherwise deeply researched and erudite discussion of displacement and colonization in the South Pacific.

A Time for Tea: Women, Labor, and Post/Colonial Politics on an Indian Plantation. Piya Chatterjee. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001. ix + 417 pp., illustrations, appendix, glossary, notes, bibliography, index.

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It is commonplace to argue that the anthropology and history of commodities can no longer be written as separable narratives of postcolonial production and metropolitan consumption. This is nonetheless easier said than done. Piya Chatterjee has painstakingly labored on the cultural politics of tea beyond this conundrum. Chatterjee's layered

account of empire, value, taste, and power shows how a range of nonlocal forces mediate women's labors in the tea plantations of North Bengal, India. The result is a tour de force of intimate reflection on the embodied histories and gendered fetishisms at work on a postcolonial plantation, along with a deep attention to epistemological and political questions of feminist ethnography. *A Time for Tea* holds lessons for a remarkable array of audiences, not only in its theoretically astute, well-researched argument but also in a passionate commitment to the poetics and politics of writing in solidarity with subaltern voices without presuming to speak them. Moreover, Chatterjee engages the bodily practices and silences that escape the written word, by writing of embodied sentiments that persist despite the romanticized, gendered icons of tea pickers and genteel connoisseurs.

A Time for Tea reads in two movements. In chapters 2–4, the author charts a cultural history of tea and empire in the making of the postcolonial tea plantation. In chapters 5–9, the author enters the ethnographic present in and around Sarah's Hope Tea Estate. These cultural-historic and ethnographic moments are intertwined through the genealogies that make the planter's *hukum*, or rule, through the circulation of feminized fetishisms of the commodity and through the raced and gendered bodily practice in daily acts of picking tea.

Chatterjee does not just argue for interrelations, she attempts to enact spaces of mediation by puncturing her social science with dramatic interludes. This narrative technique exposes the limits of the written word, its construction and reliance on divergent sources. The characters in these dramatic vignettes speak through contemporary academic texts as fluently as through literature, archival documents, or folk songs in a polyphony that reminds those accustomed to a more prosaic social science of multiple meanings that willy-nilly interrupt or evade acts of narration. Chatterjee's ethico-political impulse here is clear: She seeks to decolonize her disciplinary practice without claiming a place outside privilege, by writing through

poetics that honor the tensions of ethnography in solidarity with the "grief" of subaltern women. Through this methodological commitment, Chatterjee makes her central argument: that the swirl of gendered fetishisms, embodied work practices, patriarchal patronage networks, and techniques of work discipline through the planters' *hukum* constitutes "the terms of postcolonial feudalism" (p. 6). The rest of the book demonstrates the varied ways in which these terms are constructed, remembered, enacted, violently enforced, creatively shirked, and, perhaps, contested.

Chatterjee begins by unraveling the imperial geography of tea, linking circuits of mercantile capital to gendered representations of labor and consumption. These moments in the "feminization" of tea carry affective traces of fetishized aromas and romantic sentiments linked to the production and consumption of this global commodity. Chatterjee makes quite startling observations about anxieties over capitalism and class disorder as revealed by the movements of this opiate of the masses: Icons of tea could signify unruly, feminized, working bodies and mist-laden Asian hillsides or respectable, controlled, bourgeois bodies and spaces of the genteel tea garden or parlor ceremony. The author then focuses on the colonial histories that construct the colonial plantation in North Bengal through fractions of plebian capital and specific strategies of labor recruitment based on hierarchized notions of community defined by "natural" occupation. A wonderful section explores the cultural politics of marketing tea, a thoroughly "feminized" commodity, through notions of ideal Indian masculinity and domesticity. Chatterjee drives hard the argument that gendered bodies and histories of taste are central to deepening circuits of value.

Chapters 5–9 are the ethnographic heart of *A Time for Tea*, where Chatterjee opens a window to the cultural politics of plantation and village. Political, economic, ritual, and sexual economies undergird the hegemony of the *mai-baap* planter, whose baroque form of patriarchal control, in turn, rests on a mixture of coercion and patronage relations across hierarchized

masculinities. In this eccentric form of hegemony, Chatterjee pays strong attention to bodies, sentiments, and emergent forms of gendered critique. The consequence is ethnography in deep engagement with subaltern practice, always in relation to wider postcolonial and feminist discourses and always tempered by the politics of the possible. What could have been more incisively interrogated through Marxist political economy are particularly contentious categories like "feudalism." However, Chatterjee shares with the agrarian Marxist tradition a deep commitment to how gendered work regimes might create opportunities for activism through women's gang labor arrangements like the *dols* at Sarah's Hope. The author's feminist commitment to the politics of translation and to the embodied practices of subaltern women speaks to major lacunae in labor scholarship in South Asia and far beyond. By the same token, Chatterjee refuses a postcolonial politics that accepts the mute subaltern, turning her narrative gifts to the task of honoring the words of a woman from Sarah's Hope: "Let us not walk alone. . . . The community of women is a community of sorrow" (p. 323). The author's last dramatic interlude stages a politics of solidarity with this grief. Piya Chatterjee is a remarkable, visionary writer. *A Time for Tea* is an erudite and powerful book that should be read widely and closely.

Cultural Logics and Global Economies: Maya Identity in Thought and Practice. Edward F. Fischer. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001. xii + 287 pp., figures, photographs, notes, glossary, bibliography, index.

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Cultural Logics and Global Economies is an ambitious book. Edward F. Fischer sets out to integrate the cultural and the material, the global and the local, essentialism and constructivism. His subject is Maya identity in Guatemala. Maya professionals in Guatemala City have developed a vigorous pan-Mayanist movement since the mid-1980s. The central question of this book concerns the relationship between their