

## BOOK REVIEWS

## Single Reviews

## Tragic Spirits: Shamanism, Memory, and Gender in Contemporary Mongolia by Manduhai Buyandelger.

Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013. 336 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12304

Rebekah Plueckhahn

University College London

*Tragic Spirits: Shamanism, Memory, and Gender in Contemporary Mongolia* presents an encompassing, detailed, and intricately woven ethnography of contemporary shamanic practice in an area of northeastern Mongolia. Focusing on experiences of those largely of Buryat ethnicity in a rural district, Manduhai Buyandelger skillfully explores several key themes affecting wider contemporary Mongolia: its socialist history, the sudden transition to a market economy in 1990, and accompanying widespread financial uncertainty and gendered power relations. These are a population trying to rectify unclear forms of spiritual debt wrought by attempted socialist state-engineered “forgetting” of spiritual, shamanic knowledge. The proliferation of “tragic spirits,” or *uheer*, spirits of those who fell victim to state violence during socialism and whose gravesites are unknown, Buyandelger writes, are noted as the cause for much continuous misfortune as people in this district deal with the uncertainty and accompanying poverty of Mongolia’s ongoing “transition” to a market economy. The author paints a complex portrait of the postsocialist proliferation of shamanism, describing how people attempt to calm these *uheer* and find, remember, and honor existing, powerful, and established “origin spirits.”

This book admirably maps this postsocialist proliferation of shamanic practice from multiple angles simultaneously. Buyandelger opens the first section of the book by examining the mutual constitution of history and memory. At first positioning the reader on a historical perspective, she highlights how shamanism has long been a way for a mobile, oppressed people to contain and proliferate sociospiritual memory through oral narrative and the spiritual imbue ment of mobile shamanic paraphernalia. Buyandelger alternates between using oral narratives of shamanism as a resource to learn about history and (especially in later chapters) conducting a gendered analysis of narrative and memory itself. This book maintains this depiction of Buryat experience through a shamanic lens. In later sections, the author admirably explores the larger “economy of shamanism” from multi-

ple angles. These include how gender and power influence the development and legitimization of shamans, the reasons women of limited means consult shamans, and most significantly how this unfolds in intermeshed contemporary social processes and the forming of narrative and memory. This focus on the larger social processes that form a comprehensive part of shamanic practice makes this text an extremely valuable contribution to the study of contemporary shamanism in Mongolia and postsocialist religious practice more generally.

This book contributes to an understanding of the interrelationships between the individual and the state in both socialist and postsocialist Mongolia. In particular, Buyandelger examines “technologies of forgetting” employed by the socialist state to create a particular form of socialist personhood and the ramifications of this in postsocialist Mongolia. She successfully evokes the blurred entanglements between socialist and postsocialist personhood in contemporary experience. One aspect of this overall theme of the book that arguably could have been brought out and critiqued more concerns how the contemporary postsocialist proliferation of “neoliberal capitalism” (p. 102) influences the creation of personhood and vice versa. Conducting the bulk of her research during 1999–2000, Buyandelger witnessed some of the first after-effects of Mongolia’s swift introduction of neoliberal economic policies and the alienating affect this had on many areas of Mongolia’s rural populace. However, while she often describes the neoliberal market economy as a factor that forces people to conduct meager economic activities on the fringe of this larger state influence, she does not ethnographically delve as much into exactly how this occurs. She describes how capitalism and shamanism are “mutually constitutive” and that “shamanism has its own economy” (p. 11). In her text, “institutions of neoliberalism” seem to exist as an omnipresent influence (p. 166), and it would have been good to see the entanglements between capitalism and shamanism explored ethnographically a bit more.

However, while an important theme, this is not the author’s larger ethnographic focus. Instead she conducts a great gendered analysis of shamanism in social life in this rural district, forming a major new contribution in this area of Mongolian studies. Exploring through a gendered lens the interrelationships between memory, power, and the

legitimization of narratives, Buyandelger artfully examines why most powerful Buryat shamans are now male—despite a “feminization of shamanism” during the socialist period. She explores the ways that virilocal familial contexts shape shamanic practice and reputation. She argues that gendered practices enabled shamanism to remain hidden and practiced in secret during socialism and that current shamanic practice reflects larger gendered social processes affecting peoples’ levels of empowerment and wealth in contemporary Mongolia.

In examining spiritually derived misfortune, the marginalization of women’s voices, and struggles on an economic periphery, Buyandelger, however, does not ethnographically paint this picture solely through the view of the “suffering subject.” Nor does she lean this study toward the “anthropology of the good” (cf. Robbins 2013). While she places initial theoretical emphasis on exploring the

“social mechanisms that create and distribute suffering” (p. 100), the resulting ethnography forms an examination of the oscillations of power and complex larger processes affecting the positionality of women in contemporary Mongolia (p. 166). She enriches her text with compelling narratives that describe in well-written detail the complex contradictions facing her female interlocutors. This book would appeal to anthropologists of gender, postsocialism, spirituality, economy, and memory and history.

#### REFERENCE CITED

Robbins, Joel

2013 Beyond the Suffering Subject: Toward an Anthropology of the Good. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (N.S.) 19(3):447–462.

## Producing Spoilers: Peacemaking and the Production of Enmity in a Secular Age by Joyce Dalsheim.

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. 256 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12305

Jeff Halper

*The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD)*

Joyce Dalsheim’s book on inclusive peacemaking has much to offer scholars who focus on issues such as identity politics and what she calls “the tyranny of nationalism.” It has special relevance for “nonacademic” activist scholars like me. Because Dalsheim describes herself as a “peace activist” around the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and demonstrates a great familiarity with both grassroots Palestinian and Israeli actors, it is appropriate that an “engaged anthropologist” living in Israel–Palestine and immersed in that conflict evaluates not only the theoretical contributions of this work for peacemakers but also its usefulness as an applied approach for peacemakers as well.

Dalsheim locates her criticism of liberal peacemaking within its hegemonic assumptions: that peacemaking is based on rational “secular” dialogue and negotiations; that the accepted political order is that of sovereign nations with distinct cultures operating within distinct nation-states; that democracy is the most valued and accepted form of statehood, based on individual rights and behaviors dictated by the market yet tolerant of cultural differences and recognizing a common humanity—and intolerant, however, of those disrupting the social order or “extremists” sitting “outside of the glow of the collective campsite.” She then surveys both the counterhegemonic worldviews of important actors in Israel–Palestine who are thereby categorized as “enemies” or “spoilers” of peace— Hamas, a variety

of Israeli Jewish settlers, the Palestinian intellectual Sari Nusseibeh, an American–Jewish peacemaker, Mizrahi intellectuals, and others—and liberal peacemakers who are unable to integrate their nonsecular cultures and views of peace arising from their local contexts into a liberal, consensual framework. Her basic point is that rather than “spoiling” peacemaking efforts, the very presence of such influential “spoilers” bespeaks a systemic malfunction in liberal peacemaking that must be addressed if truly inclusive, just, and workable solutions are to be achieved.

On the way to a more inclusive and peaceful social order, Dalsheim progresses through a carefully thought-out set of alternatives, evaluating each according to one or more useful concepts and illustrating each alternative with well-chosen examples from her fieldwork in Israel–Palestine and from the literature. After laying out why the liberal approach that seeks to somehow reconcile contradictory narratives and worldviews (even as it excludes “spoilers”) won’t work, she sets out to examine various possibilities of “thinking beyond the nation,” with peoples in all their variations defined by relationships rather than closed narratives, reified cultures, sovereign national collectives, or discrete territories.

Dalsheim admits that no social order inclusive of all heterogeneity actually exists or can exist. It is possible, however, to acknowledge and empower grassroots heterogeneity through what she calls “local solutions” to the problem of people “living together.” She then considers a number of steadily more localizing approaches: exploring post-national social forces such as popular sovereignty, alternative sovereignties, flexible citizenship, and scattered hegemonies, all expressed through the rule of international

humanitarian law and human rights covenants, as well as in other forms; bridging narratives and reframing; developing social movements that link issues of common concern for local communities (I would insert organizing a grassroots global infrastructure); and ultimately acknowledging and legitimizing all our many “stories.”

Here Dalsheim leaves us hanging a bit in midair, as if her search for a more inclusive world order trails off. While “paying attention” to our enemies’ stories might help us deconstruct them, she admits that “Israelis and Palestinians are not interested for the most part in deconstructing their national identities” without suggesting what to do about that.

As an anthropologist engaged “on the ground” in Israel–Palestine in grassroots efforts to achieve a just peace between the two peoples (I say with a dash of essentialism), I found Dalsheim’s book thought provoking and an important corrective to attempts to impose a narrative and political program—even a progressive one. As the “two-state solution” dies and an inclusive alternative has yet to

formulated, a localized approach is indeed being tried. Rather than proposing “solutions,” Palestinians and Israelis interested in resolving the conflict are stepping back and identifying their basic rights and needs (grievances being bracketed as the post-resolution stage of reconciliation). In this endeavor, Dalsheim’s views and cautions can certainly play a valuable role, especially as efforts are made to incorporate the positions of potential “spoilers.” At times her discussion of local solutions sounded a bit “anthropologizing”; it assumed a good faith in “living together” rather than addressing contradictory agendas and disproportionate power relations. But here, too, her approach of localized heterogeneity could prove useful. It offers a way of “backing into” what she calls “different sets of arrangements to accommodate different sets of needs” rather than the traditional “front-end” approach to peacemaking based on defining common interests, making instrumental peace with one’s “enemy,” negotiations and compromise, often accompanied by power politics.

## Aymara Indian Perspectives on Development in the Andes by Amy Eisenberg.

Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2013. 280 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12306

**Andrew Canessa**  
*University of Essex*

Whereas the Aymara-speaking peoples of Bolivia and Peru have enjoyed considerable attention from anthropologists and other social scientists, the much smaller population in Chile receives comparatively scant attention. For this reason, Amy Eisenberg’s book, which explores the impact on a politically and economically marginalized population of highway development, the creation of Parque Nacional Lauca, and the diversion of the Lauca River for irrigation, is welcome. The central thrust of the book is that the local population has not been adequately consulted in these developments, and the author seeks to document the views and perspectives of local people in their own words. The book thus makes a contribution to our understandings of the Aymara people living in Chile.

Eisenberg is not an anthropologist nor does she pretend to be one (the back flap describes her as an ethnobotanist and botanical artist); the book does, however, offer chapters on “Aymara Cosmivision,” “The Aymara Cultural Landscape,” and “The Aymara Community Today,” as well as “The Aymara: Pre- and Postcolumbian History.” One should therefore expect some engagement with the relevant anthropological literature, but Eisenberg cites very few contemporary anthropologists of the Andes. I must hesitate

here because I have always thought it weak of a reviewer to bleat that she or he was not cited by the author under review, and there is no particular reason why in this case she should necessarily cite my work. Nevertheless, what is striking about this book is how few references there are to any anthropologists who have worked in the area. I can hardly feel personally aggrieved if I am in such good company. This matters because this book is replete with generalizations that simply do not hold for a large and diverse population in the Andes. The author with the most entries in the bibliography is the ethnohistorian John Murra, whose research in the Inca and early colonial period is enormously influential. Yet there is a serious problem in citing Murra again and again to make points about contemporary people, especially without reference to more recent ethnographies; and when anthropologists are cited, they are often those who produced work in the first half of the 20th century rather than contemporary scholars. There is no problem at all in citing these pioneering anthropologists, but there is a problem when they are cited to discuss “Aymara culture” as it exists today.

There is a deeply worrying tendency to ahistoricize a large and complex population, to romanticize their beliefs and existence, and to ignore the enormous diversity of Aymara people today. This tendency to romanticize goes to the very heart of the book, where the impact of development is discussed: “It is the supernaturally derived birthright of all Aymara people . . . to be consulted if any place within their

traditional holy land is potentially impacted by development” (p. 156). This begs a number of questions as to why this right is supernaturally derived as opposed to rather more pro-saically defined in international law and conventions (e.g., ILO Convention No. 169) or simply as an example of a basic human right. The book is replete with gnomic phrasing that, in my mind, sits ill with a highly diverse and complex situation on the ground. For example, the book ends with the sentence: “The Aymara believe in the unity of humankind and that only as one can we make this earth a good place for all of us” (p. 228). By the end of the book, one is used to sentences beginning with “The Aymara believe . . .” (ignoring any sense of a large and diverse population), but we are not told if anyone ever actually articulated such a sentiment. It certainly does not resonate with anything I have heard in several decades of research with Aymara-speaking people nor do I recall any other ethnographer writing about “the unity of humankind.”

The book is much stronger in chapters 5 and 6, which offer numerous accounts of the effect of development change,

most particularly the construction and maintenance of the Highway 11. Eisenberg offers personal accounts in people’s own words of how the building of the highway has affected water supply, caused the destruction of archaeological sites, created problems of erosion, increased road kill of llamas and sheep, and damaged crop production. As she points out, it is imperative to hear what people have to say on these matters, but it would also have been useful to document the effects in other ways: How many ritual centers were destroyed, what is the area of environmental destruction, and how this has changed over time? One of the problems here is that Highway 11 was first constructed in 1966, and it is very difficult to ascertain which problems arise from more recent developments of the road and which go back 50 years.

*Aymara Indian Perspectives on Development in the Andes* will be of interest to scholars concerned with development in indigenous communities in northern Chile, but the anthropologist reader should be clear that the work fails to draw upon, address, or contribute to anthropological concerns.

## Governing Indigenous Territories: Enacting Sovereignty in the Ecuadorian Amazon by Juliet S. Erazo.

Durham: Duke University Press, 2013. 264 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12307

**Gabriela Valdivia**

*University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

Juliet Erazo’s *Governing Indigenous Territories* is an ethnography about the entanglements and struggles of indigenous territory making in Ecuador. Dismantling romanticizing views of indigenous community life, Erazo blends the history of state land recognition in the Amazon with the life histories of families and leaders who negotiated state-mandated political practices to secure the right to land, to narrate the formation of Rukullacta, a 40-year-old Kichwa community with collective rights to 42,000 acres in the Ecuadorian Amazon. “Living together in a large group,” as the people cited by Erazo describe community life, is a biopolitical strategy that requires constant reflection on how “the daily obligation to live and act together as a singular political entity within a bounded space” (p. xix) can counter the loss of rights to lands where their families had lived for generations.

Erazo interrogates the formation of territory in Rukullacta through several lines of analysis. Many of these are well-known and rehearsed in Western political economy and theory: for example, autonomy, sovereignty, property, citizenship, governance, among others. The strong emphasis on these concepts at times stands at odds with the goal,

stated in the preface, of producing situated knowledges of how indigenous peoples form and defend connections to land in the Amazon. Despite this, Erazo’s ethnographic work offers solid grounds for beginning to understand the realities of how Kichwa territorial politics unfold over time. Chapters 1 and 2 trace the historical lineage of “territory” to the time of Spanish colonization to argue that this is not a Kichwa category but a modern invention of sovereign obligations and expectations toward collective well-being. Chapters 3 through 5 elaborate on the intersections between sovereignty and everyday life. Erazo explores *vida organizada* (living life through the principles of state-recognized political organization; “organized life”) to show how individuals learn to see themselves as a collective with legal ownership rights as they adhere to the logics and practices mandated by the state to legitimize territorial claims—for example, conducting regular elections, recognizing authority in a small group of representatives, and establishing forms of community service. Rukullacta became an indigenous territory as its inhabitants consented to respect and reproduce the institutions that underpin liberal governance—such as representative and centralized authority, taxation, property, and insertion into the market economy.

According to Erazo, both leaders and residents participate in the making and unmaking of territory. Local leaders, trained by missionaries and state representatives, advocated

for the acceptance—at times, tolerance—of new ways of living together in their respective communities. Acting as mediators and translators of “living well together,” leaders sought to educate residents to reproduce state hegemony in everyday life. Residents also challenged these technologies. They sought to distance themselves from leaders—physically and symbolically—to diffuse the intensity of liberal governance in everyday life. They rescinded political support, ignored calls to perform communal work, and drew on kin institutions to stake claims that countered the principles of “organized life.” Chapter 3, in particular, demonstrates how state government cannot possibly regulate every aspect of life and how residents recognize and push these limits to shape the current patterns of land distribution, negotiation, and recognition in the Amazon.

*Governing Indigenous Territories* effectively reminds us of the ambiguities of identity categories and explores how people mobilize identity to push the limits of and remake the categories through which life is governed. Erazo’s narrative is attentive to how these flexibilities are part and parcel of how Rukullacta evolved as a territorial entity—what she calls “everyday forms of territorial formation.”

It is unfortunate that *Governing Indigenous Territories* ends its analysis right before the Correa administration begins in 2007, a time when the “negotiated sovereignties” that Erazo examines are increasingly contentious at the national scale. For example, one of the organizations supporting Rukullacta leaders, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities

of Ecuador (CONAIE), experienced a shift in the terrain of political recognition: the Ecuadorian government asked the organization to vacate its headquarters building in Quito, which the state provided in 1991, because it was “doing too much politics.” CONAIE leaders declared the eviction a colonial act of persecution and an attempt to delegitimize indigenous peoples’ struggles. They contend that the building is indigenous “territory”: it stands for opening up political possibilities; it is where they learned about plurinationality, about complementary ways of being in the world, such as *Buen Vivir*, and *Sumak Kawsay*; and it represents institutional gains and centuries of colonial resistance.<sup>1</sup> Now, it is the CONAIE that leans on politically organized communities like Rukullacta to support its cause. Change, Erazo concludes, is as important as continuity in sustaining and strengthening senses of shared ownership and identity. As indigenous organizations mobilize for land distribution, food sovereignty, and the integrity of ancestral territories, political possibilities emerge and close down. Reflecting on the limits and potentials of organization as enclosure—or “living together as a large group” in a bounded space—continues to be fundamental to how the obligations, responsibilities, and expectations of the state and indigenous peoples are settled.

#### NOTE

1. El Universo, *Conaie pidió al Gobierno que desista del desalojo de su sede*, January 6, 2015. <http://www.eluniverso.com/noticias/2015/01/06/nota/4403086/mies-desiste-desalojar-sede-conaie-quetenia-prevista-marcha>, accessed February 1, 2015.

## Singing for the Dead: The Politics of Indigenous Revival in Mexico by Paja Faudree.

Durham: Duke University Press, 2013. 328 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12308

Genner Llanes-Ortiz

*Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social*

“What difference does it make that, in the Sierra Mazateca, the [indigenous language] reading public is also a *listening public*?” (p. 234). This question largely summarizes many of the topics Paja Faudree explores in her multilayered ethnography of linguistic and cultural revitalization in southern Mexico. In this book, she describes Mazatec literary and religious innovations that have emerged amid important debates about indigeneity, variously affected by Mexican nationalism, psychedelic mycotourism, and Liberation Theology, in a marginal region of Oaxaca: the municipality of Santa María Chilchotla (Nda Xo).

According to a recent statistic (CDI 2009), Spanish is replacing more than a third of indigenous languages in Mex-

ico at an alarming rate. Notably, the Mazatec language (a group of up to 16 linguistic variants) is not among these. Faudree notices that this and dozens other original languages in Mexico are in a “minority” position in relation to other indigenous languages with a prestigious and rich history of written texts, like Nahuatl and Yucatek Maya. Her work offers some indications as to why Mazatec is currently in a “state of equilibrium” with Spanish (according to Mexico’s National Institute of Indigenous Languages—INALI).

Faudree does this by reconstructing the “biographical landscape” (p. 192) surrounding Heriberto and Alberto Prado’s involvement in two important revival initiatives: the Day of the Dead Song Contest and the Mazatec Indigenous Church. The Prado brothers have played key roles in these movements both as indigenous writers and as community organizers. External observers and local people alike identify Day of the Dead festivities as the “foundational locus for the expression of ‘Mazatec identity’” (p. 98). She retraces the process leading to the creation of its annual song



contest and highlights the importance of Mazatec song-writing education provided by the Prado brothers in building up an “authorial infrastructure” for other indigenous composers (p. 101). The contest tolerates “orthographic heterodoxy” (p. 126) in indigenous writing and taps into culturally embedded performing practices, which have helped to make it a popular platform to express and problematize locally sanctioned notions of indigeneity. Conversely, when discussing the emergence of the Mazatec Indigenous Church, Faudree shows how the radical innovations introduced in local religious practice by Heriberto Prado, Sierra Mazateca’s own Martin Luther, have encountered suspicion, perplexity, and disdain from Nda Xo’s residents and other cultural activists. Critics of the nativist church often point out that its practice contradicts collective work ethos and mushroom ingestion rules, among other “traditional” codes of behavior.

She considers that Mazatec language revitalization in Nda Xo owes much of its success to the use of singing as “a third linguistic mode,” one that is “relatively rarely considered in its own right alongside writing and speaking” (p. 18). I however found her analysis of this performance genre strongly biased toward text. She devotes little space to examine song performances, and her discussion of linguistic innovations in singing is unclear about their relation to music. Her descriptions of singing fail to convey the multiple influences and textures of Mazatec songs that transpire in performances such as those found on YouTube.

Faudree links these ethnographic findings with the broader discussions about indigenous literary movements nationwide. Her analysis concentrates on the paradoxical practice of “seeing double.” This is characterized by a noticeable tendency among indigenous authors to publish bilingual texts that equally aim to promote the development of an indigenous readership and to appeal to well-established Spanish reading audiences. Her ruminations consider how the

reception of Indigenous literature demands a “double reading” operation as well. In this, indigenous language speakers find themselves needing to use both the original text and its Spanish translation to fully apprehend the meaning of the former because full reading skills in indigenous languages are rare.

Faudree’s assessment of the diverging aspects of indigenous literary and cultural revival movements is, however, more conciliatory than that of other linguists and anthropologists. Following Mikhail Bakhtin, she observes that heteroglossic expressions of indigeneity act in synergy with an imagined “unitary” indigenous identity in the same way that variations in speech contribute to shape language. Thus, in spite of their differential appeal to local people, Faudree argues, song contests and religious reform work as a “symbiotic and mutually supporting pair” (p. 194). The same rings true for orality, singing, and literacy—and for indigenous text production and reception, which demand a “double vision.” All of them give shape to a political ecology of indigenous language revival within a context profoundly impressed by the imposition of Spanish as the nation’s tongue.

Faudree’s book represents an important contribution to empirically founded discussions of the role of artistic practice in linguistic revitalization. In her rich portrait of grassroots initiatives in symbiotic relation with national ethnic demands, Faudree gives us reasons to feel hopeful about the future of indigenous literacy efforts in Mexico.

#### REFERENCE CITED

- Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas (CDI)  
2009 Índice de reemplazo etnolingüístico (IRE) 2000–2005 [Index of language replacement]. CDI. Dirección de Información e Indicadores. Mexico City, Mexico: CDI. <http://www.cdi.gob.mx/>, accessed June 4, 2015.

## The Good Life: Aspiration, Dignity, and the Anthropology of Wellbeing by Edward F. Fischer.

Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2014. 280 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12309

**Benjamin N. Colby**  
*University of California, Irvine*

What do decisions about buying eggs in Hannover, Germany, have in common with the decisions about planting and marketing high-end coffee being grown by indigenous Maya in Guatemala? Edward Fischer in his interesting book offers some ideas about wellbeing and happiness occasioned by his study of German shoppers in Hannover and Maya farmers in Guatemala. This juxtaposing of different peo-

ple and their cultural systems finds a commonality not in what they do so much as in the approach Fischer takes in characterizing “the good life” among both groups.

Maya coffee growers in the mountains of Guatemala sell high-end coffee beans flown to Miami for distribution in the United States and elsewhere. German shoppers in Hannover are concerned about where the supermarket eggs they buy come from—caged or cage-free, free-range, and organically fed hens.

So Fischer asks how economic choices in these two groups relate to their perceived wellbeing and their social obligations as expressed through fair trade and economic

decisions generally. Fischer's analytical categories are similar to The Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) list, overlapping, for example, where Fischer's categories of aspiration, agency, and opportunity structures represent a finer gradation of the OPHI category, agency. Fischer's focus generally is subjective, "combining cultural critique with non-prescriptive, ethnographically informed positive alternatives that engage public policy debates" (p. 19). Thus, the author implicitly subscribes to the standard position of cultural relativism and the use of culture as a count noun (which takes a definite article—as opposed to a wider, interdisciplinary, and ecological base for cultural phenomena as a network or system). Unless anthropology can quantify variables in a testable theory that correlates with clear benefits or deficits, as in measures of physical health, psychological health, resilience, or adaptive potential, studies of wellbeing in anthropology remain subjective and should be, as Fischer says, nonprescriptive.

There are numerous citations throughout the book, Amartya Sen being a prominent influence in what Fischer sees to be a positive anthropology, paralleling work in positive psychology in which people are asked how happy they are in interviews with the widely used ladder scale on which respondents indicate their current felt happiness or wellbeing and where they hope they might be on that scale in the future. That and another type of data Fischer has collected, the Ultimatum Game, are part of the data considered. In the latter case, Guatemalan farmers playing the Ultimatum Game showed them paying a substantial premium to punish players who they felt played unfairly. Income inequality was tolerated as long as "those who do well are seen as treating others with fairness and generosity" (p. 209). Clearly, however, outside the game environment and in the real world, ethnic relations remain an oppressive source of inequality in social interactions between Latinos and Indians. But private ownership of land and improving educational opportunities for indigenous people can certainly diminish some of those inequalities.

Fischer has carved out an important piece of the wellbeing puzzle. A summary of his values and subjective conditions is depicted in a diagram that includes opportunity structures that enable (or could frustrate) the fulfillment of a respondent's aspirations (p. 211). A future project of interest would be to apply those categories to various other sectors and tiers of society.

At a time when financial leadership (e.g., the central bank) in Germany lacks the kind of stewardship, fairness, and value orientations exhibited by shoppers in Germany or farmers in Guatemala, worldwide problems in countries like Greece, Spain, and Ireland will continue to decline economically under the yoke of austerity imposed by those private banking interests. Thus, austerity is another variable that might usefully be added into the mix of negative conditions to consider in a positive anthropology in different tiers of society and politics and under different conditions of public safety.

Fischer does not gloss over the period of La Violencia in Guatemala. He describes former president and general Efraín Ríos Montt's recent more benign change and brings us up to date from those terrible days under his military leadership of violence and torture to the present. Although convicted for the Ixil genocide, Ríos Montt escaped his 80-year prison sentence through a higher court's ruling.

Currently there have been major changes in Guatemala but not for the better. There has been a disturbing growth of criminality, organized crime, former military officers in their own gang ("hidden powers"), and the emergence of a gang known as MS-13 that is involved in extortion, drugs, smuggling, and money laundering—a sharp contrast to staid Germany.

Fischer touches upon these negativities but keeps his focus on coffee production and egg selling, fair trade, and the good life. The book's ample footnotes are a useful survey of recent writings on subjective wellbeing. It will be interesting to see how positive anthropology develops as a new branch of the discipline. That is where anthropology can get exciting.

## Imagined Globalization by Néstor García Canclini.

Latin America in Translation series. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014. 288 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12310

Florence E. Babb

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

At a time when many anthropologists are aiming to move beyond the long-entrenched Euro-American orientation of our discipline, the translation of a work by Néstor García Canclini into English is a notable event. Originally published in Spanish in 1999 and addressing time-sensitive theorizations of globalization, culture industries, and world-historical developments, it might be claimed that this book comes on the scene a bit late. After all, when the work first

appeared, the Internet had only recently begun transforming communications and commerce, 9/11 had not yet changed the way we view the world, and the BRIC countries' (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) emergence in the global economy was barely a trace on the horizon.

Nonetheless, the value of García Canclini's *Imagined Globalization* is better seen in the context of broader, extended debates among anthropologists and fellow travelers who have grappled with the reverberations of global processes, whether in academic culture, the arts and publishing, or the lives of the subjects of our research. This Argentine's distinction as an anthropologically oriented scholar long resident in Mexico and publishing leading works on culture,

identity, and hybridity across Latin America, the United States, and Europe is widely recognized.

Particularly useful is the translator's introduction by Latin Americanist cultural theorist George Yúdice, which maps the relevance of this work today; moreover, his footnotes throughout the work inform readers of significant changes since the original publication. As Yúdice notes, García Canclini famously expanded our lexicon to include *cultural hybridity* and *interculturality*, yet his work has sometimes been misunderstood as uncritically celebrating globalization and the cultural admixtures it produces. Instead, his work should be understood as adding nuance to charged appraisals of capitalist modernity as well as to overly auspicious assessments of transnationalism. Despite his concern with borderlands and interculturality, he finds the nation-state to remain salient; his own ethnographic work makes him well aware of the continuing importance of place and material culture in the crafting of selves and communities within changing nations.

García Canclini engages with literature and the arts as well as economics and cultural politics in his assessment of the broad impact of globalization and free trade alliances on regional integration. He brings together ethnography with cultural interpretation and semifictionalized accounts. For example, he considers Andean film and music industries and their hybrid forms, which allow them to compete in popular markets. He also references as ethnographic subject the concepts of *mestizaje* (historically, mixed race) and multiculturalism, whereby racial formations and discourses emerged in Latin American nations. One imaginative chapter finds inspiration in an encounter with a Mexican waiter in an Italian restaurant in Scotland, and another considers a meeting between a Latin American anthropologist, a European sociologist, and a U.S. cultural studies scholar, who grapple with intercultural differences and misunderstandings. In the latter account, the anthropologist calls into question why more dissertations on Latin America come from the United States than from all of Latin America.

García Canclini provokes us to rethink globalization and cosmopolitanism in light of persistent precarity, instability, and environmental degradation—conditions that are as true today as when he wrote the original Spanish edition. This concern with reimagining the contemporary world in which we all cross borders of one kind or another is what gives this volume its coherence as more than simply a collection of essays. As the book ably demonstrates, we need to ask who participates in integrated markets, who benefits from them, and what exclusionary practices keep many from engaging in the current global circuits. Reading this work requires making connections among disparate forms of cultural “evidence,” from antiglobalization movements to the market expansion of culture industries. Aside from the individuals in his personalized, fictionalized narratives, we find little attention to the subjectivities of the many whose lives are affected by the forces of urbanization and globalization, and it would be illuminating to see more of the ethnographic protagonists in García Canclini's intercultural framework. This absence may be owing to his more expansive objective of mapping broad dimensions of a cultural analysis and agenda that would do justice to contemporary social complexity. Indeed, much of the text is composed of extended ruminations on his subjects that Latin Americanist anthropologists should find fascinating, but others may find dense at times.

As epilogue, a 2011 interview with García Canclini by cultural theorist Toby Miller adds an important reflection on what the author himself finds most significant and enduring in the work and what he views differently a dozen years after its appearance in Spanish. Most significantly, the global political and financial crises of 2001 and 2008 brought changing patterns of mobility between North and South, stronger antiglobalization currents, and the rise of the BRIC nations. For those engaging the question of how we may move beyond narrow geopolitical horizons to embrace world anthropologies, this important book offers an exemplary model and abundant food for thought.

## Treasured Possessions: Indigenous Interventions into Cultural and Intellectual Property by Haidy Geismar.

Objects/Histories series. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013. 328 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12311

**Kathryn E. Graber**  
Indiana University

The notion of “cultural property” calls to mind the Elgin Marbles and other discrete objects of stone or hard material, usually held by museums. Although “intellectual property” might, by contrast, be said to include mainly rights over intangible creative products, in practice it, too, exists as a concept primarily to manage the distribution, flow, and

trade of those products, making them into de facto objects. This thought-provoking study by Haidy Geismar explores the challenges and contradictions inherent in extending property regimes into a variety of intangible, less thing-y domains, specifically in terms of how traditional knowledge and creative action are—or are not—recognized and framed by law.

*Treasured Possessions* is essentially a comparative study, drawing on the author's long-term fieldwork in the Pacific island states of Vanuatu and (Aotearoa) New Zealand. Geismar examines how globally circulating conceptions of cultural



and intellectual property, such as UNESCO's category of "intangible cultural heritage" and commercial conceptions of trademark and brand, are renegotiated in local legal and museum contexts. Her focus, however, is less on the local employment of global categories and ideas than on their indigenization. The Pacific has long been the geographic center of anthropological studies of cultural and intellectual property, so this book's grounding in Vanuatu and New Zealand will immediately seem familiar to anthropologists working on these topics. By no means, however, is this book a rehashing of existing knowledge or only (or even primarily) for specialists on Oceania. In fact, the deep history of Pacific studies on value, economic circulation, and materiality grants Geismar a unique opportunity. The museum workers and cultural brokers she describes have been in conversation with anthropologists, as well as legal theorists and policymakers, for a long time, and they mount nuanced alternative visions of how exchange and entitlement might work. This prevents the book from being a straightforward study of the local uptake of (or resistance to) globally relevant conceptions of property. Instead, the property struggles become means to a different end—namely, negotiating what it means to be indigenous and asserting new identities, economic models, and national sovereignties on the world stage.

Because this book is organized more as a collection of case studies and themes than as a single, linear argument, the chapters may be productively read independently. The introduction (ch. 1) draws together the different threads running through subsequent chapters, focusing on the concepts of "culture," "property," and "indigeneity" as defined both inside and outside of Vanuatu and New Zealand. As Geismar points out, the twin conceptions of "cultural property" and "intellectual property" have distinct genealogies, the former tied up with museums and cultural institutions and the latter tied up with trade, commerce, and industry. One of the strengths of this book is in bringing the two together within a common framework, especially as they are converging in international law.

The remaining chapters tack back and forth between Vanuatu and New Zealand. Chapters 2 and 3 provide

historical context, focusing on the development of legal frameworks for indigenous title. In chapter 6, the author's experience in museum studies shines as she explains the curatorial practices, aesthetics of display, and cultural politics at work in Pacific museology. The other chapters provide useful examples of new property forms that have emerged at the juncture between traditional rights and global property regimes: a sort of hybrid national-indigenous form of "kastom" copyright in Vanuatu (ch. 4), a special "toi iho Māori Made" brand designed to eclipse problematic corporate trademarking of Māori words and cultural forms (ch. 5), interventions in the commoditization of *taonga* (Māori treasures or cultural property) in auctions (ch. 7), and the remodeling of economic exchange via a "Pig Bank Project" that equates a traditionally circulating currency of pigs with state-issued coins (ch. 8). Throughout, Geismar draws on interviews with project directors and curators, but this is not a particularly "peopled" ethnography; the author provides an insightful anthropological analysis of policy more than an ethnographic depiction of individual lives. In a thoughtful conclusion, Geismar reflects on "the possibility of alternative relationships between indigenous people and state governance" (p. 214)—something about which she has given us much food for thought in this compelling book.

The rich material and analysis in *Treasured Possessions* are enough to recommend it, but the book also performs a pedagogical service to anthropology. Geismar assumes no background in intellectual and cultural property issues but manages to draw the reader efficiently into the core contradictions and dilemmas at play, deftly interweaving concrete examples with insights from key figures in the field like Michael Brown, Rosemary Coombe, Fred Myers, Marilyn Strathern, and Annette Weiner (among many others). Consequently this book may serve as an accessible introduction to anthropological approaches to cultural and intellectual property, as well as an exciting new contribution to that field. It should be useful in courses on native and indigenous studies, museum studies, and the anthropology of law and property theory.

## Witchcraft, Intimacy, and Trust: Africa in Comparison by Peter Geschiere.

Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013. 328 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12312

Phillips Stevens Jr.

University at Buffalo, The State University of New York

Sub-Saharan Africa is really the crucible of the anthropological understanding of witchcraft, and Peter Geschiere is well known in the literature, especially for his 1997 work

with its arresting title, *The Modernity of Witchcraft*. The work under review here continues the themes of the modern relevance of occult thinking and the essentials of international comparison he introduced earlier, with focus on elements of the core sociality of witchcraft: intimacy and trust. These aspects, he argues, have been recognized by anthropologists and historians but given insufficient emphasis, and they are increasingly problematic in the modernization process.

This work is presented as a culmination of his 40 years of fieldwork among the Maka of southeastern Cameroon.

This dimension of witchcraft studies reveals a paradox. Intimacy and trust are essential in meaningful social relations, but they are inherently dangerous, both in and beyond Africa, and their importance extends beyond the understanding of witchcraft. As Geschiere writes, “a profound ambivalence about intimacy—as desirable yet at the same time frightening—haunts human forms of sociality all over the world” (p. xxii). This emphasis serves three goals: (1) it re-focuses the anthropological concept of witchcraft, which he quite rightly argues has become too general in its application; (2) it provides a reconsideration of sociality, to stress the recognition that peoples’ closest relations are fraught with danger; and (3) it thereby constructs new bases for comparison with other areas of the world.

The work contains six chapters and an interesting “Interlude” before the sixth. Chapter 1 explores the nature of the author’s conceptual triad of the book’s title, with emphasis on the trust that builds in situations of intimacy. Chapter 2 draws from his Maka fieldwork for comparisons elsewhere in Africa, with emphasis on another peculiarity of witchcraft: that it involves both personal intimacy and geographic distance. In many cultures, the traditional influence of the witch is territorially bounded; with increasing mobility, the geography of witchcraft is changing. Witchcraft is no longer a strictly local phenomenon.

Chapter 3 deals with changing notions of trust and its inherent vulnerability. Among Maka, the fragility of trust is clear in the ambivalence of the *nganga*, the traditional healer. He was always dangerous because he both heals people and drives out witches by the same sort of power the witch has; today people need him more than ever, but they fear that his power cannot keep up with changing needs, and the profession is infiltrated by charlatans. Furthermore, Pentecostal Christianity is spreading, and its message is absolute: witchcraft is the work of Satan. To avoid it, one must leave tradition—including familial relations—behind and immerse completely in the church community.

Geschiere likes the Maka metaphor of “witchcraft of the house,” referring to the dangerous intimacy of kin relations. For the “comparison” of his subtitle, in chapter 4

he moves to early modern Europe, focusing especially on the works of anthropologically influenced historians. They recognized the importance of proximity and kinship in explaining witchcraft suspicions (neighbors, not kin), but many historians regarded European witchcraft as an anomaly to be explained rather than as a reality of social life. In chapter 5, Geschiere takes us to the Candomblé of Brazil to describe how an African-based system that grew out of slavery, like other New World syncretistic religions, emerged from condemnation as “witchcraft” to a respected religion regarded as a powerful protection against evil and a trusted institution even in an area of Pentecostal incursion.

A short “Interlude” muses on two other possible areas for comparison: Melanesia, whose anthropology has a long and controversial history of “ontological differences” with Africa, and Indonesia, particularly Java, whose bloody witch hunts in the late 1990s offer clearer similarities with Africa. The final chapter, “Back to Trust,” summarizes the book’s arguments, suggests even wider comparisons, and concludes with a return to the present reality of witchcraft in much of the world today. People in such areas will have to resolve “the central question of how, despite all the dangers emanating from intimacy, it can be possible to establish trust in the people with whom one has to live” (p. 181).

It is a vital question, and Geschiere’s exploration of it has produced fascinating and insightful book. I think, however, that its readability would have benefited from more severe editing for wordiness. I should caution that this is not a book for newcomers to the topic. Familiarity with earlier foundational scholarship and the attributes of “witchcraft” (flight, transformation, cannibalism, sexuality, the sabbatic meeting, etc.) is assumed. The term is not defined to mean a mystical power, or sorcery as learned magic, or demon invocation, or curse, or other methods of human perpetration of supernatural evil. For his purposes, it seems not to matter; wherever the term *witchcraft* has been applied, Geschiere intends his question to be asked.

#### REFERENCE CITED

- Geschiere, Peter  
1997 *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Post-colonial Africa*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

## Songs of Seoul: An Ethnography of Voice and Voicing in Christian South Korea by Nicholas Harkness.

Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014. 320 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12313

Keith Howard

SOAS, University of London

This is a welcome and superbly detailed account of a side of Korean music making that has to date rarely been considered.

It moves us from familiar accounts of traditional Korean music and its contemporary incarnations to a consideration of “classical” vocal music—vocal music in the Western art tradition. The redress is timely because today Koreans expert in Western music flood European and U.S. conservatoires and take prizes at international competitions. Nicholas Harkness offers a complex, erudite text, despite an introduction

that starts by discussing *pudae tchigae*, a hot and spicy stew beloved by students, which began as the food of poverty-stricken Koreans scavenging leftovers from U.S. army bases 50 years ago. Harkness wears his breadth of knowledge with pride, fusing literature from anthropology, musicology and ethnomusicology, Asian Studies, physiology, theology, and more. He differentiates qualia from quality, details obscure mechanics of vocal production, provides copious footnotes, and reproduces, through Romanized scripts and translations, large excerpts from interviews with singers, voice teachers, and taxi drivers.

*Songs of Seoul* divides into two parts: “The Qualities of Voice,” detailing the vocal apparatus and how Koreans define vocal quality, and “The Sociality of Voice,” exploring how the voice mediates social relations. It explores how classical vocal music, as *sŏngak*, is allied to purity and cleanliness, contrasting traditional *p’ansori* operatic and folk singers, removing the “‘fuzz’ caused by their pressed vocal cords, abrasions . . . [and] ‘obstruence’ along the vocal tract; and the ‘wobble’ of unstable vocal adduction” (p. 9). In somewhat different terms to this, my accounts of traditional vocal styles are cited, but I question whether Harkness’s characterization of the classical voice producing normal, natural, and perfect sounds from relaxed cords as opposed to the damaged vocal apparatus of traditional singers reflects reality. Indeed, Harkness writes how he came across many *sŏngak* vocalists who had strained and damaged their voices, not least when forcing their production ever louder to satisfy the tastes of teachers and peers.

Harkness identifies the *sŏngak* voice as part of Korea’s Protestant Christian soundscape: a shared Christian faith unites the vast majority of vocal students at the most prestigious South Korean university, Seoul National. The Christian self-identification of singers links to a Korea claimed as modernized and advanced. He explores how this requires well-documented tropes of Koreanness, such as *han*, the feeling of unavenged injustice, sadness, and suffering, to be abandoned. Within churches, vocalists populate choirs that project the Christian message, made subservient to the evangelical dictum that serving God is more important than singing well. But, outside churches, voice students train to be soloists. They train in an atmosphere of extreme competitiveness in schools and universities, where their autocratic professors require unswerving obedience and supplication. The professors pray with their disciples; the disciples must

offer gifts. The picture that emerges is one peppered with corruption and bribery rather than Christian charity: in fact, several professors at Seoul National have recently been fired for hitting students, taking bribes, and more, and today—2015—the inability of the vocal faculty to work together means that a professor of the traditional *kayağŭm* zither is acting as dean.

On graduation, students travel abroad to refine their voices, unlearning the forced projection that their Korean professors required. They offer homecoming concerts on their return to Korea, where the larger the audience attracted the more successful the concert is deemed to be. But the audience is bought: the singer pays for the venue and buys tickets that they distribute freely to former professors and peers. The repertory is largely canonic standards, except for a final encore that will, invariably, be a Christian song. No connoisseur buys a ticket, and the concerts reveal that Korea lacks a commercial concert culture. This is a revelation that Harkness hammers home by describing how the cast for an opera in Korea will be changed every few days simply because audiences are generated primarily by the social influence and reach of a particular singer’s network.

Much of the data Harkness offers is striking and revealing. But the volume struggles with some of the contradictions encountered. To give one example, Harkness zooms in on one particular church, the Somang Presbyterian Church. During fieldwork, he sang in one of its choirs at the time when its elder, Lee Myung-bak, took the reigns as South Korea’s president. In an exploration of how Korea is voiced, Harkness analyzes a sermon by pastor Kim Chi-ch’ŏl that, in support of the statesman Lee against his growing body of ignorant detractors, contrasted the measured intonation of Jesus with the burbling high-pitched voices of Pharisees. But a footnote indicates a problem with the analysis: Lee spoke, according to Harkness’s informants, not like Jesus but in a “scratchy,” “hoarse,” “husky,” and “terrible” voice. Harkness also ignores the large number of traditional musicians who are born-again Christians, like the great but now-deceased *p’ansori* singer Pak Tongjin or the traditional instrument-based performance group Yegahoe. How do these musicians square their traditional practices with the Western music encountered in churches, or do they find alternative ways to voice Korea beyond the clean and pure *Songs of Seoul*?

## Mediating the Global: Expatria's Forms and Consequences in Kathmandu by Heather Hindman.

Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013. 288 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12314

**Andrew Nelson**

*University of North Texas*

In *Mediating the Global*, Heather Hindman provides a glimpse into a subject rarely covered in anthropology—elite transnational laborers, “expatria,” moving from the Global North to the Global South. When she relates the questions she was asked about her subjects at an academic conference in Boston (“how can you stand those people?”) and in a Nepali village (“why are those people so crazy?”), one knows that Hindman has located a rich ethnographic topic. “Those people” consist of a diverse group of foreign government employees, development workers, and business people, and their families, posted in Kathmandu, Nepal. Despite their diverse occupations and circumstances, they share a structural position “trapped between central policies and local conditions, all the while trying to conduct a mobile life” (p. 7). While promoting neoliberal policies and bureaucratic practices at the office, they must negotiate the impact of those same policies and practices in their home life and shifting career opportunities. Hindman demonstrates how, within the bind of being both agents and objects of neoliberalism, expatriates help produce and undermine the strategies put forth by their employers.

Hindman roots Kathmandu expatria in a historical lineage starting with the gendered expectations of British colonialism in India and sprouting in the Cold War geopolitics and logistical problems of early U.S. interventions in 1950s Nepal. Specifically, she provides ethnographic insight into the two more recent types of “package” expatria and the “flexpatriate.” Modeled on the global “Shell families” of the 1960s and 1970s but institutionalized by the development of international human resources management in the 1980s, the expatriate package refers to the ways in which employers (corporation, government, or development agency) attempt to compensate workers for their geographic displacement. Such compensation occurs through the bureaucratic processes of measurement and documentation to ensure that workers do not fail, which is defined as returning home prior to the fulfilling their contracts. From the worker’s perspective, what we find is a collapsing division between public and private, work and home, and labor and leisure in which the employer, or often the outsourced support agency, enters the household abroad to advise the family on how to shop, decorate, maintain health, and access education. The employer compensates the expa-

triate “as if” they were in their home country, a lifestyle formulated and regulated through bureaucratic processes of forms, surveys, and paperwork. When expatriate workers fail, however, the blame is attributed not to the process but, rather, to the incompatibility of the family, or even more specifically the “trailing spouse,” with the international posting.

Starting in the 2000s, the package form of expatria was replaced by a more flexible and temporary worker, what she calls “flexpatriates,” in response to the new business realities of deterritorialization, not to mention the militarization and political instability of Nepal. Careers spent abroad gave way to increasingly specialized labor, short-term contracts, and the rise of highly compensated consultants and underpaid “semi-volunteers.” Instead of the “organization man” driven by company success, the “flexpatriate” follows the protean career of choice, personal branding, mobility, and detachment. In effect, employers expect such workers to be “boundaryless” international citizens able to bridge the home office and local site. Through compelling portraits of such flexpatriates, we meet mostly male workers detached from both Nepal and their employer. Despite the predictions of the Internet contributing to an increasingly flat earth in which the need for expatriates would be diminished, in Kathmandu technological realities rarely match home office expectations. Instead of a non-place expatria, Hindman finds expatriates using the Internet to start entrepreneurial ventures but not to replace their face-to-face community. As she wryly observes, “best friends are not offshorable” (p. 201).

Of particular interest to anthropologists, Hindman deconstructs the use and abuse of the culture concept hijacked from 1940s anthropology and repackaged by social psychologists for the purposes of cross-cultural training. For the expatriates of Kathmandu, cultural difference might be the very reason they are there—to translate office policies into local practices—but it is also something to be managed and ultimately erased so as to ensure the supposedly noncultural realm of the office. As workers receive training before departing for overseas assignments, culture is taught as a simple list of dos and don’ts, an ahistorical collection of traits that can be objectified, quantified, and charted. While abroad, culture is conflated with national stereotypes and celebrated as long as it can be performed on a stage or served on a plate at public events. However, back in the office, any cultural practice seen to be inconsistent with modernity or neoliberal values is understood as “laziness, backwardness, resistance” (p. 170).

Hindman's study reminds us of the importance of focusing on the mediators of globalization. Expatrias transcend the simple dyads of global and lo-

cal, producer and receiver, and origin and destination while transforming and being transformed by global structures.

## The Wherewithal of Life: Ethics, Migration, and the Question of Well-Being by Michael Jackson.

Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013. 272 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12315

Shahram Khosravi  
Stockholm University

Reading the first pages of Michael Jackson's *The Wherewithal of Life: Ethics, Migration, and the Question of Well-Being* made me recall a conversation I had with the author many years ago in Stockholm. Though short, it was inspirational for me as I was, at that time, a PhD student. After a reception at the university, I drove him to his hotel. When I started the engine, he asked me about how a Middle Eastern tribal man had ended up in a dark and cold Scandinavian country. I told him about my journeys without papers across many borders. His interest was genuine, and he listened passionately. Before getting out of the car, he looked at me and said: "Write about it." I did, and now, many years later, I read his book on migration.

Based on biographies of three men, Emmanuel, Roberto, and Ibrahim, born in the Global South who now live in the Global North, the book depicts quandaries many migrants struggle with every single day: shame of failure, sense of guilt, longing, homelessness, discrimination, violence, or a feeling of double abandonment. Like his interest and passion in hearing about my migratory trajectories, Jackson is enthusiastic to understand the causes and consequences of migration for three young men. The biographical form of the book offers an opportunity to contextualize these men's accounts of migration. It also helps us to explore abstract concepts of policy and law and translate them into cultural terms grounded in everyday life. Individual stories reveal the consequences of migration policies and the current border regime for people like Emmanuel, Roberto, and Ibrahim, who are searching for well-being somewhere other than the land in which they were born. Their stories show that for many people migration is, after all, arbitrary, formed by chances and contingencies.

A thoughtful scholar, Jackson historicizes experiences of these three young migrants with references to what the Jewish minority experienced during the first half of the last century in Europe. Throughout the book, Jackson interweaves the life histories of Emmanuel, Roberto, and Ibrahim with reflections invoked from Hannah Arendt, Primo Levi, and

Giorgio Agamben. However, Jackson skillfully does not let his interlocutors be represented (as many migration scholars who use Agamben do) merely as victims, voiceless and agencyless figures immobilized by borders. The life histories of the three young men show individual willfulness, power, and autonomy despite all restrictions.

Furthermore, unlike many other books on migration, *The Wherewithal of Life* is not built on a series of dichotomies: voluntary contra forced migration; legal contra irregular migration; refugees contra asylum seekers; or political contra economical migrants. This is what makes the book powerful. Rather than focusing on divisions, *The Wherewithal of Life* gains its narrative power from what emerges from the spaces of between-ness: between here and there; now and then; you and me; home and homeland; man and citizen; the legal and the illegalized; and even between the author and those about whom he writes. Existential reflections of Emmanuel, Roberto, and Ibrahim about belonging, roots, and routes echo the author's own thoughts and feelings about the same issues. How much does Jackson—constantly en route to "another visiting academic position"—see himself in Emmanuel, Roberto, or Ibrahim? Inspired by Walter Benjamin, he tries to link different forms of experiences—more individual and immediate ones (*erlebnis*) to historical and collective ones (*erfarung*). This is what makes Jackson, in Benjaminian meaning, a great storyteller—one able to go deeply inward, inside himself, and to emerge with a personal but at the same time collective story.

Rather being a book about migration, *The Wherewithal of Life* is a book about life and being in the world, which, as Roberto expresses it, "presents itself as a question" (p. 213). Like in his other books, Jackson, also a poet, thinks "poetically"—that is, "keeping alive a sense of what it means to live in the world one struggles to understand" (see Jackson 2000, 2007). Jackson tries to understand what happens to the world when, as Ibrahim expresses his concern for the vanishing of trust, "there is no more truth in words?" (p. 195) or when one, as Emmanuel puts it, should "break himself into pieces" (p. 75) to have a chance in the host country? In his struggle to understand, Jackson focuses not only on the significance of "ethics of small things" (loyalty, betrayal, and value of hospitality) but also on a higher law than the law of nation-states, as well as on an ethics



of life that transcends the ethics of any particular culture or nation.

Overall, *The Wherewithal of Life* is an interesting, beautifully written, engaging, and empirically rich book. It is undoubtedly an important contribution to the migration studies and anthropology in general.

## Caricaturing Culture in India: Cartoons and History in the Modern World by Ritu Gairola Khanduri.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. 370 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12316

Jennifer L. Jackson<sup>1</sup>

University of California, Los Angeles

Ritu Khanduri begins her historical and ethnographical account, *Caricaturing Culture in India: Cartoons and History in the Modern World*, with a fundamental question that neither journalists nor politicians nor scholars have known how to adeptly speak to: When recent insensitive political cartoons are followed by international protests and debates, and humor becomes a litmus test to draw boundaries between religion and political freedom, ultimately “why do cartoons matter in this world?” Through the book, she tells us the history and the daily story of why they have mattered in Indian cartooning’s 150-year history and why they continue to flourish as a part of Indian culture.

Khanduri traces the role that cartoons have played in political public discourse and the development of the Indian postcolonial state into its manifestation and negotiation of a local democracy, a national state, and a global circulation of neoliberal globalized remakings of that vernacular. She inevitably answers through both the historical and the contemporary how cartoons have played a role in developing an Indian vernacular democracy, the forms of free speech practiced to constitute it, and the liberal subject. Much of this conversation circulates around India’s strong ties between cartoons, their cartoonists, and the many spiritual gurus who have always had much to say about the place of cartoons in Indian culture, both locally and beyond the country’s borders.

Khanduri divides the book in three parts, focusing on colonial, national, and global periods. This division quite deftly explains the dialogic between the cartoonists and readers of the local with the long *durée* and temporally expanding life in which they both coarticulate. Through archival research and interviews with a community of contemporary cartoonists, the reader meets the well-known comics who made an indelible mark on how the past was seen and how that perspective carries through into today’s cartooning as political knowledge to mass-mediated publics, in addition to serving as a medium that does the work of interrogating and complicating any straight notion of a single hegemonic

### REFERENCES CITED

Jackson, Michael

2000[1995] *At Home in the World*. Durham: Duke University Press.

2007 *Excursions*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Indian relationship between “evidential power, cultural entanglement, and history” (p. 15).

The book is filled with critical, entertaining, and didactic cartoons by India’s past and present cartoonists. That Khanduri follows them as not just informative but also interrogative of current and longer histories of India’s politics and politicians illuminates the texture of this reversed single-frame event as a mediator of political discourse and the embodied performance of its subjects. As a parodic surrogate of an iconicized register across time, the cartoonist, the cartoon caricatures, and the hyperbole of their talk and appearance provide absurdity regarding absurd reality. Through the satirical, the parodic, and the carnivalesque, cartoonists as surrogates engage even the register of the state to recontextualize what appears to be “fixed”: this reflexive engagement with terms such as *development*, *democracy*, *neoliberalism*, and even *corruption* is brought to confront an otherwise-discursive branding by the voices of the state and international development to the indiscursive “opposition of a truth and fiction that situates caricature as the vantage point for realism, rather than its reverse” (p. 170). In this new “branding,” political communities come to cohere. Khanduri’s effective integration of history, language, embodiment, and the mediating paradigm of the carnivalesque is presented quite aptly here.

That the book is organized into three parts and has over 50 examples of political cartoons with detailed explanations makes it a great teaching tool. The themes of local, national, and global speak to familiar themes that students study, and the integration of the three complicates the familiar, making this a book worthy of the classroom. It is also an exceptional analytical resource for graduate and faculty alike. Khanduri’s citations are plentiful within current conversations in anthropology and history, and pointedly, she closes the book with another contemplation about a possibility for cartoons, this one regarding cartooning’s purpose to the discipline: How might scholarship shake its own use of particular images, language, and embodiment, which fix a country and its people as a kind of place with a kind of person, therefore best able to be analytically understood as the kinship people or the caste country, the nomadic group, the place with the ancestors—what Arjun Appadurai notes as our own way of “gatekeeping” (2014:304)? In this and a number of

other ways, Khanduri does not simply speak to Indian social science, much like the caricatures that fill her book with talk and talk about talk, politics and making politics about politics, and representing people through representations of people. This book deserves a print run to paperback so that it may be affordably accessible to students, instructors, and those in and out of the physical boundaries of India and its cartoons.

## Consoling Ghosts: Stories of Medicine and Mourning from Southeast Asians in Exile by Jean M. Langford.

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013. 304 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12317

Peter J. Bräunlein

University of Göttingen

Hired by the research unit of a U.S. hospital, Jean M. Langford conducted interviews with Southeast Asian emigrants about death. In her conversations with Khmer, Lao, Hmong, and Kmhmu people, Langford listened to stories of Southeast Asian wartime violence, displacement, and exile. Most notably, many of the emigrants' stories referred to the dead: "their needs, their discomfort, their authority, their power. The recurring appearances of spirits in emigrants' narratives obliquely registered the institutionalized exclusion or neglect of the souls and bodies of the dying and the dead. Souls are driven out of hospitalized patients by clinical talk of death, leaving the patients listless and depressed" (p. 3).

The documented stories of hauntings and ghosts are not decoded as parables of cultural differences but read as parables of life and death and as critique of the U.S. healthcare apparatus. Langford admirably resisted the common procedure of "anthropologizing" ghosts as cultural forms of belief or psychologizing them as metaphors for a traumatic past and its repressed effects in the present. *Consoling Ghosts* is neither a sort of applied medical anthropology nor a collection of ethnically different imaginations of spirits, ghosts, and afterlife. Langford's aims are more ambitious. Her remarkable monograph is a theoretically demanding meditation on conflicting imaginations and ethics of death, on thanatopolitics (Agamben), necropolitics (Mbembe), and the "co-belonging" of the living and the dead. It is also a critical objection to scholarly conversations "about haunting in the wake of violence [that] has been conducted without reference to those in the contemporary world who speak of their own or others' encounters with the dead" (p. 210). Taking ghosts and those who encounter them seriously leads to the question "What does the literal ghost have to offer to this

### NOTE

1. Jennifer Jackson, 39, passed away May 21, 2015. Her colleague Elinor Ochs acted as her proxy in proofreading this review.

### REFERENCE CITED

Appadurai, Arjun

2014[1986] *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

conversation?" (p. 210). This question functions as leitmotif for the seven chapters of the book.

Chapter 1, "Violent Traces," is about trauma and the dominant social scientific models, mostly based on psychoanalytical presumptions, which explain its psychodynamics and ways to overcome post-traumatic stress syndrome by retelling traumatic events. For the emigrants, the maintenance, or the reconstruction, of their relationship with the dead is of vital importance, whereas the prescribed verbal interaction to heal post-traumatic stress seems inappropriate or even strange to them (p. 50).

In chapter 2, "Displacements," Langford considers the emigrants' accounts of topological spirits. In Southeast Asia, spirits inhabit the landscape and are closely linked to certain locations. During war, however, spirits and human beings both suffered displacement. The ancestral landscapes of Cambodia and Laos were severely hurt. The emigrants discuss the questions if and why spirits do not inhabit the U.S. landscape. The alienation of spirits of place in U.S. society, Langford argues, "prefigures the alienation of spirits of the ill on hospital wards and the alienation of the spirits of the dead in morgues and mortuaries" (p. 14).

Chapter 3, "Disciplines of Dying," focuses on North American standards of end-of-life care and its life-prolonging technologies. *Ars moriendi*—the art of dying—doesn't exist anymore. Instead, the individual's death in Western societies is disciplined by technocratic and bureaucratic regulations. The separation of family members from the dying individual, the insistence on informing the patient about the terminal diagnosis, the underlying concept of a soul that leaves the body in the very moment of death, and the psychology of dying and mourning "in the right way" are all considered as part of biomedical rationality. However, as Langford argues, behind these practices and ideas are not only Euroamerican cultural presuppositions but also eschatological Protestant narratives. This leads to tension and mistrust among Southeast Asian emigrants, who conceptualize the boundaries between life and death, and matter and spirit, differently and,

furthermore, consider long-lasting funeral ceremonies necessary for the orientation of the wandering soul and the maintenance of an intimate relationship with the dead.

Chapter 4, “Dangerous Language,” elaborates on how the practice of “truth telling”—the disclosure of terminal diagnosis—presupposes an essentially theological concept of interiority, autonomy, and sovereignty of the modern subject. This latent Christian theology is challenged by emigrants’ stories in which an alternative ethos of death rooted in other cosmological imaginaries becomes visible (p. 13). Chapter 5, “Syllables of Power,” and chapter 6, “Postmortem Economies,” based on an extensive reading of ethnographic material, explore Southeast Asian healing and death rituals, as well as techniques for maintaining a reciproc-

cal and material exchange between the living and the dead—a topic that is further elaborated in chapter 7, “Spirit Debt.” In her afterword, “On the Status of Ghosts,” Langford outlines the theoretical challenges and ethical consequences of the nonsymbolic, material, and literal dimensions of ghostly encounters.

In her excellent book, the stories of Langford’s interlocutors allow for a deeper understanding of Southeast Asian migrants. Beyond that, Langford brings rich ethnographic material on death, dying, and mourning into dialogue with Euroamerican concepts and institutional practices, and she succeeds in generating sophisticated theoretical arguments against the coercive logic of bioethical end-of-life discourses and for alternative engagements with life and death.

## Living with Lupus: Women and Chronic Illness in Ecuador by Ann Miles.

Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013. 204 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12318

**Suzanne E. Morrissey**

*Whitman College*

In *Living with Lupus*, Ann Miles delves into the lives of women suffering from chronic illness in Ecuador. Broad themes of living with systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) are elaborated with acumen without sacrificing intriguing details of the idiosyncrasies and particularities of illness experiences. The work focuses on working- and middle-class women in Ecuador’s third-largest city of Cuenca, a place steeped in conservative Catholic tradition and class and racial hierarchies. Miles has worked in Cuenca for over two decades, with her research focused on the effects of internal and transnational migration on families in the city and the marketing of “natural” medicine. As medical anthropology has taken on chronic illness as a central topic, this book brings to the field a needed analysis in Latin America, where the focus has largely been infectious disease and folk medicine.

The book opens with a useful background to SLE, an autoimmune disorder characterized by diffuse muscle and joint pain, eczema-like rashes, photosensitivity, chronic fatigue, and, eventually, internal organ damage as one’s own body attacks itself at the cellular level. In straightforward fashion, Miles describes the signs of the onset of lupus; the challenges of diagnosis and treatment; the emotional, social, and financial tolls exacted on lupus sufferers; the contradictory nature of disease categorization; the discursive construction of illness narratives that reveals the culture below; and the ways in which gender, race, and social class matter to chronic illness suffering. While Miles, in her words, is presenting an

“extended case study of one illness” (p. 6), she nonetheless speaks to universal themes of social suffering that extend beyond the boundaries of a single disease.

Miles centers the ethnography on Rosa Quitasaca, who she has known for nearly 30 years. Rosa’s story unfolds like a perfect storm: unusually rapid onset of severe symptoms, delayed diagnosis, growing skepticism and suspicion of biomedical providers and public hospital services, and thinning financial, emotional, and social network resources. Compounding these challenges is the absence of Rosa’s husband, who has migrated to the United States to lessen the family’s burdens by sending remittances from the work he has found there. His absence permeates Rosa’s experience of lupus, and Miles questions if the stress of his departure exacerbates her disease symptoms. Yet migration has been a necessary evil, like it has for many Ecuadorian families, that allows the family to stay ahead of Rosa’s mounting medical expenses.

Placed strategically in conversation with Rosa’s story are eight additional personal narratives, two for each chapter, corresponding with narrative arc themes (chs. 4–7): liminality, loss, suffering, and transformation as both independent features of illness narratives and as “intertwined in multiple ways” (p. 14). In chapter 4, Turnerian liminality is used to describe the effects of becoming a disease that leaves one “neither healthy nor legitimately ill” (p. 63). Through the stories of Jessica and Paula, the reader learns that this may mean inhabiting an emotional space between hope and denial, of perpetual dependency and disruption to desired life trajectories, and calls to defend one’s character. Chapter 5 explores “how loss and illness mutually reinforce one another” (p. 87)—particularly how lupus interferes with

both traditional feminine expectations (marriage, motherhood) and changing modern expectations (including higher education, employment, and financial independence). Here Valentina and Leonor lead the reader into a world of debilitating pain, which robs the women of their abilities to fulfill idealized roles. Miles's task is a difficult one as she finds herself navigating a literature on women's suffering that perpetuates beliefs about illnesses like lupus as nothing more than the somaticization of women's psychological conditions. Chapters 6 and 7 deepen the themes of suffering and transformation by drawing out ways Catholicism informs the question "Why me?," often asked by Miles's informants. Following Carmela and Mercedes, and then Monica and Sonia, the ideology of *sufrimiento* (understood as the dignified suffering of the Virgin Mary) is harnessed by women to achieve a "new orientation toward life"—to make sense of, come to terms with, and even find personal agency through lupus, and chronic pain in particular.

*Living with Lupus* could be overlooked by potential audiences due to its seemingly narrow focus on a single illness in a specific place and time. However, it will appeal to numerous audiences in anthropology and health sciences and be at home in graduate seminars in medical anthropology as well as introductory courses in cultural anthropology and cultural competency. Miles sets the stage for a range of discussions: from theory (e.g., foundational frameworks in medical anthropology, especially as influenced by symbolic interpretive approaches) and new perspective in the ethnography of the Andes to genre (concise writing that offers comparative and productive use of informant narrative for argumentation) and, simply and broadly, "the human condition"—how physical suffering is inextricably tied to social relationships, economic and political conditions of the state, attitudes and experiences with health systems, and features of identity such as gender, race, ethnicity, and religiosity.

## Mosquito Trails: Ecology, Health, and the Politics of Entanglement by Alex M. Nading.

Oakland: University of California Press, 2014. 288 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12319

**Ann McElroy**

*University at Buffalo, The State University of New York*

Dengue fever (hereafter, "dengue") is a viral disease transmitted to humans by *Aedes aegypti*, a mosquito species adapted to reproducing in shallow pools and household containers such as pots, washbasins, bottles, and cisterns. Classified as an emerging infectious disease, dengue is a focus of surveillance and research in many tropical regions. Lacking a vaccine or cure, prevention requires strategies to control mosquitoes and minimize their reproduction.

In *Mosquito Trails*, Alex Nading portrays the political ecology of dengue in Ciudad Sandino, a Nicaraguan city of more than 100,000 people. Between 2006 and 2011, Nading accompanied community workers (*brigadistas*) in their house-to-house dengue campaign, rode on garbage trucks that collected and recycled containers in which mosquitoes might breed, and interacted with garbage collectors, recyclers, health workers, home owners, families of sick children, entomologists, epidemiologists, and staff of the Ministry of Health and community-based health organizations. The product is a vivid ethnography of complex community responses to dengue fever epidemics.

To make sense of this complexity, Nading uses the concept of "entanglement"—the "attachments and affinities, antagonisms and animosities that bring people, nonhuman animals, and things into each other's worlds," including

the "practices by which bodies and environments become attached" (p. 11). In quantum physics, entanglement theory refers to particles becoming correlated in such a way that they continue to affect one another even when separated. Archaeologist Ian Hodder (2012) describes the complexity and interdependence of humans with material things as "entanglement," and medical anthropologist Margaret Lock discusses an entanglement theory of dementia: when "mind, persons, life events, aging, and environment interact to precipitate neurological and behavioral transformation" (2013:5).

There are six chapters organized into three parts. Part 1, "Infrastructure," describes Ciudad Sandino, a young city developed to accommodate Nicaraguans displaced by earthquakes, flooding, and hurricanes, and the historical emergence of dengue in a particular system of water and sewage systems developed in this community. Part 2, "Bodies," portrays the organizations and persons charged with responding to the threat of dengue. Nading notes the gendered dimensions of control systems, with women (as health workers and as homemakers) holding primary responsibility to "regulate" private spaces through health education, surveillance, and abatement. Despite official views of humans and mosquitoes as antagonists, an "ecological aesthetic" emerges as brigadistas learn about "mosquito-human lifeworlds" (p. 15) and come to empathize with female mosquitoes as *madre solteras*, single mothers, as are many of the health workers themselves. Part 3, "Knowledge," discusses ways of knowing and the production of knowledge among the parties

involved in surveillance and control, demonstrating how epidemiology and public health are entangled with Nicaraguan politics.

Clearly, this book is not solely about a disease. Rather, it describes the production of health through “more-than-human” practices and interactions. Its explicit goal is to redefine and locate health not exclusively in the physical body nor in the “natural” environment but, rather, in relationships between and among humans and other species. The focus on dengue serves as the hub from which multiple elements—climate, ecology, practices, beliefs, affiliations, power, and strategies—radiate and connect.

Nading calls these elements *trails*, markers of interactions of humans and other animals within shared landscapes. His choice of “trail” as a trope is purposeful to “tell a story about disease that belies easy separations like local/global or body/environment” (p. 20) and to remind global health specialists that “environments do not just cause health problems; rather humans and non-humans incorporate one another’s actions” (p. 202). Local ecologies matter, and generalizations about emerging infectious diseases as biosecurity threats need to be critically examined. Further, Nading suggests a new ethic regarding multispecies problems. Studying human health requires extending “local biology” to “the non-human *bios* of insects, rainfall, and viruses” (p. 203). If we continue to view mosquitoes as pests, we are left with an anthropocentrism that doesn’t fit the need for holistic solutions to climate change and health disparities in unevenly developed cities (p. 207).

In addition to exceptionally skillful writing, there are many strengths in the book’s organization. Using endnotes creates greater readability. A list of acronyms for 17 organizations such as MINSA (Ministerio de Salud) makes reading less tedious. The bibliography is extensive, and copyediting is nearly perfect, but the nine-page index could have been usefully expanded. Another issue is that definitions of *entanglement* and *entanglements* range in this book from specific meanings (“relationships that connect humans and non-humans”) to vague connotations (“experiences of learning about and learning from”; “processes of becoming in a shared environment”) to obscure implications (“an enacted condition of participation and motion”). This variety of definitions could be heuristically problematic.

Despite minor semantic issues, *Mosquito Trails* is a masterful work and a fine resource for courses in medical anthropology and global health. It will be welcomed by critical medical anthropologists as a solid case for the political ecology of health.

#### REFERENCES CITED

- Hodder, Ian  
2012 *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things*. Malden: John Wiley and Sons.
- Lock, Margaret  
2013 *The Alzheimer Conundrum: Entanglements of Dementia and Aging*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

## Witchcraft and a Life in the New South Africa by Isak Niehaus.

International African Library series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 259 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12320

**Douglas Falen**

*Agnes Scott College*

*Witchcraft and a Life in the New South Africa* is a biography of Jimmy Mohale (a pseudonym), Isak Niehaus’s longtime friend and research assistant. Jimmy used to accompany the author in investigating witchcraft from a detached vantage point, but later Jimmy became embroiled in his own witchcraft intrigues, which form the basis of this book. In 2005, 40-year-old Jimmy died of an AIDS-like illness, but he maintained until the end that it was not AIDS but, rather, his father’s witchcraft that was afflicting him. The year before his death, he asked Niehaus to record his story, and this biography is the product of 21 sessions with Jimmy, as well as interviews with some of his friends and relatives. In ten chap-

ters, Niehaus lays out a brief political history of South Africa and a theoretical introduction to witchcraft as the backdrop to Jimmy’s account of his troubled life during the transition to a post-apartheid South Africa. Niehaus concludes with a critical view of Jimmy’s obsession with witchcraft and his failure to consider biomedical causes and treatments for his condition. This is a biography, but the ethnographic perspective is apparent in the way Niehaus draws on his knowledge of the region’s customs, social relations, and cosmology to contextualize Jimmy’s narrative. This work is most relevant to scholars and graduate students in anthropology, though it would also be of interest to historians, political scientists, and public health policy makers.

The book traces Jimmy’s modest beginnings, educational success, and promising marriage, followed by his frustrations over a stagnant teaching career, marital discord, and the deaths of numerous family members. Although



the young Jimmy was bright, ambitious, and hopeful of his prospects in the new South Africa, this is a story of misfortune, misery, and death. However, this is not an example of voyeuristic sensationalism. In fact, frequently the account is quite mundane, and Jimmy tells his story matter-of-factly, citing everyday logistical problems of transportation, meals, money, and housing. Readers receive detailed information about taxis that break down, neighborhood quarrels, personality conflicts, family rivalry, and the search for better paying jobs.

When Jimmy was in his thirties, there was a series of deaths in the family, amid suspicions that his father was a witch. After consulting diviners and Christian prophets whose verdicts were always the same, Jimmy came to believe that his father was responsible for killing his kin. He also began to suspect that his own personal and professional misfortunes were the result of his father bewitching him. Jimmy and his siblings spent several years and significant financial resources in the mystical fight against their father. They visited diviners, healers, and doctors, looking for ever-more-powerful individuals to diagnose and combat his witchcraft. The book reveals how the Mohale family mourned the loss of loved ones again and again, culminating in Jimmy's own tragic death, after he suffered separation from his nuclear family and lost all his money.

Those familiar with witchcraft in Africa will recognize the Mohales' tendency to hedge their bets by practicing a combination of traditional and Western medicine and by calling on both diviners and Christian prophets. This fine-grained account also gives readers a taste of just how intertwined witchcraft is with issues of family, love, health, sex, money, and jealousy on a personal level. One of the

book's theoretical claims is that many studies overemphasize connections between witchcraft and social structure. According to Niehaus, such works portray witchcraft as a predictable response to inequality, jealousy, and social disruption. Without denying these patterns on a macro level, Niehaus contends that Jimmy's engagement with witchcraft is more accurately viewed as having been shaped by personal relationships and behaviors, by unusual misfortune, and by longstanding suspicions and grudges among family members—none of which can be linked to social structure.

But the concern that Niehaus finds most important for anthropology is the problem of competing visions of reality, as illustrated by Jimmy's rejection of the author's opinion that he should submit to an AIDS test and undergo antiretroviral therapy. Niehaus saw witchcraft as an avoidance strategy so that Jimmy did not have to face the stigma of an AIDS diagnosis or take responsibility for extramarital affairs that led to his contracting the illness. Niehaus is sympathetic to anthropologists' efforts at neutrality regarding others' supernatural worldviews but argues that relativism overlooks the suffering and misery caused by witchcraft beliefs. Challenging those who would embrace alternative realities and the existence of supernatural forces, he writes, "anthropological studies can ill afford to adopt an uncritical, purely interpretive, stance towards witchcraft and divination" (p. 212). While some anthropologists might take issue with his anti-relativism, his stance derives from a heartfelt sense of regret at being unable to convince his long-time friend and collaborator to seek care and avoid the dire consequences of witchcraft beliefs. Whatever readers' theoretical leanings, they cannot help being moved by Jimmy's story and the gravity of witchcraft's manifestations in Africa today.

## Native Evangelism in Central Mexico by Hugo G. Nutini and Jean F. Nutini.

Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014. 224 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12321

**David Frye**

*University of Michigan*

Catholicism no longer holds the uncontested grip on religiosity in Latin America that it once enjoyed. Established as the official religion of almost all the newly independent Spanish American republics in the early 19th century, the Catholic Church was gradually stripped of its privileged position through decades of political struggle, civil wars, and revolutions. Most recently, Bolivia eliminated state backing of "the Roman Catholic Apostolic religion" in its 2009 constitution, leaving only Argentina and Costa Rica to grant Catholicism special constitutional status. Disestablishment

has gone hand in hand with a rise in the adoption of religious alternatives. A wide variety of new flavors of Christianity have actively competed for religious hearts and minds since the 1960s, with considerable success in some Latin American countries (Guatemala is, at most, only about half-Catholic today). The most widely adopted non-Catholic Christianities in contemporary Latin America are not the older "mainline" Protestant denominations but the newer churches usually described as evangelical or pentecostal.

*Native Evangelism* is an "analytical ethnography" of two "native evangelical sects," as they term religious groups founded in Mexico by Mexicans. This book is, by my count, the 11th ethnography of central Mexico written or co-written over a lifetime of research by Hugo Nutini, who died in April 2013, and the first coauthored by his wife and

research partner of many decades, Jean F. Nutini. Briefer than H. Nutini's encyclopedic volumes on Mexican folk Catholicism, it is based on a decade of research (1996–2006) in small urban centers from Tlaxcala to Córdoba, Veracruz, drawing also on the authors' decades of research in rural Tlaxcala.

After detailing their analytic approach, the authors present a brief history of the foundation of a native sect, *Amistad y Vida*, by a Presbyterian minister in Puebla in 1982. They then cover the group's theological orientation, beliefs, and ideological principles and the practical "imperatives to action" derived from those principles. A second chapter on this church covers "the structure and material organization of the congregation," its weekly and yearly ritual cycles, and its use of Pentecostal-style glossolalia. In the most interesting section, the authors compare *Amistad y Vida*'s social networking and kinship relations with traditional *compadrazgo* networks in rural Tlaxcala. The chapter ends with a discussion of outsiders' perceptions of the movement and the authors' estimation of its future prospects.

The next two chapters cover a second "native sect," *La Luz del Mundo* (LLDM), founded in the northern city of Monterrey in 1926 by a recent Mexican convert to Pentecostalism. These chapters precisely echo those on *Amistad y Vida* while setting up a sharp contrast between the two. Where *Amistad y Vida* is egalitarian in orientation and has grown by word of mouth among the urban middle classes of central Mexico to perhaps 120,000 members, LLDM has, under the authoritarian leadership of its founder's son and heir, aggressively proselytized among the urban working classes and now claims a "membership of more than two and a half million" in congregations throughout the Americas—a claim the authors regard as highly suspect, though they credit it with at least 400,000 members in Mexico and half a million abroad.

The comparison between the two sects is strikingly judgmental: "LLDM is, at least at the top, a destructive sect, whereas *Amistad y Vida* is the most ethical, forthright, and honorable of all the native and Protestant sects we have encountered in central Mexico" (pp. 151–152). The authors are clearly fond of the friendly and egalitarian *Amistad y Vida* and openly disdainful of LLDM, especially its top leadership, several of whom have been credibly accused of crimes ranging from embezzlement to rape and the rampant sexual abuse of minors and are allegedly protected only by their close ties to Mexico's longtime official political party. Indeed, after the "Apostle Samuel," leader of LLDM and son of its founder, died in December of 2014 (while I was reading this book), high-ranking politicians sent condolences and attended his funeral despite multiple accusations of rape and malfeasance against him.

The authors cap off the book with a chapter on "the process of conversion," in which they look not only at these two churches but at Protestant evangelization (and Catholic reactions) in central Mexico generally. Though I find their predictions of a violent anti-evangelist backlash by traditional folk Catholics in rural central Mexico (p. 141) somewhat unlikely, their points are well considered and well taken, and their observations on the attractions of Evangelical churches to a rapidly urbanizing, commercializing, "secularizing," and increasingly "transient" population, and particularly to women, who feel themselves cut off from participation in the urban incarnation of Catholicism, are excellent. Their "basic model of conversion," which draws on interviews with a wide range of converts to elaborate a psychological and social profile of the structure of conversion, is insightful. Altogether this is a well-researched book on an important and very current topic and will be of interest to researchers of Latin America and of comparative Christianities worldwide.

## Amazon Town TV: An Audience Ethnography in Gurupá, Brazil by Richard Pace and Brian P. Hinote.

Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2013. 224 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12323

Jennifer Ashley

George Mason University

Richard Pace and Brian Hinote's *Amazon Town TV* uses a mixed-methods approach to explore the changing role of television in Gurupá, a remote town located in the Brazilian state of Pará. What is perhaps most unique about this audience ethnography is that it draws on fieldwork over a 27-year-long period. Pace began doing research in Gurupá as a graduate student during the early 1980s while participating in Conrad Kottak's multi-sited study of television in Brazil,

which forms the basis of *Prime-Time Society* (2009), originally published in 1990. In the years that followed, Pace returned 14 times to Gurupá, complementing his study of media with attention to political economy and political ecology. In 2009, sociologist Hinote joined the project.

*Amazon Town TV* continues the research begun in *Prime-Time Society*, meaning that the authors incorporate the same "positivistic approach centered on television's influence and viewers' ability to mediate it" (p. viii). Opting for this approach is challenging, they suggest, given the changes in the field of anthropology, and media ethnography in particular, since the 1990s. When *Prime-Time Society* was published, it was among the first anthropological analyses of media. In

fact, Debra Spitulnik began her 1993 article in the *Annual Review of Anthropology* stating: “There is as yet no ‘anthropology of mass media’” (p. 293). Although the rich body of ethnographic work that has since emerged has grappled with the relationships between media and the ways people think and talk about the world, it has overwhelmingly suggested that the question of media effects is “unanswerable” (see, e.g., Abu-Lughod 2005:26). Pace and Hinote, in contrast, argue that the effect of media on people and cultures can, in fact, be determined through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods (p. 188).

In their analysis, the authors develop what they call a “theoretical middle ground,” which seeks to assess the “relative strength of television influence vis-à-vis viewers’ ability to mediate it” (p. 20). To bridge the methodological divides they perceive in media studies, the authors provide a skillful multidisciplinary overview of cross-cultural television studies in chapter 1. In chapter 2, they situate their project within Brazilian television studies. These carefully written and thoroughly researched chapters would be an excellent resource for students looking for an introduction to media ethnography techniques and examples of their application to an empirical case study.

In the next four chapters, the authors transport the reader to Gurupá, where, they argue, the lack of access to other media forms allows them to “isolate television’s impact” (p. 177). Chapter 3 provides an extensive description of the context of the media reception they analyze, including the area’s socioeconomic conditions, geographical features, history, and relation to activist struggles in different political moments. Chapter 4 describes the arrival of television to the town, relating the experience of Gurupá to the five-stage framework of televisual impact developed in Kottak’s work. Adapting Stuart Hall’s framework for analyzing viewer response, Pace and Hinote outline the instances in which viewers in Gurupá heed televisual messages in chapter 5 and those in which they miss, ignore, or resist these messages in chapter 6. Their discussion pays special attention to the response of residents of Gurupá to “social merchandising,” a Brazilian televisual practice in which writers intentionally

insert social and political issues into the script to raise awareness and encourage discussion. In this chapter, the authors outline the instances in which residents of Gurupá fail to respond to televisual texts as Brazilians (presumably) do in the rest of the country due to their lack of the required cultural capital or proximity to the issues raised.

Attempting to cover so much analytic ground over such a long period of time does have its presentational challenges. At times, the authors’ attention to the discussion of their quantitative data and its correspondence to the categories outlined in previous literature seems to overshadow the insights that emerge more organically through their own ethnographic material. Some of the richest moments in the text occur in descriptions of paddling to a neighbor’s house to watch television (pp. 2–4) or the frustration experienced when visitors from São Paulo insist on talking during a television program (p. 95). More of these kinds of moments would have been welcome.

Overall, the methodological choices made by Pace and Hinote have produced a broad-ranging discussion of the various analytic tools available for deciphering media reception. The possibility of following the changes in the community that have occurred alongside the increased access to television over such a long period of time make this book a particularly interesting read. Whether or not Pace and Hinote have indeed answered the question of media effects will depend on the epistemological perspective of the individual reader.

#### REFERENCES CITED

- Abu-Lughod, Lila  
2005 *Dramas of Nationhood: The Politics of Television in Egypt*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Kottak, Conrad  
2009[1990] *Prime-Time Society: An Anthropological Analysis of Television and Culture*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast.
- Spitulnik, Debra  
1993 *Anthropology and Mass Media*. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22:293–315.

## Russian Case Morphology and the Syntactic Categories by David Pesetsky.

Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2013. 192 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12324

Katya Pertsova

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

In this monograph, written for syntacticians, David Pesetsky presents his latest research on case within the framework

of generative syntactic theory. Through a detailed analysis of complex phenomena in the Russian language, the author makes a radical proposal that reduces case to part of speech categories.

Learners of languages such as Latin, German, or Russian are mostly familiar with cases (such as nominative, dative, accusative, etc.) in the context of agonizing about which

suffix or article to add to a noun depending on its function in a sentence. Learners of Russian, in particular, are often exasperated by the slew of idiosyncratic rules related to case. One of the most famous oddities in the language is the behavior of phrases with numerals such as “two,” “one hundred,” “a dozen.” Typically, every word in Russian modifying a noun must match (or “agree with”) this noun in case, gender, and number. However, in phrases with numerals, this agreement breaks down. For example: “these two beautiful tables” is realized with the following morphology: “these (NOM.PL.) two (NOM.MASC.) beautiful (GEN.PL.MASC.) table (GEN.SG.MASC.)” The pattern does not seem to make sense: Why should the noun be marked as genitive in a context where it normally (e.g., in the absence of *two*) appears as nominative? Why should the adjective *beautiful* agree with the noun in case but not in number, while the words *these* and *two* agree neither in case nor number? Another example is the phrase “last (NOM.PL.) whole (GEN.PL.) seven (NOM.) years (GEN.PL.)” in which the nominative and genitive cases keep alternating from one word to the next. As usual, native speakers don’t find such phrases problematic or illogical and are scarcely aware of the complexities of their own grammar. For the linguists, however, these sorts of patterns present a challenge and an opportunity to glimpse the general workings of the “linguistic software” in addition to understanding the structure of a specific language.

Pesetsky’s book attempts to accomplish both goals above: through an analysis of Russian (with occasional excursions into other languages supporting his claims), he makes a proposal that revises our understanding of case with far-reaching consequences for all languages. More specifically, Pesetsky argues that the Russian phrases with numerals reveal to us that case is not an independent category but, rather, a realization of parts of speech such as noun, verb, preposition, and so on. For example, accusative is a verbal category, while genitive is a nominal category. Thus, all nouns are “born genitive,” and this is why they show up as genitive in Russian phrases with numerals. This is also

why nouns typically assign genitive case, so that phrases appearing right after other nouns (more precisely, phrases standing in a specific syntactic relation to nouns) are marked as genitive (e.g., “the hat *of Sam*,” “the destruction *of the city*,” “the grain *of salt*,” where the preposition *of* in English corresponds to genitive in case-marking languages). Typically, the primeval genitive case that the nouns are born with is invisible because it gets overwritten by the nominative case assigned by the determiners (words like “the,” “a,” “these”), but certain syntactic processes affecting numerals prevent this overwriting in Russian and possibly in other languages. For example, Pesetsky suggests that the French contrast between *ces jeunes acteurs* (“these young actors”) and *beaucoup de jeunes acteurs* (“many young actors”), in which the genitive-like *de* is required after the numeral *beaucoup* (many) might have a similar explanation as the genitive in the Russian phrases with numerals.

The fact that a single word may stand in a number of syntactic relationships to other words in a sentence suggests that it should be possible for it to be marked for multiple cases. This is, in fact, what happens in so-called case-stacking languages, such as Lardil, the language that inspired Pesetsky’s work. If Pesetsky is right, languages like Russian are also case stacking, but this property is largely concealed from us by a number of complex interacting factors.

To integrate his proposal with the rest of syntactic theory and to cover a large number of other patterns in Russian, Pesetsky is forced to introduce many wrinkles and complex assumptions. At times, it seemed that the complexity of the analysis almost rivaled the complexity of the data it was supposed to explain. But with every new chapter, the author brought more data supporting his proposal or explained how the assumptions he was relying on were independently motivated. In the end, the scope and the creativity of his proposal are impressive. Even if the details of this analysis turn out not to be exactly right, it is guaranteed to advance the field of morpho-syntax by challenging centuries-old assumptions, as well as raising new possibilities for research and new ways of looking at the interaction between syntax and morphology.

## Kings for Three Days: The Play of Race and Gender in an Afro-Ecuadorian Festival by Jean Muteba Rahier.

Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013. 216 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12325

Diego Quiroga

Universidad San Francisco de Quito

*Kings for Three Days* describes and analyzes a ritual that takes place in two communities in the north coast of Ecuador among Afro-Ecuadorians. The ritual is performed in Jan-

uary to celebrate the Epiphany, the event during which the three kings come and give gifts to baby Jesus. Jean Muteba Rahier studies the way in which rituals express and frame the complex social, economic, and ethnic relations that characterize the area. Rahier explores and analyzes the similarities and differences in the way the ritual is celebrated in two towns in the Province of Esmeraldas, Santo Domingo de Onzole and La Tola. The towns are in one of the poorest

areas of Ecuador. They depend to a large extent on subsistence activities and are being incorporated to an economic system through a series of boom-and-bust cycles that have systematically marginalized the two communities. In both towns, rituals act as commentaries and reflections of social, political, and economic relations, as well as on gender and ethnic segregation and relations with outsiders.

The rituals are different in many important ways, and Rahier correctly indicates the ways in which these variances illustrate important differences between the towns. The town of La Tola is multiethnic and characterized by a more complex social and ethnic situation, wherein white mestizos from the southern province of Manabí (Manabas) migrate to the town and appropriate the land that Afro-Ecuadorians consider to be theirs. In the case of La Tola, the event is more a commentary and a reflection of racial and ethnic tensions, whereas in the case of the Santo Domingo, where interethnic tensions are part of a more complex social and economic system, the ritual becomes more a reflection of gender relations. Santo Domingo, the author argues, is less complex from an ethnic point of view, and thus, there, gender relations acquire a more central role. The enacted birth of a new baby from a white mestizo outsider is a moment of reflection about the power, the desire, and the rejection of whiteness. An important and interesting point that Rahier highlights is the way symbolic criticism is not only directed toward outsiders but also toward many of the activities of the members of the community. Afro-Ecuadorian men, for example, are criticized because of their lack of commitment to their families and their constant search for new partners, which is characterized as a reason for joking and parody.

Through parody, performances during liminal stages that refer to internal and external tensions create a distance from the daily practice that permits a critical reflection on these practices. Whereas in the case of Santo Domingo, the main issues have to do with solving many internal conflicts and tensions, in the case of La Tola, where many outsiders, often white mestizos such as Manabas, have been taking over the land, the economic tension that is generated by their presence is processed during the rituals. Powerful white mestizos, including the president of the country, are

parodied but also imitated in an attempt to reject and appropriate their power. During these ritual performances, the marginal position of Afro-Ecuadorians produces desire and resentment with respect to these powerful others.

Multilocality and multivocality are two important aspects of rituals that are described by Rahier. Different localities provide alternative contexts to the play of symbols. In multilocality, the same ritual structure acquires different meanings as the economic, social, and political context changes. However, there are similarities that Rahier also uses and explores. By looking at these variations, the author is able to better understand the way in which social relations are being conceived and reproduced.

Future analysis could expand the extraterritorial uses and functions of the rituals, exploring how these events can create more formal social and political movements. What is the role they play on the practices and the activities of black activism? For example, in the case of the indigenous people in Ecuador, rituals have been used effectively for indigenous mobilization. There have been various emergent Afro-Ecuadorian organizations that defend their territory and rights in the region from the incursion of different agribusinesses, such as the shrimp farming and oil palm production, that have occurred in the area. To what extent do these emergent process draw in their symbolic and ritual opposition to the white-mestizo dominant groups? One of the questions that needs to be answered concerns how these groups are able, or not, to translate their ritual reflections into effective political action. The differences in social and economic complexities that explain the diverse ritual practices need to be explained better. In the last chapter, in which Rahier describes the changes that have occurred in both communities during recent years, he could have made better use of the interesting data collected to explore not only how the relationship between the disappearing rituals reflects changing values and social systems but also how their disappearance reformulates these social relations and values. Overall, though, *Kings for Three Days* is a very interesting and thought-provoking treatment of the relationship between social and economic changes and their symbolic manifestations.

## The Disappearing Mestizo: Configuring Difference in the Colonial New Kingdom of Granada by Joanne Rappaport.

Durham: Duke University Press, 2014. 368 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12326

Paul K. Eiss

Carnegie Mellon University

*The Disappearing Mestizo* is a pathbreaking study of race mixture in the New Kingdom of Granada (present-day

Colombia) in the 16th and 17th centuries. Unlike most historians of race in the Spanish colonial world, Joanne Rappaport eschews any characterization of mixed-race populations as discrete social groups. Instead, she explores the practices by which individuals of mixed Spanish, indigenous, and African descent (or an admixture of these) were named as mestizo or mulatto by others or by themselves.



In the early colonial period, “mestizo” was a “disappearing category” (p. 10), into and out of which people moved in fluid and ephemeral ways, as claims of mixed heritage were asserted, insinuated, and effaced in diverse contexts. While *The Disappearing Mestizo* is based entirely on archival research, Rappaport calls it an “ethnographic history”—each group of archival documents is an “ethnographic scenario, something akin to the settings that ethnographers encounter in the field, which furnish the ground on which ethnographic description and analysis is constructed” (p. 22).

Rappaport’s “scenarios” populate this book with a diverse cast—if not caste—of characters, beginning with Inés de Hinojosa, a 16th-century adulteress who murdered two husbands before ending up on the hangman’s noose. Conquistadors seek to marry off their illegitimate daughters with Muisca noblewomen to well-born Spaniards; a mulatto man is alternately accused of raping indigenous women and of inciting indigenous and mixed-race plebeians against Spanish overlords; an alderman of mixed descent works strenuously at gaining admission to Spanish high society; young mestiza women alternately present themselves clothed in Spanish and indigenous “habits” to the consternation of colonial officials. Most captivating, for this reader, were Alonso de Silva and Diego de Torres, both descendants of Iberian conquistadors and Muisca women of chiefly lines, who asserted claims to be legitimate native *caciques*, or chiefs. While opposed by Spanish lords, Rappaport demonstrates that they pressed their cases as “consummate insiders” (p. 145); though derided for mixed descent and the nefarious qualities such was presumed to imply, both men made their Christian and Spanish ancestry central to their claims to legitimacy as indigenous leaders. In the process, they produced thousands of pages of documents, exemplifying a process Rappaport elsewhere calls “archival inscription,” which she defines as a “space in which the process of identification unfolded and was negotiated, rather than as a simple repository of historical evidence of stable identities and unchallenged genealogies” (p. 78).

Through detailed portraits of such figures, Rappaport illuminates the “distinct epistemology that underlay the process of making sense of diversity in the colonial world” (p. 25), one at substantial variance from modern socioracial categories presumed to be phenotypically or biologically derived. “Mestizo,” she argues, operated metaphorically, indexing the mixing of many kinds of social and cultural difference, including religion, social class, physical environ-

ment, and lineage, all of which contributed to understandings of race as transmitted or inherited not through genes but, rather, blood. Here Rappaport’s discussion of *calidad* (i.e. “quality”) exposes the ways in which ascriptions of mixed-race identity (or even Spanish or indigenous identity) were based on perceptions of rank, morality, wealth, religion, and privilege, as well as aspect or physiognomy. Such judgments were specific to the contexts in which they were rendered; indeed, any sense of “groupness” associated with mestizos was “highly situational” (p. 62), as such individuals lived within social networks that tended to attach them to other kinds of groupings, whether by occupation, social status, location, or community. Rappaport lends particular attention to questions of gender difference, noting, for instance, that mestiza daughters of Spanish elites enjoyed the ability to assume “unmarked” status, principally through marriage to Spanish men, whereas the “stain of mixed blood adhered more permanently” (p. 98) to mestizo men. In a penultimate chapter exploring the visual practices of bureaucrats who categorized mestizos in physiognomic terms, Rappaport demonstrates how categories of racial identity did not reflect stable groupings of people but rather operated as “floating signifiers that can only be interpreted situationally” (p. 172).

Rappaport writes against the grain of much previous scholarship on race and mestizaje in colonial Latin America and also in defiance of the “enormous epistemological gap” (p. 42) between early modern and present-day racial thinking—a gap as much cultural as it is temporal. While focused on the New Kingdom, *The Disappearing Mestizo* reaches far beyond regional confines to pose questions about the “illusory fixity” (p. 208) of colonial socioracial categories and especially about the way historians have attributed conceptual fixity to those categories, mistakenly assuming the existence of a stable caste “system” founded on them. In this way, Rappaport suggests, we remain “prisoners” of an “epistemological framework” (p. 226) that “limits and skews” our understanding of her subjects’ subtler, more fluid, and more dynamic worlds. In the wake of several recent studies, and most compellingly now Rappaport’s *The Disappearing Mestizo*, the rigid “caste system” associated by many with colonial Spanish America may well face the prospect of its own disappearance. It will now be incumbent on scholars to question, rather than assume, its nature and even existence—and to do so with the kind of regional, historical, and cultural specificity that enriches this deeply researched and powerfully argued study.

# Having People, Having Heart: Charity, Sustainable Development, and Problems of Dependence in Central Uganda by China Scherz.

Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014. 184 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12327

**Stan Frankland**

*University of St. Andrews*

Over the many years that I have been visiting Uganda to carry out my own ethnographic research, I have always been amused and bemused by the plethora of signs advertising development projects that once were, still are, or yet may be. Although it often seemed that the sign was all that there was, what such signage did accomplish was to symbolize the importance of the transnational development business to the economic growth of the country. As one U.S. official said in the mid-1990s: “If you’re serious about development in Africa, [your program] should work in Uganda. If it can’t work in Uganda, it can’t work” (Hauser 2005:623). This continues to be the case. Not only has the number of NGOs operating in the country increased year after year, totaling nearly 8,000 in 2009, but Uganda has also been one of the key locations for the application of models of sustainable development. It is against this backdrop that China Scherz positions her ethnographic analysis of two very different organizations: one a typical example of current developmental orthodoxy, the other seemingly at odds with the prevalent model of sustainability. The first organization, a Ugandan NGO called Hope Child, is committed to the holistic development of children and their caregivers. It is committed to avoiding the creation of dependency among the project beneficiaries and to trying to create community-owned institutions that will last. Conversely, the Mercy House home for orphans, the disabled, and the elderly run by the Franciscan Sisters of Africa works on very different principles centered around the ideal of Christian charity.

Scherz brings together these two contrasting moral imaginations by focusing on the local ethics of hierarchical interdependence that inform social life on the ground. It is the interactions among these three different “ethico-moral assemblages,” these different ways of imagining the “good,” that form the basis for analysis. In Buganda, where Scherz carried out her fieldwork, relationships and subjectivities continue to be shaped by particular ethics of kindness and obligational duties. Within the current structures of inequality, the poor, those who need to be sustained, make “declarations of dependence” (Ferguson 2003) to a contemporary range of patrons in the hope of improving their lives. Hope Child was in effect a patron, but as it grew as an organization and adopted the model of sustainability,

its relationship with its client transformed. There was an ethical rupture at the point of delivery. Adopting a practice common among many NGOs, Hope Child tried to stop the “handouts,” the gifts often expected by the client at this critical point of exchange in the development process. The idea was to help create a sense of “ownership” for the project among the community. They changed the context and value of dependency. In contrast, the interactions by the Sisters continued more harmoniously, their practice and ethic of charity fitting closer to the Kiganda expression of kindness. They maintained a far closer and more giving relationship.

This is a gross simplification of a work rich in ethnographic detail and theoretical persuasion, but in many ways this is a classic account of the contemporary practice of development in Uganda. Scherz captures a kind of chaos that typifies the human interfaces of rural development practices. She describes the world of 8,000 NGOs competing for donors, of confused ethical assemblages and codes of practice. Most importantly, she details the spread of audit culture into the ethical framework of international development. The Hope Child project eventually ground to halt, another casualty of the endless competition for short-term funding. However, based on the monitoring and evaluation process, it met its targets and was accountably sustainable. Through auditing, an appearance of sustainable development is created and the chance of attracting donors is increased. The implementation of an accountable model of sustainability becomes a repeatable formula of workshops, reports, meetings, minutes, and numbers.

The questions Scherz raises about the ethic of sustainability are an important theoretical intervention in anthropology’s ongoing critique of development and change. Her argument is a persuasive one challenging long-held anthropological assumptions about the gift and symbolic violence. She also raises important questions about the ethics and practice of development assistance. However, the ethnography of Mercy House is not presented as an answer but, rather, as an alternative form of ethical practice outside of the confines of sustainable development. The history of the Sisters and the shared memories and reflections of those at Mercy House provide a vivid example of Catholic charity and of how the church has provided an alternative when the state and the development business have had little impact. By wanting more charity rather than less, Mercy House and the Sisters resist the authority of the audit and the logic of sustainability. Perhaps this will only be temporary, but Scherz has captured a powerful ethnographic moment that

has enriched my understanding of development practices in Uganda and Africa.

#### REFERENCES CITED

Ferguson, James  
2013 Declarations of Dependence: Labor, Personhood, and

Welfare in South Africa. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 19(2):223–242.

Hauser, Ellen

1999 Ugandan Relations with Western Donors in the 1990s: What Impact on Democratisation? *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 37(4):621–641.

## Possessing Spirits and Healing Selves: Embodiment and Transformation in an Afro-Brazilian Religion by Rebecca Seligman.

Culture, Mind and Society series. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. 224 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12328

Ralph M. Becker

*University of Northern Colorado*

Rebecca Seligman's book, based on her fieldwork in Salvador, Brazil, is addressing the Afro-Brazilian spirit possession religion Candomblé. The author describes her interesting trial to combine biological, psychological, social, and symbolical aspects of spirit possession mediumship in an interdisciplinary or, as the author calls it, "integrative research" (p. 47). Opposite to early approaches that consider spirit possession mediumship as a mental illness, the author's focus here is on the therapeutic and healing aspects of the phenomenon.

Basic to the research is the concept of "self-transformation" (pp. 9, 10) appearing in bodily features as well as in the narratives of mediums. A central premise of her research is that the process of self-transformation through spirit possession is a form of concomitant healing of body and mind (p. 21). Seligman contends that the processes of self-transformation can best be understood through the concept of "embodiment" or "embodied learning" (pp. 21, 25). The self of a person perceives itself and communicates with its environment through the body. Therefore, self-transformation should also be detectable by physical features of the mediums. Embodiment implies a process that is characterized by learning through the whole body rather than just through the intellect. This fact can also be clarified by the difference between knowledge and skill—for example, having knowledge about music does not necessarily translate to an ability to play or create music. Seligman's hypothesis even goes further in introducing Ian Hacking's concept of "biolooping," explained as the "process through which the embodied dimensions of self are shaped and reshaped through their interactions with sociocultural meanings, discourses and practices" (p. 27). In the context of Candomblé, this means that mediums are enabled to perceive another possible self through the physiological manipulations caused

by the initiation, expressed by their altered body conditions. From this moment on, the cognitive processes change and give mediums the possibility to see their "persona" as newly born, with new functions in the community, and a new social network at their disposal.

To give evidence to these hypotheses, Seligman employed different field methods, combining technical devices and traditional ethnographic techniques. In addition to the traditional participant-observation and interviews, she applied psychological inventories and a device that measures cardiovascular activities.

The cardiovascular device, an impedance cardiograph, provided data about neurophysiological activity, in particular the ability to control the cardiac autonomic nerve system. Although having only a very small sample of mediums and nonmediums of the religious community, Seligman found some evidence that the trance mediums have a "higher level of total regulatory control over their cardiovascular function" (p. 128).

The author explains that two conflicting conclusions can be drawn from the experiment:

- (1) Persons who have a disposition to become possession mediums generally have higher control over their cardiovascular functions, consequently they have it already prior to initiation; or
- (2) they develop the ability through or during the initiation as mediums (pp. 129, 133).

It should be noted that Seligman's data do not reflect the neurophysiological activity during the possession trance state, therefore it does not tell us what actually happens during the trance (p. 128).

Seligman's biological findings could be aligned with the narratives she recorded. In almost all recorded cases, mediumship is, as many authors have confirmed before, connected to an initiation illness or suffering (e.g., Eliade 1964; Lewis

1975). In all cases, the mediums reported an enhancement of life quality and self-perception after the initiation.

The significance of this book, in my view, lies in its encompassing approach, not only giving consideration to a religious tradition but also including the fact that Candomblé is evidently an effective form of holistic medical therapy. It opens up new ways to continue the study of spirit possession and provides methodology to approach the subject. This book should interest every scholar or student of psychological or medical anthropology. Despite all the valuable information the author offers in her book, I would criticize two points. First, Seligman's research does not sufficiently consider Brazilian or other-than-English written literature (of 175 reference books, 173 are in English and only two are in Portuguese). Second, her definition of *spirit possession* as "displacement" of consciousness in the state of trance (pp. 5, 135) does not match with known records. Vari-

ous anthropologists report that possession is possible when the conscious self is present (even in the "erê" state of the Candomblé mediums). Cross-cultural comparisons also indicate that spirit possession can even be attributed without an altered state of consciousness (e.g., Becker, 1995; Lewis, 1975).

#### REFERENCES CITED

Becker, Ralph M.

1995 *Trance und geistesbesessenheit im Candomblé von Bahia* [Trance and spirit possession of the Candomblé of Bahia]. Münster: LIT.

Eliade, Mircea

1964 *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Lewis, Ioan Myrddin

1975 *Ecstatic Religion*. Middlesex: Penguin.

## Along the Bolivian Highway: Social Mobility and Political Culture in a New Middle Class by Miriam Shakow.

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014. 272 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12322

Susan Ellison

Wellesley College

In her incisive analysis of how the emergent Bolivian middle classes negotiate conflicting moralities and identities, Miriam Shakow challenges popular and scholarly accounts that pit impoverished yet resurgent indigenous Bolivians against European-descendent elites. Through her fine-grained attention to those Bolivians who find themselves in the middle, Shakow contributes to anthropological understandings of political subjectivity, shifting racial and class formations, and the material dimensions of how power and politics operate in Bolivia.

Andeanist scholars have long been interested in how their interlocutors voice individual and collective ambitions through racialized expressions of betterment and education, enacting those aspirations through social practices such as godparenting, child circulation, and migration, among other strategies. Where Shakow pushes these analyses further is by linking political practices such as clientalism to intimate notions of proper kinship, good neighborliness, and intergenerational aspiration. Shakow's multiscalar ethnography moves from the sharply racist teasing that occurs between kith and kin to the public accusations of corruption and patronage seeking at large political gatherings to the perennial efforts of NGO staff to broker funding relations between "grassroots" communities and municipal governments. In so doing, she demonstrates how socioeconomic hierarchies are

constructed and contested through prominent moral idioms that crosscut intimate relations, social organizations, and national political campaigns alike.

Shakow's book pivots around two major claims. First, "middling" Bolivians do not fit neatly into the racially marked categories of white "super-elites" versus indigenous subalterns. The persistence of these two categories in both scholarly and popular imaginations obscures the lived experience of Bolivia's nascent middle classes who must negotiate binary categories and ideologies of race (indigenous–nonindigenous), geography (urban–rural), and class (elite–subaltern).

On this point, one of Shakow's gripping ethnographic contributions is the textured way she shows residents of Sacaba (Sacabans) navigating these situational identities—demonstrating how one's sense of inferiority or superiority is relational and ever shifting. Sacabans do not experience "middle class" as a stable category, and many feel enormous anxiety about their unsteady positions. Shakow offers multifaceted characterizations of Sacabans like Edgar, whose pursuit of professional prestige lead him—and his kin—to denigrate his common-law wife, a woman whose status as a racially marked *cholita* does not mesh with Edgar's imagined future self. Shakow tackles the ugliness of intimate hierarchies without caricaturing men like Edgar, who expresses enormous ambivalence about the life toward which he aspires.

As her second main contribution, Shakow argues that many "middling" Bolivians find themselves confronting conflicting moral imperatives: that of striving for socioeconomic

betterment (asserting social hierarchy) and the countervailing obligation to demonstrate one's commitment to egalitarianism. These conflicting imperatives manifest in formidable idioms that permeate social and political life.

Ordinary Sacabans and well-known political leaders must constantly defend themselves against accusations of self-interest. Through Shakow's account of diverging responses to the Morales administration, we gain a complex rendering of people's ambivalent allegiances and multiple forms of self-identification. For example, Shakow links struggles over municipal resources—and national debates over how to reform party politics—with the ways “middling folk” themselves relate to, imagine their futures through, and face accusations about their own participation in clientelistic practices. Sacabans, like many Bolivians and Latin Americans more broadly, bitterly denounce clientelism yet, nevertheless, engage in patronage practices. Moral-political idioms of patronage seeking (*buscapegas*) and public works (*obras*) circulate widely in Bolivia and frequently serve to police public figures by questioning whether their leadership reflects sincere ideological commitments or cynical self-interest. So, too, Sacabans deploy these terms to distinguish themselves from the potentially selfish aims of others. Shakow's ethnography powerfully illustrates just how all-consuming it can be to defend and define oneself against such accusations, as well as how Sacabans mark the

boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate patronage practices.

The book's compelling theoretical contributions are subtly woven into the ethnographic material, making it an accessible read for both undergraduate and graduate audiences. However, in her light touch, Shakow undercuts some of the transferable theoretical insights she offers to the anthropology of kinship, political subjectivity, clientelism, and critical development studies beyond Bolivia. Some readers may wish that she had fleshed out several of her claims, including critiques of the civil society concept and her insights into hybrid political repertoires—theoretical interventions she largely consolidates in her brief conclusion.

Shakow's book will appeal to Latin Americanists interested in patronage, political subjectivity, post-neoliberalism, and debates over the impact of Bolivia's Law of Popular Participation. It also would make an excellent addition to courses in political anthropology, critical development studies, and racial formations. Shakow powerfully demonstrates that any effort to understand politics in Bolivia must include but also look beyond institutional arrangements and broad-based social movements. It also must analyze the ways moral idioms such as envy, self-interestedness, egalitarianism, and appeals to collective well-being operate powerfully across multiple scales of politics.

## Our Lives: Collaboration, Native Voice, and the Making of the National Museum of the American Indian by Jennifer A. Shannon

Santa Fe: SAR Press, 2014. 288 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12329

Valerie K. Verzuh

*Museum of Indian Arts and Culture*

In 2004, the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) opened to the general public. Significant to their mission was a commitment to “advancing knowledge and understanding of the Native cultures of the Western hemisphere—past, present, and future—through partnerships with Native people and others” (<http://nmai.si.edu/about/mission/> [accessed June 8, 2015]). NMAI became one of the 19 museums and galleries, nine research facilities, and a zoological garden that comprise the Smithsonian. What makes it both unique and problematic among the Smithsonian's museums is its focus on a curatorial practice called “community curating.” Although far removed physically and culturally from the communities it represents, the concept

of “community curating” legitimized the NMAI's representation of indigenous cultures.

Author Jennifer Shannon's long professional interest in contemporary indigenous populations, and community collaboration, led to this publication, which is adapted from her 2008 PhD dissertation in sociocultural anthropology at Cornell University and is based on her employment with NMAI from 1999 to 2002 and two years of fieldwork at the museum from 2004–2006. During her fieldwork, she conducted formal and informal interviews with “museum community” members. Her work was also informed by institutional reports, newspaper and magazine articles, and academic sources that link her study to museology and ethnographic literature. Her presence during the formation and opening of NMAI and close work with both NMAI staff and community collaborators during the process provided her with important firsthand knowledge of the discussions and negotiations taking place behind the scenes.



In this fully realized ethnography, Shannon aligns in process with cultural anthropologists who have done fieldwork in the communities in which they live or work. Shannon's book encompasses a subculture of NMAI, consisting of the individuals and departments who planned, developed, designed, and constructed its exhibitions. Specifically, the author documents the development process for the *Our Lives: Contemporary Life and Identities* exhibition, which comprises of the stories of eight 21st-century Native communities located in North and South America. She studied in depth the "community curating" of three museum communities: consultants from the urban Indian community of Chicago, the Kalinago community of Dominica, and NMAI's staff community.

Shannon's book brings to light the usually hidden theories and processes, successes, and failures of exhibit development. In this instance, exhibit teams consisted of non-Native curators who were academic content specialists, Native curators who combined community perspective with scholarly content, community curators who brought an experiential practice and shared values to the process, and other museum staff with specialized skills such as exhibit design and fabrication, object conservation, education, administration, security, and many more. Each of these departments or sections, Shannon discovered, brought its own "culture of expertise" to the process. One reading of Shannon's critique of exhibition development at NMAI, its experiment in collaboration, and its ethical relations with tribal communities is that ultimately this experiment in community curating was in conflict with the Smithsonian's existing exhibition standards and procedures.

One of the most revealing chapters, entitled "Bureaucracy," deconstructs the "class structure" that existed among

departments and individual employees and how this affected their working relationships with community curators. Although community curating was seen as essential to fulfilling the museum's mission, Shannon reveals, it was also at the center of ideological differences within museum departments, many guided solely by museum and institutional best practices and following internal protocols that made instituting community curation seem impossible, even ridiculous, in some instances.

Because of its size and significance in the national consciousness, the NMAI has become central to any discussion of indigenous community curation; however, other museums have been operating in this tradition for decades. One of those is the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture (MIAC) in Santa Fe, where collections and exhibits are formed with community and Native scholar consultations. MIAC'S success lies in its smaller, less invasive bureaucratic structure and its proximity to the tribal communities it represents. It is just one museum that serves as an example of the possibility of success, as well as the value of the process.

Shannon's critical analysis of exhibit development processes and authority is a significant contribution to the future of indigenous museology, and it renews discussions about the development of community-responsive exhibitions. It is an important addition to readings for museum professionals exhibiting the cultures of indigenous people, as well as those developing community-curated exhibitions of any kind. Her detailed analysis of the process and the outcome will inform museum professionals, communities, academics, and audience members as they move toward a more inclusive and ethical future.

## The Myth of Race: The Troubling Persistence of an Unscientific Idea by Robert Wald Sussman.

Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014. 384 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12330

**Heather Joy Hecht Edgar**

*University of New Mexico and Maxwell Museum of Anthropology*

*The Myth of Race* provides an encyclopedic history of racists and racism in Western Europe and the United States from the Spanish Inquisition to today. By drawing extensively on earlier, similar works (e.g., Black 2003; Brace 2005; and several papers of the Southern Poverty Law Center), Robert Sussman summarizes much of the history of racist ideology that shapes the U.S. present and does a fine job of connecting past arguments for segregation, sterilization, and euthanasia to the contemporary push for strict anti-immigration policies. Throughout the text, monogenism and

polygenism are used as themes to weave together historical periods of "scientific" attempts to justify racism. Chapter 4 provides an excellent spotlight on mainstream eugenics in the U.S. and its association with Nazi thought and action, an important connection that is often overlooked in similar books.

Much of the text consists of a long, intertwined list of important figures in the history of racism, from Immanuel Kant to Madison Grant, to living, active proponents supported by the Pioneer Fund. Each time I read a book on this history of racism (and there are many), I learn something new about the characters in the story. Here, for example, Robert Yerkes, widely known for his important work in primate studies, is shown to have focused on race earlier in his career. While the majority of the book describes the history

of racism, in a relatively short chapter 7, Sussman explains the relationship between the work of Franz Boas and his students to the decline of racist orientation in anthropology and other social sciences.

Despite these positive notes, I came away from my reading with an overall feeling of dissatisfaction with this work. Though Sussman describes his purpose for writing the book, explains who his intended audience is, and concludes with a statement of the intended central argument, I found the purpose unconvincing, the audience who would actually benefit unclear, and the central argument disconnected from the content.

One stated purpose of the book is to “show how some ancient perspectives on race have survived and persist in some current views on this topic” (p. 9). Another related statement of purpose is to “explore why some very early views of race based on ignorance, emotion, hatred, intolerance, and prejudice have been repeated, almost verbatim, throughout the ages” (p. 9). Certainly Sussman’s work fulfills the first goal, but I think it fails in the second. The work makes clear that racism is old and continuous in anthropological thought, but it never actually addresses why this is, which is a far more interesting topic.

Regarding the intended audience, Sussman explains that he hopes that some readers will see that their own “intolerance” stems from an obsolete, baseless idea. He also hopes that other readers, presumably those who are not “intolerant,” will further their understanding of why, racism still exists. Unfortunately, while the text thoroughly explains the history of what happened, it again fails when it comes to the

understanding of why, because there is virtually no biological content in it. Familiarity with the evolution of human variation is required to provide this insight; readers with this familiarity are unlikely to need this book to convince them that race is biologically irrelevant.

While reading the text, I felt unsure of the central argument being made. However, in the conclusion chapter, Sussman writes:

All of us who believe in human dignity, freedom, and justice must continue to fight against racial prejudice and those who spread hatred based on the idea that differences among humans exist. We must teach our children of the real wonders of human variation and enjoy the wonderful ethnic variation we find among us and around the world. We must teach tolerance and love, not the bigotry and hatred of the new bigot brigade as they spread their ancient and outdated myths of race and racism. [p. 304]

I strongly agree with the sentiment of this statement, despite its inclusion of some contradictory components. Biological races do not exist; racism is abhorrent. However, sentiment is not compelling argument. While an interesting historical read, *The Myth of Race* does not make clear why either of these statements is true.

#### REFERENCES CITED

- Black, Edwin  
2003 *War against the Weak: Eugenics and America’s Campaign to Create a Master Race*. New York: Four Walls Eight Windows.
- Brace, C. Loring  
2005 *Race Is a Four-Letter Word: The Genesis of the Concept*. New York: Oxford University Press.

## Pigmentocracies: Ethnicity, Race, and Color in Latin America by Edward Telles and the Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America (PERLA).

Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014. 320 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12331

**Cristobal Valencia**

*University of New Mexico*

This multisited team-research sociology text is jacketed with good, if not cautious, reviews from respected scholars of race and multiculturalism in Latin America. However, they strongly convey a reluctance to contemplate the text with attention to ontological and epistemological considerations regarding race. The relationship between what we know about race or conceptualizations of race and how we know it, learn it, and teach it are not only willfully neglected but also more importantly contravened by this volume.

The chapters are a country-by-country analysis of PERLA-designed surveys and assessments conducted by market and survey research firms in Mexico, Colombia, Peru, and Brazil. The text begins with the flawed premise that racial data are “scant” (p. 3) on Latin America, holding that quantitative data on race are empirical. All readers know that a substantial amount of qualitative data on race exists, especially in anthropology. It is useful to observe, however, that qualitative data on race seek to address the shortcomings of quantitative data as well as to challenge the ways in which quantitative data shape popular and official understandings of race.

The main argument of the book is that skin color is a central axis of social stratification in Latin America. Thus,

PERLA researchers developed a skin color rating assessment used by the surveyor and as a prompt for self-identification. The authors justify skin color measurement based on their hypothesis that pigmentocracy links skin color to worth. The goal of the assessment is to separate out ethnoracial categories from skin color, reduce the subjective classification of race, and “fix” color. While it is true that race and discrimination involves the gaze of others, anthropologists have argued for more than a half-century that race is a complex historical and contemporary process—racialization—dependent on structural constraints and privileges as well as unequal relationships of power, in short, subjectivity. The authors note tensions between PERLA researchers over using the assessment; however, the differing views are not discussed, and I suspect they are of great importance. The authors ask, “Why not use a measure of skin color if that is what humans notice when they encounter others and decide how to treat them?” (p. 12). For anthropologists, race is situational, fluid, and subjective even from the moment of encounter. This cannot be captured by a survey.

The major findings of the research project are that (1) race is multidimensional; (2) skin color is more determinant of inequality than self-identification; (3) racial discrimination is common; and (4) there is widespread support for multiculturalism. For anthropologists, the first three findings are more or less agreeable and not in need of quantitative validation. While we may disagree with the social determinist thrust, in general these findings have emerged from face-to-face ethnographic engagement with communities of color in Latin America. The final observation that *mestizaje* is progressive for its time and that multiculturalism is a “promising new stage of race thinking” (p. 22) is highly problematic. This ignores critiques made by anthropological scholarship regarding *mestizaje* as

a form of white supremacy and multiculturalism as a neo-liberal strategy of tolerance and as a way to dissuade political challenges.

The second part of their overarching argument is that skin color is “often ignored” (p. 3). We must ask by whom? When? The quantitative data do not provide for this sort of everyday finding. Furthermore, the historiography we often use to frame our ethnographic examination of race does not bear out this phenomenon. Indeed, the book’s tendency to reinforce rather than intervene in a theory of social determinism makes skin color a predictor for inequality. The authors argue that racial self-identification is the standard method for collecting quantitative data because of an emerging rights perspective—the right to identify as one wishes. However, anthropological research links racial self-identification to the work of race-based social movements that challenge quantitative data and demand social, political, and economic rights beyond official representation. The authors express an interest in what “normal Colombians, Brazilians, Mexicans, and Peruvians think about indigenous people and Afrodescendants” (p. 14)—specifically in terms of poverty, incidence of intermarriage and other interracial social relations, affirmative action, and race-based social movement demands. However, it is strikingly clear in the text and widely known among anthropologists that attitudes about race and experiences of racism are not well captured by a survey.

The book succeeds on two levels that have little to do with the research findings. First, it demonstrates the value of a comparative approach for understanding the social fields that shape certain structural constraints and subjective processes. Second, the book is an excellent source of scholarly and official ethnoracial histories and contexts, including census design, for each country.

## The Bioarchaeology of Artificial Cranial Modifications: New Approaches to Head Shaping and Its Meaning in Pre-Columbian Mesoamerica and Beyond by Vera Tiesler.

New York: Springer, 2014. 269 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12332

**Danielle S. Kurin**

*University of California, Santa Barbara*

In *The Bioarchaeology of Artificial Cranial Modifications*, Vera Tiesler—one of the foremost scholars on the topic—has synthesized an impressive swath of ethnohistoric accounts, artifactual and iconographic referents, clinical studies of ontogeny and anatomy, and data on more than 2,000 Mesoamerican crania to address one of the most ancient

and enigmatic forms of body modification practiced by humans. The complexity of artificial cranial modification is well suited to book-length treatment. In this format, Tiesler is able to comprehensively reconstruct phenomenological perspectives on cranial remodeling within a framework largely centered on embodiment and identity. She convincingly demonstrates that evaluating cranial modification requires emic understandings of ideological systems and the roles and meanings ascribed to the body and its parts. Head remodeling reflects on—and is influenced by—basic aspects of social permanence or change.

### HEAD SHAPING AND SOCIAL LIFE

Heads don't artificially reshape themselves. Remodeling was achieved by cradle boarding—swaddling a squirming infant to a rigid, portable crib or by using head splints and turban-like bindings. As Tiesler points out, heads were reshaped by mothers or other members of the nuclear family, and perhaps even midwives and priests—all integral actors in cultural reproduction and ethnogenesis. Cranial modification was a crucial part of the Mesoamerican child-rearing process and a conduit for establishing personhood and social integration within the family and community.

Tiesler suggests that, while visual outcome was considered, enactment was ever more important. With modification, assimilation to a desirable cultural form was reified through the daily performance of deeply emblematic head-binding traditions. Moreover, the organoplastic character of the cranium attached a protective function to head reshaping: a prominent occiput was viewed as dangerous, while the crown was auspicious. Modification was thus necessary to fortify child development, protect and “seal” or “ensoul” the body, and prepare a youngster for future rites of passage.

### MODIFICATION MEANINGS

One of Tiesler's most important contributions is demonstrating how the meaning of a remodeled head and its constituent parts are contingent on temporal, geographic, and cultural factors. The Maya used modification to identify family and community traditions, reify local ideologies of social roles and belonging, and signal broad ethnic affiliations based on the geopolitical landscape of the time.

Supernatural emulation is another possible motivator, as some gods are portrayed with elongated or squat heads. Maya elites may have used cranial modification as a means of self-aggrandizement through symbolic transposition with deities, yet there is no evidence of aristocratic exclusivity. Tiesler suggests that emulating protector-god head shapes would have propelled social cohesion writ large.

Regionally, particular head shapes were associated with inland or coastal residence, and with the Petén jungle in the east versus lands west of the Usumacinta River. Cranial modification also coincides with trade routes and may denote an emergent merchant sector. While head shapes in urban areas were largely homogeneous, linguistic and ethnic boundaries—locales on the fringes of contact and exchange—demonstrate the most variability in cranial morphology.

### HISTORY OF MESOAMERICAN CRADLE BOARDING

Keen to the lasting impact of previous cranial modification studies, Tiesler provides a thorough historiographic assessment of research on the subject, as well as her own synthetic summary of trends concerning head remodeling in Mesoamerica over the past 7,000 years.

It was during the Early Pre-Classic that skull compression devices were first invented; significant regional diversity in head shapes emerged by the Late Pre-Classic. In the Classic Period, rates of modification reach their apogee; almost all heads were remodeled. Some groups even employed anachronistic pear-shaped Olmecoid heads, which Tiesler interprets as a sign of syncretism and reinterpretation, not social memory or imposition. Maya collapse eventually led to homogenization as head shapes across the region embodied a new international social order associated with Kukulcan–Quetzalcoatl. Finally, by the Colonial Era, the now-rare and restricted reshaping tradition came to signal mere “otherness.”

Of note, chapter 3 provides one of the most comprehensive explanations in the extant literature of pre- and post-natal cranial ontogeny and the impacts of artificial remodeling. Chapter 4 is equally strong, as Tiesler masterfully addresses the vagaries of head classification systems. This volume will inform and inspire bioarchaeologists and skeletal biologists, as well as scholars of material culture and embodiment in Latin America and beyond.

## Anthropology in the Making: Research in Health and Development by Laurent Vidal.

Routledge Studies in Anthropology. New York: Routledge, 2014. 182 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/aman.12333

Karin Friederic

Wake Forest University

In *Anthropology in the Making*, Laurent Vidal draws from his extensive experience working in health and development projects in Africa to explore the production of anthropological knowledge in multidisciplinary research contexts. He

uses rich ethnographic detail from four case studies, including an HIV/AIDS evaluation, a study on health workers, a tuberculosis intervention, and a project on emergency obstetric care, all based in Senegal or Cote d'Ivoire.

The questions he addresses are at once pragmatic and epistemological. Vidal argues that anthropology's epistemology rests on the assumption that anthropology is a solitary research endeavor, yet anthropology is increasingly practiced in collaborative, interdisciplinary environments. As

a central question, then, Vidal asks, “At what point do anthropological encounters themselves (with other disciplines, with the actors of health development, and so on) affect the goals of anthropological research?” (p. 4). What happens to anthropological knowledge, methods, ethics, and products as a result? In exhaustive detail, he illuminates the processes through which the anthropologist must legitimize her approach, translate findings, and offer recommendations at various stages of research vis-à-vis distinct stakeholders and collaborators. Vidal is honest in his assessment of anthropology’s strengths and limitations.

Vidal leaves no aspect of these multidisciplinary engagements unexamined; in fact, it is this level of attention to detail that makes this at once a fascinating and cumbersome read. Readers are invited to participate in the negotiation of epistemological differences between actors (and disciplines) that occurs at each stage of research, from drafting the initial research questions to collecting data, suggesting recommendations, and writing final reports. For anthropologists who work in these multidisciplinary environments, the complexities and stakes of such encounters can be frustrating and tedious to write about and report, yet it is the stuff that is and makes anthropology. This is precisely Vidal’s point.

The book consists of seven chapters collected into three thematic sections, all of which are grounded in rich examples from Vidal’s experience in health and development. Part 1 (“All Together Now? Needs and Constraints in the Interdisciplinary Encounter”) describes the initial stages of an applied, interdisciplinary project with a particular focus on the relationships between investigators. This section explores various dimensions of a project’s implementation—from study design to data collection—including the hierarchical relationships, epistemological differences, and division of labor between investigators from distinct disciplines. Vidal discusses the temporal, interpersonal, and professional dynamics that shape how research questions are formulated, research design is conceptualized, and unexpected surprises are addressed.

In Part 2 (“Anthropology Face-to-Face with Health Actors”), Vidal redirects the lens from the internal dynamics of the research team to the relationship between the anthropologist and project stakeholders during data collection, analysis, and reporting. Specifically, he highlights the tension that emerges when anthropologists interact with intermediaries

and beneficiaries, such as government health officials, administrators, and health professionals. In these later stages of research, the anthropologist often transitions from observer to practitioner, as he negotiates how findings are presented (to make them accessible without compromising them) and advocates for their incorporation into interventions.

Part 3 (“Exposition”) adopts a broader, more reflexive perspective and argues that the terrain of interdisciplinary encounters should themselves constitute part of “the field.” The point of this introspection is both to better understand the doing and making of anthropology and to more effectively manage the inter- and transdisciplinary negotiations through which it is made. Considering the complex terrain in which anthropologists are now embedded, Vidal ends the book by proposing three potential paths for anthropologists. At the extremes, he suggests that we can proceed either as lone anthropologists unwilling to comprise “anthropological rigor” in interdisciplinary and multi-stakeholder settings or as “soul-less” anthropologists who encourage the use of anthropological methods but whose identity gets subsumed within multidisciplinary projects. Vidal encourages anthropologists to take a middle path that he calls “critical pedagogy,” which “takes the time to explain its approach, including its constraints and advantages as well as its limitations . . . [and] levels a critical gaze on its own work as well as that of the other disciplines” (p. 4). While his conclusion may not be entirely novel, Vidal’s patient, autoethnographic attention to the textured layers of collaborative research—and their significance—makes this an important and long-awaited contribution, one that definitively moves us along from tired questions about the authenticity of applied anthropological research.

*Anthropology in the Making* will certainly be of interest to professionals working in interdisciplinary research teams, readers in science and technology studies, or graduate seminars that consider the future of anthropology. Readership might be limited, however, because the book is a dense and challenging read, in part because it is a translation from French. While not for the undergraduate reader, the book is certainly relevant for graduate courses on anthropological ethics, methods, theory, and epistemology, as well as courses on development, applied anthropology, medical anthropology, public health, and nongovernmental organizations.