

BOOK REVIEWS

Single Reviews

The Professional Guinea Pig: Big Pharma and the Risky World of Human Subjects

Roberto Abadie. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010. 184 pp.

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The Professional Guinea Pig tells a fascinating story at the entrepreneurial and pharmaceuticalized heart of neoliberal medicine. Its core account is of a group of white male anarchists in West Philadelphia who support themselves financially by participating in Phase 1 “healthy-human” clinical trials. (The book’s comparative example of later-stage HIV trials is less developed but still of interest to scholars of these topics.) It is a riveting read and makes important contributions to the anthropologies of neoliberalism, pharmaceuticals, and the body.

The book’s most significant contribution is analysis of the micropractices of a rarely investigated sphere of the pharmaceutical industry: Phase 1 trials in the United States. Phase 1 has been relatively neglected in the burgeoning literature of the social studies of pharmaceuticals, which has tended to analyze later-stage trials and the cultural impact of drugs postrelease. Moreover, author Roberto Abadie’s focus on the “exotic at home” (p. 17) is an important intervention. Rich recent attention to how trials in the developing world exploit subjects with scant chance of benefiting from pharmaceutical advances can render invisible those who are exploited by the pharmaceutical industry within the first world.

Despite its title, the book is not really about “the” professional guinea pig. As Abadie points out, people who rely on Phase 1 trials as their primary source of income are a diverse and disparate group. Abadie focuses on these particular men, mining the rich irony of self-styled anarchists becoming self-contractors to Big Pharma and, as such, finding themselves not outside of but, rather, fundamental to neoliberal governmentality. Marginal to the overall industry of Phase 1 clinical trials, these brazenly unrepresentative informants provide their own rich political economic analyses of it.

It is an informant called “Spam” who articulates one of the most evocative concepts of the book: “the mild torture economy” (p. 2). This concept could be relevant for thinking through postindustrial labor generally. Noting that much productive work has left the country, Spam likens the role of a professional guinea pig to that of a security guard: being paid not to do anything but “to get bored” (p. 2). The goal becomes endurance: “And the other side of this informational economy is the mild torture economy, you are not asked to produce or to do something anymore, you are being asked to endure something” (p. 2). Spam suggests that “there is some work in it but the nature of work has changed” (p. 3).

The appeal of clinical trials needs to be understood in terms of disdain for available employment alternatives—a frequent refrain among Abadie’s interlocutors is that it beats working at McDonald’s or taking risky blue-collar work. Although the pharmaceutical industry denies that it is commodifying bodies, the research subjects contradict this. Abadie compellingly argues that the oxymoronic “paid volunteer” emerged because pharmaceutical research was forced out of prisons. The industry’s desire for disciplined, compliant subjects encourages the development of a cohort of professional guinea pigs. Attention to the ways in which their mindful bodies are alienated is part of the book’s contribution to the anthropology of the body. Informants’ confidence in their ability to separate mind from body invites comparison with sex work. Like sex workers, Phase 1 trial subjects are being paid to be penetrated, to allow things to be done to their bodies, not to think or reflect. The informants perceive more risk from psychological drugs than somatic drugs—they want to rent out their bodies without renting out their minds.

There is much more that could be said about the whiteness and masculinity being constructed here, in which bodily insults and scars of biopsies are simultaneously borne proudly and dismissed, which Abadie forgoes by framing

race and gender questions in terms of racial and gender difference rather than racialized and gendered subjectivities. For Abadie, only the lone Puerto Rican subject and the lone female subject are relevant to analysis of race and gender respectively, which misses the opportunity to fully explore formations of marginal whitenesses and masculinities in postindustrial communities.

In any system of political economy, there will be resistances, and we read about many here: professional guinea pigs often exaggerate their health, deny their vegetarianism, or engage in small acts of noncompliance. Abadie describes

one strike that predated his fieldwork—in which the subjects threatened to walk out if not given more money—and wonders why organizing is not more common. But as Abadie himself has mapped out, a disparate alliance perpetuates this unjust system, and challenging it might require radical transformations that exceed these activists' scope.

The Professional Guinea Pig is accessibly written and should find a wide audience among cultural anthropologists and students of all levels as well as interdisciplinary scholars of the modern pharmaceutical industry and a broader educated public.

The Spectacular State: Culture and National Identity in Uzbekistan

Laura L. Adams. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010. 242 pp.

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Into the dreadfully understudied and undertheorized literature on Central Asia since the Soviet collapse in 1991, Laura Adams has contributed what may be the best ethnographically grounded and conceptually sophisticated monograph to date. She offers an intimate view of how independent Uzbekistan, the post-Soviet region's dominant nation-state that is infamous for its repressive rule, seeks to exercise power over its citizenry and position itself in the post-Cold War world. Adams presents Uzbekistan, particularly during its first decade of independence in the 1990s, as a "spectacular state": one in which politics is conducted predominantly on a symbolic level through public spectacle and control of the visual landscape. Elaborately staged Olympics-style performances marking national holidays are televised regularly, displaying the country's claim of its rich "Inner Asian" cultural heritage in a decidedly modernist and internationalist frame. The spectacles are simultaneously nationalist and cosmopolitan, Adams argues, embedded with a state ideology of postcolonial cultural renewal and a claim to a place of respect on the global stage.

The Janus-faced orientation of these spectacles reflects the particular legacy of Soviet techniques of rule, and herein lies the fascinating core of the book's analysis. Out of Central Asia's former hybridities and contextual identifications, Soviet institutional practice constructed definitive heritages and essentialized ethnicities that the post-Soviet Uzbekistani state now elaborates and promulgates. The state also inculcated universalist ideals such as progress, development, peace, and internationalism. This dual legacy has led, according to Adams, to independent Uzbekistan articulating claims of both its cultural distinctiveness and universalistic

modernity through spectacle. She studies the activities of the cultural elite charged with production and, employing an unproblematic distinction of form-content, sees the content of local particularity displayed within the international form of recent Olympics opening ceremonies. The ceremonies have a double message: Uzbekistan's people are shown the nation's proud past and promising future in the able hands of the state, and the world is presented with Uzbekistan as an important, "normal" modern nation. What spectacle as a tactic of state power accomplishes is the construction of a field of one-way communication whereby the state provides the people a feeling of inclusion, even Durkheimian effervescence, without the possibility of responding. This is monopoly on meaning via monologue.

Adams's book raises conceptual issues worthy of consideration beyond the region. Her study is clearly locatable within current discussions on the performativity of state power—including its theatricality, well known since Clifford Geertz's *Negara* (1980)—within the growing subfield on the anthropology of the state. Adams does not engage this literature, although it would have enriched her analysis. Her focus on the multiple motivations of the cultural elites and their complicity with the state fits well with that literature's concern with unbundling "state effects" into concrete social relations with individuals variously acting "for the state." In fact, although Adams does not seek to reify the Uzbekistani state, she still treats it as a site of unitary intentionality and agency. The claim of spectacle as a form of symbolic politics lacks consideration of the conventional politics behind it, although the opacity of this government makes such research nearly impossible. Still, her rich ethnography on the artists and producers could have offered a more complex account of their agency: constrained and co-opted by the state and yet partly constitutive of its public face. Her study,

indeed, could raise uncomfortable questions about academic research complicities with global neoliberal agendas.

Adams thinks with Guy Debord on the “society of spectacle” (1994) in its banal preoccupations with consumption. She juxtaposes spectacle operating under a capitalist logic with that operating under a state-socialist logic, in which culture is a political commodity to be redistributed from the center. But if spectacle can be found at the heart of both, what does that tell us about the nature of communities and their imaginaries across political contexts? Unfortunately, Adams stops short of a deeper comparison concerning this modern form of power among the “Three Worlds” of the Cold War globe, which might have rendered contour to understanding stateness and subjectivity across the 20th century’s competing grand projects of modernity.

The effectiveness of spectacle appears to be waning in Uzbekistan in recent years, as people are fed up with

official culture and underfed from poverty, triggering more overt exercises of police power. The book nicely captures that euphoric initial decade of independence when Uzbek elites thought they could attain national resurgence and international prestige. Both have turned out to be elusive. This readable monograph is excellently suited for teaching in graduate and upper-level undergraduate courses on Central Asia, ex-socialist societies, nationalisms, and the anthropology of the state. It stands almost alone in providing a nuanced, on-the-ground glimpse of culture and politics of a fascinating yet poorly documented society.

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Ancient Mesopotamia at the Dawn of Civilization: The Evolution of an Urban Landscape

Guillermo Algaze. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008. 246 pp.

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Near Eastern archaeologists with strong anthropological backgrounds have long focused on the Uruk period, the time when the first cities—not only in Mesopotamia but also in the world—grew up. However, much of this work has been largely divorced from current understanding of the later development of this civilization, partly because of difficulties inherent in interpreting publications of cuneiform texts by nonspecialists and partly because of the largely humanistic approach taken by most archaeologists working in later periods. Because recent fieldwork has focused on areas outside Mesopotamia proper, it has tended contribute little to what was happening in Mesopotamia itself. Guillermo Algaze’s seminal work, *Ancient Mesopotamia at the Dawn of Civilization* bridges this gap with elegance and clarity. This is an important book that presents data in an accessible manner and makes a strong case for the author’s thesis that a combination of southern Mesopotamia’s geographical position at the base of the Tigris–Euphrates basin and the motor of long-distance trade resulted in its extraordinary precocity in urban development. The writing is clear, the illustrations pertinent and well chosen, but it could have done with a more detailed index.

This book is the first major published work to situate the origins of Mesopotamian civilization within the much-wetter

world that has been revealed by recent geomorphological research relevant to Mesopotamia’s southern alluvium. We now understand the Uruk period to have been dominated by higher sea levels, which resulted in much of what is now southern Iraq lying beneath the waters of the Gulf, with broad areas of marshes stretching much further north than is the case today, accompanied by some summer monsoonal rainfall. Algaze combines this new understanding of the fourth-millennium Mesopotamian landscape with the theoretical work of the new economic geographers like Paul Krugman to argue that Mesopotamia’s geographic position at the apex of an enormous network of natural watercourses that stretched up to northern Syria and southern Turkey allowed it to use largely water-borne trade, not only to import necessities like metals and timber for roofing but also to acquire sumptuary items that could then be used both for elite consumption as well as distributed to the larger population. Ultimately, this process resulted in colonies, both large and small, located along the major watercourses as well as along major land routes where newly domesticated donkeys could be used for conveyance.

Algaze makes another important contribution in his contrast of early but abortive steps toward urbanism evidenced early in northern Mesopotamia with the steady increase in overall population growth, urban development, and articulation in the south. He shows, convincingly, that the northern cities were unable to develop further as each was based on

a single drainage system with little possibility of movement between them. This contrasts with the southern cities, which could use their direct access to all areas upstream to develop much more extensive trade networks, leading to the demise of the early urban flourish of the north.

His discussion of the process of development in the south is largely compelling, although the one area where I remain less convinced is with his emphasis on dependent labor and developing inequality as major factors in Mesopotamia's development. Certainly a key factor of Mesopotamia's economy later in the third millennium was a degree of centralized management of irrigation agriculture and animal husbandry, although whether these were fully in place in the fourth millennium is much more controversial. In his discussion of labor, Algaze avoids more recent approaches by some of those working in historic periods, which have moved away from understanding those receiving "rations" as semi free,

instead in a pre-money economy regular monthly payments seem more like a salary. Another way to view Algaze's excellent documentation both of the increase in population in Uruk Mesopotamia at the expense of neighboring areas and the penetration of sumptuary goods deep into Uruk society including at small sites, suggests that one of the impetuses for the extensive trade might have been to attract people to the new cities by providing access to imported goods, both utilitarian and sumptuary.

Algaze is very aware of the sad lack of excavated data from southern Iraq. He ends his book with a list of the types of research that still must be undertaken. Here his outlined research agenda is exactly what is needed to test the validity of his carefully argued thesis. I only hope that conditions in Iraq will make it possible for a new generation of archaeologists inspired by Algaze's vision to conduct the necessary fieldwork.

Racialized Bodies, Disabling Worlds: Storied Lives of Immigrant Muslim Women

Parin Dossa. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009. 192 pp.

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Drawing on the narratives of four South Asian and Iranian immigrant women with disabilities who live in metropolitan Vancouver, *Racialized Bodies, Disabling Worlds* bridges disability studies and antiracist feminist methodologies. Author Parin Dossa aptly notes that despite a shared set of oppressions that should lead to common theorizing and activism, these fields often remain distinct from one other. Organized into seven chapters that focus on her methodological structure and her four participants, Dossa's contribution is important: this book does a formidable job in granting these methods and women visibility. A highly personal narrative informed by her disabled younger brother's experience of discrimination in Uganda and former employment in a vocational school, Dossa also indirectly comments on how the Canadian immigration system, in emphasizing the "points system," erroneously constructs immigrants with disabilities as undesirable and a drain on the social system.

Dossa therefore argues that these four women's narratives of migration are embedded in and reflective of broader processes of exclusion and stigmatization facing many immigrants and visible minorities in Canadian society. She relies on storytelling to make her case because "in times of crisis, it is through the presence of others that we can affirm our social existence" (p. 126). She presents four narratives: the first narrative comes from Mehrun, a 48-year-old woman of Sudanese origin with polio. Mehrun's story evokes how the

Canadian immigration system values productivity rather than migrant women's potential. We hear next from Tamiza, who migrated from Tanzania in 1970 and is a professional working mother of two children with disabilities. Her narrative illustrates how fragmented social services burden parents and extended family members. Firouzeh, the third participant, is a paraplegic Iranian mother, who at age 50 followed her husband to settle in Canada. As Dossa notes, "For the Canadian state, Firouzeh is not a desirable migrant. She is not perceived to be part of the landscape of paid work" (p. 102). Firouzeh's story further highlights the isolation and vulnerability to abuse (both domestic and from the system itself) experienced by immigrant women with disabilities. Finally, Sara, who migrated as a refugee escaping domestic violence in Iran and became disabled after a car accident in Canada, provides a narrative that points to the pejorative effects of poverty.

The narratives of exclusion and suffering of these four women are compelling and powerful. There are, in my reading, two minor shortcomings in this ethnography. First, in her introduction, Dossa notes that she has interviewed six Iranian women and seven South Asian women along with two mothers of children with disabilities and has drawn from this group to focus on the four aforementioned women. Although she concludes that the four women she describes are a "diverse group" (p. 151), it would have been useful to get a broader sense of the percentage of new refugees or permanent residents who are female, Muslim, and disabled. How pervasive is the problem that she illustrates? How do

services for immigrant women in British Columbia compare to other provinces in Canada? Second, it would have been useful to include more ethnographic data about the women and the contexts in which the interviews took place. For instance, that these women are Muslim is treated only very briefly in a mention of the “negative perceptions” (p. 158) they endure, but I would have liked to know more about their religious lives and whether being Muslim and refugees further intensified the discrimination that Dossa chocks up to gender and disability.

Despite these two drawbacks, Dossa’s study is important and is appropriate for 400-level undergraduate and master’s-level research courses in women’s health, disability studies, gender studies, and anthropology courses. This is an engaged anthropology that gives voice to a socially invisible population. Although ably addressing the methodological erasure of disability and feminist literatures, Dossa effectively demonstrates how racialized immigrant women with disabilities are redefining the parameters of their social worlds for themselves and those around them.

Mitzvah Girls: Bringing Up the Next Generation of Hasidic Jews in Brooklyn

Ayala Fader. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009. 260 pp.

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Ayala Fader’s *Mitzvah Girls* is a readable and vivid ethnographic account of the language and religious socialization practices among women and children in a Hasidic community of Boro Park, New York. Fader gives an in-depth account of one Hasidic group, the Bobover, yet she also examines the variation of Hasidic courts in Boro Park including the Satmar, Lubavitch, and other unaffiliated Hasidic groups, highlighting the diversity of religious practice in this community. With superb ethnographic and linguistic analytical skills, Fader takes us into the homes, classrooms, and temples where Hasidic women work at ensuring continuity of religious belief and practice, given that in this “nonliberal community” (a term used to counter perceptions of passivity attributed to women in discussions of traditional or fundamentalist religious groups; see also Mahmood 2005), the women controlled the secular outside world and actively maintained the contours of their religious community. Although the scope from girlhood to womanhood is broad, Fader covers the full life cycle, describing in rich detail routines of the everyday as well as key moments of development, including rites of passage and purification.

Drawing on Michel Foucault’s framework for understanding moral codes and the ways people recognize and act on their moral obligations (Foucault 1990:26), Fader analyzes how the “polluted” modern world was kept at bay and furnished an ongoing contrast to local Hasidic values in Boro Park. This contrast deployed an array of “techniques of the self” aimed at affirming the holiness of Jewish law and practice. Mothers used these techniques of the self to socialize their daughters and sons to promote self-vigilance and self-improvement (p. 48). Examples of such techniques included the practices of public accountability through the use of *mitzve* (good deeds) notes, charts, and prizes that

celebrated the moral behavior of children at home and at school, effectively providing continuity and surveillance of practice across these two domains. *Mitzve* messages were sent from home to the teacher, who, in turn, would read them aloud to the class, hoping to promote in young children a desire to “fit in” and live up to the moral expectations of the community (p. 52).

Fader’s observations and interviews characterize Hasidic women as active in decision making and in maintaining the well-being of their community even when gender separation was encouraged—socially, educationally, and, to some extent, religiously. Contact with the secular world also produced linguistic changes most noticeable in the development of Hasidic English, a variety of English in which the girls and women were especially fluent, while boys and men preferred to use Hasidic Yiddish as well as *loshn-koydesh* (Hebrew and Aramaic) for religious study. Hasidic women not only engaged the secular world around them but also sanctified it through actions that upheld the principles of their religious faith. The deliberate pronunciation of English words to sound more like Yiddish, for example, was an action believed to purify English. Through these and other acts, Hasidic women were engaged in “a civilizing religious project” (p. 117) that redeemed their everyday environment.

In the book’s coda, Fader contends that the efforts of Hasidic women to innovate and hybridize secular and religious symbols (to sanctify the daily environment) represent an alternative modernity that complicates binaries such as Western and Other, or secular and religious. Fader argues for an “ethical anthropology” that makes explicit competing (and conflicting) interpretive and representational frameworks, not only of the practices of the participants in a study but also of those who, like Fader, are insider anthropologists (p. 218). In this book, Fader’s experiences as an anthropologist and as a “cultural insider” (see Jacobs-Huey 2002) contribute valuable insights to discussions on the

tensions that arise in fieldwork in negotiating loyalties, rights, responsibilities, and ultimately translation.

In *Mitzvah Girls*, Fader describes with elegant prose the details of the daily lives of contemporary Hasidic women as they redefine notions of femininity and wrestle with aspects of modernity that intrude into their community. Such intrusions move women to protect and maintain the faith to fulfill the expectations of their gender and tradition amid one of the most diverse cities of the United States. This is, in short, an excellent book. It offers important contributions to a variety of fields but most directly speaks to the anthropology of education, linguistic anthropology, gender studies, and the anthropology of religion.

Your Pocket Is What Cures You: The Politics of Health in Senegal

Ellen E. Foley. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010. 188 pp.

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In *Your Pocket Is What Cures You: The Politics of Health in Senegal*, Ellen Foley offers a nuanced and sensitive account of the impacts of neoliberal health reform and long-term economic decline on ordinary people's lives in Senegal. Her study chronicles a particular moment in Senegal's contemporary history (primarily 1996–99) that immediately followed the devaluation of the regional currency and the imposition of various other austerity measures aimed at curing Africa's "ailing" economies. Drawing on 20 months of research in two different communities, Foley argues that the pro-market mantras of privatization, decentralization, participatory management, and individual responsibility have transformed the terrain of health care in Senegal and have created conditions of economic depravity that constrain individual- and household-level decision making regarding illness and treatment. Foley also demonstrates how risk, disease, and access to care are mediated by other priorities and practices, such as Islamic beliefs and therapies, indigenous conceptions of body and spirit, and gendered and classed hierarchies. Influenced by Pierre Bourdieu's practice theory, by feminism's attention to moments of resistance, and by recent trends in critical medical anthropology, Foley approaches "health" as an inherently political state of being and acting in the world, one that both shapes and is shaped by local and global inequalities.

The book's strength lies in its rich ethnographic foundation, assembled through Foley's committed participation as a health clinic worker, a women's group member, and the daughter-in-law of a well-respected migrant to the city. Her multisited approach brings into the same ethnographic

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framework both rural and urban experiences and institutions, a notable achievement given the stubborn persistence of this dichotomy in much of the literature on Senegal. This dual focus acknowledges the dense traffic that links rural and urban spaces, as migrants, capital, therapies, and ideas about health and illness move between city and village.

The first two substantive chapters of the book (chs. 2 and 3) orient the reader to the political and economic situation of the region and the country more broadly, in both colonial and postcolonial times. Chapter 3 also sets the scene for the more data-driven chapters that follow, describing the quotidian challenges that urban and rural dwellers face in this economically peripheral region. The book gathers momentum in chapter 4, in which Foley introduces "decentralization" as the conceptual touchstone for her study. Here, she begins to explore the shape that neoliberal reform takes on the ground in northern Senegal, a region plagued by underdeveloped health infrastructures. She argues that shifting the responsibility for primary healthcare from the national government to "empowered" communities and individuals has made health services less accessible for ordinary residents and has exacerbated conflicts within medical institutions.

The final six chapters of the book offer more intimate snapshots of various residents who provide, manage, seek, put off, and withhold care for both everyday aches and life-threatening diseases. Foley pays close attention to human agency and its limits, examining how neoliberal reforms mingle with more "local" practices and ideas—like ardent prayer and the use of traditional plants and amulets (ch. 6), plural marriage customs and household budgetary practices (ch. 7), efforts to control young men's labor (ch. 8), and localized notions of "development" (ch. 9)—to produce certain possibilities for action while foreclosing others.

Particularly noteworthy is the author's consideration of the gendered and generational expectations and hierarchies that influence decisions like how a young mother will care for her malnourished child (p. 127), whether a youth with cancer will receive ethno- or biomedical therapies (p. 132), and who will finance and oversee the care of an ailing relative (p. 135).

One of the major contributions of the book is that it casts neoliberal reform as a thoroughly contingent and often-incongruous assemblage of practices rather than as an all-encompassing, abstract force. As Foley points out, "neoliberalism' has become a throwaway label" that fails to adequately describe the on-the-ground impacts of dramatic reforms to health care systems in places like Senegal (p. 80). Surprisingly, however, the author offers no sustained critical reflection on "neoliberalism" as a scholarly concept or on its limits in Senegal (see, e.g., Dahou and Foucher 2004),

despite the fact that her ethnography offers persuasive evidence for this critique. Nonetheless, Foley's book contributes in powerful ways to theorizations of the intersection between public health and market-based economic reform. The book would likely appeal to scholars with interest or expertise in contemporary Africa, public health and institutional reform, gender and family, and neoliberalism and economic globalization. Its clear prose and well-supported argument would also make it appropriate for a midlevel undergraduate course on medical anthropology or African studies.

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Promising Genomics: Iceland and the deCODE Genetics in a World of Speculation

Michael Fortun. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008. 330 pp.

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In *Promising Genomics*, Michael Fortun explores how deCODE (a genomics company) came to have access to the health records and blood samples of Iceland (an entire nation). Fortun's analysis emphasizes the extraordinary speculation that organized this moment of bioscience finance—deCODE's rise relied on promise, simultaneously financial, ethical, and medical. He deftly draws on ethnographic moments and an array of public printed materials about finance to listen for deeper metaphors at play. He extends the "promises" of genomics for improved health as well as for the future of medicine and higher stock prices into a rich analytic for troubling the ways a future is imagined that gives peculiar shape to the present. These promises mobilize people, money, and institutions.

The chapters are organized into a series of "chiasma," structural dichotomies that Fortun finds lurking in current commerce, politics, and hopes around genomics (e.g., CounterfeitXMoney, EthicsXExpediency, TrustXGullibility, PublicXPrivate). The X indicates affinity, opposition, implication, and other such dialectics. This structure allows Fortun to organize each chapter as revealing something of deCODE's experience that relates to a broad world of making science and money. Along the way he draws on Jacques Derrida, makes Iceland's terrain a metaphor for the world of speculative genomics, and finds parallels between the CEO

of deCODE and the whale Keiko (as celebrities). The result is lively and provocative.

The promise of genomics is founded for Fortun on commerce—and throughout the book, the market is the main character. He seeks out U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filings, corporate press releases, and investor websites, finding the ways they contend with one another, often belying one another in intriguing ways. Everything here is emergent, becoming. This newness extends from the genetic commerce being assessed (a world "of unfolding, of unsettling change, of recombination" [p. 13]) to the analytic tools used to critique it ("we are going to have to invent ways of speaking about the ever-unstable equilibria that publicXprivate databases in fact are" [p. 45]). In this new language, history seems reducible to how it gets mobilized in imagining the future. But just when Fortun appears set on analytically speeding toward the future just to keep up with genomics, he turns for interpretive perspective to an Icelandic novel written in 1948. The effect is of a new world of high finance, genomes, and medicine that is shaping our lives in ways that echo older formations of international speculation and governance.

Fortun critiques the promises of some future of personalized genomic knowledge envisioned by biotech companies and the states that embrace them. He searches out instead specificity: "What matters are the effects, the finite relations, the specific forces that constitute the events surrounding deCODE" (p. 283). Getting mired in the details of financial

and medical forms and policies are here an antidote to the toxin of abstractions that sell, like “choice,” “democracy,” or “ownership.” The moral call from Fortun is for something like authenticity—he imagines promises that can be kept (and in this he diverges sharply from Derrida). But the effect is compelling: Fortun’s peculiar knack for making his analyses personal makes authenticity a kind of intriguingly paradoxical anthropological and political desire.

And politics are at the center of this text about a controversial company. Fortun’s sources are mired in the controversy of deCODE: he draws on his own experiences giving interviews to Icelandic media about deCODE, interacting with deCODE’s founder and CEO, and his deep participant-observation with the highly organized critics of the company. In a chapter entitled “DistanceXComplicity,” Fortun implicates himself in the activism against deCODE and productively undermines any claims to simply be the removed analyst. But a more structuralist reading might have

explored how complicity can become distance (as when attempted solidarity can become a kind of paternalism) and, likewise, how distance can become complicity (as when the critique reproduces the language of the critiqued, a mirror image that strangely gives more mana to the power of the promise).

And might a complicity be found in the affinity between the utopia constituted by market promises and the dystopia written by its critics? The book does not have a category for that obverse of promises: warnings. This might have been the name for the portrayals of deCODE offered by its institutional critics—and thereby the book might have avoided any impression that high finance has the monopoly on fashioning a future out of idealized images. But among those of us following such genomic futures, Fortun has created a provocative and fresh account of how the present is fashioned out of what it promises—a troubled gift if promises are indeed made to be broken.

Blue-Ribbon Babies and Labors of Love: Race, Class, and Gender in U.S. Adoption Practice

Christine Ward Gailey. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010. 185 pp.

Cortney L. Hughes

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In *Blue-Ribbon Babies and Labors of Love: Race, Class, and Gender in U.S. Adoption Practice*, Christine Ward Gailey draws on 13 years of research in which she interviewed 131 adopters of 90 children in the northeastern United States as well as in southern California to demonstrate how gender, racial, and class hierarchies impact adoption practices and the relationships between adoptive parents and their children. Gailey’s objectives are to assess the meanings of *kinship* and *family* when children are taken into adoptive homes (often called by her interviewees as “coming home”) and why some children are preferred for adoption over others. The book’s strength is its very personal feel. Rich and plentiful quotes from Caucasian and African American parents, single adopters and couples, adoption lawyers, and social workers are combined with the author’s own observations at conferences and support groups and personal experiences throughout the entire text.

Analyses of public and private, transracial, and international adoptions in addition to adoptions by lesbian and heterosexual single women reveal “tensions between ideologies and practices of kinship today” (p. 3). Gailey argues adoption has “challenged, transformed, or reinforced” (p. 3) parents’ own beliefs of gender, race, and class. The phrase “blue-ribbon baby,” Gailey states, was developed in the 1970s in the adoption world as a phrase referring to a healthy Caucasian baby (p. 104). Certain parents in her

study build kinship bonds that actually destabilize dominant ideologies of kinship in the United States that emphasize ties based on blood, while other parents either subconsciously or overtly express worries about class reproduction and try to fashion the iconic “American family.” Gailey combines in-depth interviews and observations with a history of adoption, including discussions of white settlers adopting Native American children and adoption through the U.S. military occupation of Korea in the 1950s. Not only is this helpful for those who are unfamiliar with this past but also it exposes the domestic and international social, political, and economic forces that have ultimately shaped current adoption practices.

The opening chapter outlines Gailey’s arguments, the context of adoption in the United States (public vs. private agency, independent adoptions), and the participants in the study. Chapter 2 centers on public-agency adopters. This group is the most ethnically diverse of the adopter groups Gailey studied and receives the most preadoption training but tends to have class traits that mimic those of adoptive children’s birth parents. Public-agency adopters include transracial adopters, the focus of chapter 3. Gailey centers the discussion on white parents who adopt African American children to show that even though federal reforms prohibit placing children based on race, engrained racism and discrimination in U.S. society continue to impact adoption practices, the building of kin systems, and children’s identity formation. Chapter 4 takes a critical look at parents who

adopt girls four years old and over, a practice most common in public agencies. Gailey examines how racial and gender violence (physical and emotional) older girls have endured (and often continue to endure in foster and adoptive homes) impacts their well-being, the bonds with their adoptive parents and families, and “bodily integrity as a gendered person” (p. 56). Chapter 5 moves onto a topic highly debated today in the United States: international adoption. In trying to answer why parents adopt children abroad rather than those in the foster system, Gailey compares two groups of adopters: (1) businesspeople and professionals and (2) NGO workers and academics. Gailey posits that “the Global Search for ‘Blue-Ribbon Babies’” (p. 79) is linked to social class. Class ideologies of race, health, ability–disability, and gender inform parents’ desires as to the children they will consider and the channels they pursue to bring them “home.”

Blue-Ribbon Babies and Labors of Love offers a fresh perspective on kinship and family. Gailey provides a multidimensional

analysis that moves beyond the “nature versus nurture” debate by theorizing kinship as being located in everyday practices and experiences. Readers realize that kinship is a highly complex chain of events (ch. 6) informed by dominant ideologies and individual beliefs in which “there is no connection among people who consider themselves to be kin that is not built or believed” (p. 117). In the first chapter, Gailey provides a vast amount of numbers regarding the participants (e.g., African American adopters, public-agency adopters), which could slightly overwhelm the reader, given that all these statistics come in just a few pages. But this book is a crucial read for those interested in politics of reproduction and population, motherhood, fatherhood, family, and child development. Gailey’s argument comes at a critical time in the United States when new reproductive technologies, laws regarding gay marriage, and health-care reforms call into question whether blood is really thicker than water.

The Pastoral Clinic: Addiction and Dispossession along the Rio Grande

Angela Garcia. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010. 248 pp.

Julie Livingston
Rutgers University

Angela Garcia’s stunningly written and deeply intelligent new book on heroin addiction in New Mexico’s Espanola Valley opens with an epigraph from Giorgio Seferis, “Memory aches, wherever it is touched.” Over the next 200 pages, the reader comes to understand the profound depth of the ache and impossibility of escaping memory’s touch for the people of northern New Mexico’s Espanola Valley—and for Garcia herself. This is anthropology at its very best.

Garcia returns to the New Mexico of her childhood, which currently boasts the highest rates of heroin addiction and overdose in the United States, to reconcile its terrible cycles of dispossession and human loss with the dense and melancholic beauty of family, care, and landscape. This wasn’t always a place of addiction. But politics, history, kinship, and culture have combined to create a landscape where there is “ultimately no space—physical or experiential—external to” heroin. Garcia worked for two years as an attendant at a drug-rehabilitation clinic, forming relationships with patients as they underwent court-ordered detox, relationships she then deepened beyond clinic walls. Most studies of heroin addiction focus on urban communities, while popular narratives of heroin addiction emphasize the ways that addiction forces a breakdown or severing of familial ties. Yet the Espanola Valley points in other directions. Here we find a rural landscape saturated with loss and its

mnemonics. Heroin users cannot escape the presence of drugs without severing their social ties, given how drug use circulates through the most intimate relationships of family and love. Nor can they overcome pasts that literally greet them at every turn in the road.

The book draws out a Hispanic mode of melancholia, of eternal suffering that is stoked by a political and economic history of land appropriation, with the resulting entrenchment of desolate rural poverty and a social history of the loss of loved ones: children, parents, siblings, lovers, friends. This melancholia in turn reworks and is amplified by rehabilitative centers and institutions that hinge on a medical model of chronicity: of individual subjects who must own and regret their pasts and whose addiction is understood to be a lifelong condition. The result is a world in which the past is ever present and where the constant temporality of heroin need and use help to blunt a future of more of the same.

The institutions meant to remediate this situation—clinics, hospitals, prisons—inevitably wind up channeling people through the endless temporality of melancholia in ways that only add to the dangers of existential angst. Yet northern New Mexicans lack the political power to refute institutional logics that fuel their dispossession. So, too, do the social relations of care, of kinship, animate the daily life and ethical struggles of addiction. Care is ever present in the affective and moral imagination of the Espanola Valley, but it is insufficient and at times even destructive to the

people caught up in its ethos. When addiction links parents and children, for example, gifts of heroin or the injection of drugs into fresh graves become important acts of care. Garcia describes these processes of care as they culminate in suicide through overdose and in incarceration through loyalty. One of her more important interventions is to describe how the male symbolics of addiction and criminology impose grave repercussions on female experiences of the same.

Garcia sets before us a tangle of addiction, loss, care, history, and place with tremendous grace and honesty. She exposes a place of deep and affecting contrasts: the depth

of the heroin epidemic and the ubiquity of suicide amid the strength of social bonds; the beauty of the landscape amid its scars of land appropriation; the impetus of care amid the often-tragic consequences of caring relationships. A gifted writer, Garcia has clearly thought deeply about the ethics of writing. This brief review cannot begin to do this book justice. Instead, I urge anyone interested in care, kinship, Hispanic life, the United States, and the craft of ethnography to read *The Pastoral Clinic* for herself. A singular accomplishment, Angela Garcia calls forth an ethics of care from which it is impossible to turn away.

Converting Words: Maya in the Age of the Cross

William F. Hanks. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010. 472 pp.

Greg Urban

University of Pennsylvania

Reduccion, a term used to describe the Spanish conquest of the Yucatec Mayan in 16th century, is understood by scholars to have had two principle objectives: to gather native peoples into towns (*pueblos*) and to transform their habits, dispositions, and beliefs—that is, to turn them into Christian subjects of the Spanish crown. In addition to these two objectives, author William Hanks argues, *reduccion* had a third goal, this one key to understanding the encounter between the Spanish and the Maya during the colonial period. In his richly detailed, impressively researched, and erudite study, Hanks argues that *reduccion* aimed at transforming the Mayan language; indeed, it aimed at producing a new language—a *Maya reducido*.

Because Yucatec Mayan is not a creole, readers may scratch their heads at the notion of “Maya reducido” as a “new” language. Would a study of cognates reveal such divergence between pre- and postconquest Mayan languages as to suggest that the two were mutually unintelligible? The question of intelligibility, in fact, pinpoints the brilliance of Hanks’s insight. Maya reducido, “neither European nor Maya in any simple sense” (p. 16), made the world intelligible in a new way.

Vocabulary change, central to the transformative process, is studied in chapters 5 and 6 through analysis of Spanish–Mayan dictionaries developed by missionaries. Hanks looks at what he calls “commensuration”—how the Spanish words (both form and meaning) were brought into alignment with Mayan words. Commensuration produced an asymmetrical conduit through which Spanish meanings worked their way into Mayan lexical forms, creating the new intelligibility characteristic of *Maya reducido*. Hanks traces the creation of this “translanguage,” as he dubs it, into morphology and syntax.

His thesis is not that the creation of dictionaries and grammars is sufficient to bring into existence a new language. Forging a new language, one capable of making the world intelligible in new ways, depends on getting people to take that language on as their own. In other words, the language must be made to circulate. *Converting Words*, indeed, is a study of discourse circulation. It is an investigation of the forces that initiated the motion of this “translanguage” through the world—over space and through time.

Motion through space is not just a metaphor. After an introductory chapter laying out his vision of *reduccion* as social process, Hanks describes the gathering together of native peoples into *pueblos* and into a broader system of Spanish governance. This organization of space, however, does not suffice to make it intelligible to Mayan speakers—needed as well are concepts of “property,” “ownership,” and “government.” For this reason, Hanks returns to the intelligibility of space in chapter 9, in which he shows that land documents produced by Mayan speakers also embody the new language.

How did these Maya come to adopt the new language? Hanks charts this fundamental process in chapters 3 and 4. Missionaries endeavored to fashion the Maya into “new men.” Through repetitive practices of both a religious and secular nature, the Maya in *pueblos* came to adopt new habits—habit being, as Cicero averred, “a second nature.”

However, it is not just any habits that are crucial to the spread of a new language. It is specifically discursive habits such as recitation of memorized prayers, catechism, confession, and sermons. Repetitive discursive practices bring about the internalization of the new language. In the course of iteration and reiteration, linguistic usage turns into habit; the new language becomes self-replicating. If the language becomes self-replicating, then so too do its forms of intelligibility. They acquire the capability of moving beyond the confines of religion and missionization. Hanks marks this

transition by distinguishing between part II, focused on the religious realm, and part III, concerned with linguistic usage in secular life.

From what I have said so far, it might appear that Hanks views the new language exclusively as a tool of domination and control. This interpretation, however, would miss his main point. Once Maya reducido became self-replicating, it acquired the capability of moving beyond the Spanish colonial world and into the realm of the un-subjugated Maya, where it transformed itself into a tool of resistance. This is the theme of chapter 11. Once set in motion by missionaries, the new language took on a

life of its own. It became the Mayan language—a tool usable for subversion and for the self-determination of a people.

Converting Words is destined to become a classic in Mayan studies. Although dense and detailed, it is a must-read for anthropologists and historians interested in the colonial period as well as in contemporary Mayan culture. It will hold great value for all linguistic and cultural anthropologists concerned with processes of contact, colonization, and resistance. Indeed, it represents a distinctive contribution to the literature on discourse circulation and the motion of culture more generally.

The Secret: Love, Marriage, and HIV

Jennifer S. Hirsch, Holly Wardlow, Daniel Jordan Smith, Harriet M. Phinney, Shanti Parikh, and Constance A. Nathanson. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2009. 301 pp.

Jill Owczarzak

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HIV researchers and prevention specialists have long known that marriage does not offer protection from the virus and that women in particular are vulnerable to HIV infection even when they are married. As the authors of the essays collected in *The Secret: Love, Marriage, and HIV* note, this fact contradicts with the globally popular “ABC Campaign” and its promotion of abstinence, fidelity, and condom use (“Abstain, Be faithful, and Condomise”). This volume offers insight into the social, economic, moral, and cultural contexts through which HIV potentially enters marriages and contributes to women’s vulnerability to infection.

This research occurred as part of a larger collaborative and comparative study funded by the National Institutes of Health. The authors propose a new approach: comparative ethnography through the framework of “critical comparative ethnography.” This approach focuses on processes rather than social traits; investigates the relationship between large social forces and individual experiences through experience-near ethnography; and deliberately seeks to include a variety of perspectives and experiences across gender, class, and generation. Such a collaborative and comparative project requires continual revisiting and revising of research questions and consideration of how best to answer them in particular contexts as well as a willingness to acknowledge—and even highlight—the unique ways analytic concepts play out on the ground in each research setting. As a result, each chapter outlines the historical context of gender relations and patterns of social and economic change unique to that context.

The authors offer several key themes that highlight the larger social, political, and economic forces that shape HIV risk opportunities. First, the concept of “extramarital oppor-

tunity structures” explores the linkages between infidelity and broader social, political, and economic factors. As Harriet Phinney points out in her chapter on Vietnam, the global market economy has led to the commercialization and sexualization of men’s leisure time, with the emergence of new enterprises geared toward sexual services. Spaces for sexual relationships have proliferated, increasing the possibilities for infidelity and decreasing the potential social risk associated with being caught. In addition, the primacy given to a women’s responsibility to the home and the need for men to seek economic opportunities through labor migration create opportunities for men to engage in extramarital relations. In Nigeria, as Daniel Jordan Smith illustrates, many men attributed their behavior to the opportunities for extramarital affairs facilitated by work-related migration.

Second, the authors contrast the notion of “social risk” with “sexual” or “epidemiological” risk to highlight that, in many contexts, conceptualizations of “safe sex” are not limited to concerns about health risks. Holly Wardlow’s examination of infidelity among the Huli of Papua New Guinea, for example, illustrates that for Huli men extramarital sex partners are considered “safe” if they do not infringe on other men or carry adverse economic consequences. “Safe sex,” particularly in the context of marital infidelity, involves complex interpretations of social, moral, and economic risks, such as the degree to which an extramarital affair hurts the financial well-being of the family rather than its potential to introduce HIV into the relationship.

Third, the concepts of extramarital opportunity structures and social risk are significantly tied to gendered social space and sexual geographies. In her essay on extramarital sex in rural Mexico, Jennifer Hirsch illustrates that certain spaces (e.g., motels, bars outside of town) are associated with “socially risk-free sex.” She argues that men’s moral

reputations are based on their skill at concealing extramarital affairs from their wives and communities, while also demonstrating assertive and sexually independent masculinity. Shanti Parikh's analysis of infidelity in Uganda likewise illustrates that gendered daily mobility patterns enable men to engage in extramarital activities outside the scrutiny of their wives and kin.

The authors contend that public-health campaigns against HIV may unintentionally heighten gendered tensions, exacerbate stigma, and obscure political and economic issues that contribute to risk. In response, they outline the policy implications of their findings, with an emphasis on structural interventions to address the social and gender inequalities that contribute to HIV risk. They urge researchers and policy makers to more fully consider the effects of migrant-labor processes and to shift from targeting identity-oriented risk groups to targeting prevention efforts at people who gather

in particular social spaces. This comparative ethnographic project provides an important contribution to our understanding of the social and economic processes that enable marital infidelity and potentially increase women's vulnerability to HIV infection. It lays the groundwork for rethinking how we conceptualize risk and for exploring the possibilities for developing HIV-prevention strategies that move beyond behavioral interventions based on generic behavior and identity-based risk categories.

In addition to its contribution to our understanding of HIV risk, this book offers valuable insights into the process and potential products of cross-cultural, comparative research for both anthropologists and social and behavioral scientists. Its detailed description of the collaborative research process could be used as a guide for advanced graduate students and established investigators who seek to design public health studies that span multiple contexts.

Uncertain Tastes: Memory, Ambivalence, and the Politics of Eating in Samburu Northern Kenya

Jon Holtzman. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009. 285 pp.

Brad Weiss

The College of William & Mary

With compelling ethnographic detail and engaging theoretical exploration, Jon Holtzman offers a "food-centric" account of the social and historical complexity of Samburu experience. The "anthropology of food" has become a growth industry in recent years, and Holtzman provides an exemplary offering. He not only demonstrates the wide-ranging potential of this perspective, using food "as a lens through which Samburu" (p. 7) think about just about everything in their world, but also offers valuable critiques of prevailing approaches to food in anthropology that (in keeping with contemporary rifts within the [in]discipline) emphasize either the instrumentalities of nutritional content and energy optimization or the expressive dimensions of food's sensuousness and symbolism. Hoping to combine Marvin Harris's dictum "food is good to eat" with Claude Lévi-Strauss's "food is good to think" (although, plainly, from an interpretive perspective), Holtzman aims to present a unified food theory to illuminate what he calls the "ambiguous and ambivalent" perspectives that Samburu have on their society and its transformation.

These issues of ambivalence and social transformation provide the other focus of Holtzman's work: memory. Samburu memory, for Holtzman, is informed by "two gastronomical master narratives" (p. 29) centered on food. The first is the story of "progress," in which pastoral diets give

way to "rational" food provisioning and distribution. The second is "decline," wherein core features of Samburu culture and moral personhood are eroded—erosion best exemplified by the replacement of such vivid foods as meat, milk, and blood with the "gray foods" centered on grain. These narratives are intermingled in Samburu experience and expression (typically in the same conversation), whence the ambivalence in Samburu values with respect to their memories of society and culture. This theme allows Holtzman to explore contemporary perspectives on memory. In his review, he argues that memory need not be explicable in a single, coherent theme that is amenable to one's overriding theoretical perspective (e.g., that "memories" embedded in rites of commemoration "really" divulge the workings of state power), but analysts should, instead, be attentive to the "dissonances, ambivalences, and inconsistencies" (p. 43) characteristic of the social pragmatics of memory. In this way, Holtzman's arguments about memory are consonant with his perspective on food: these complex dimensions of social experience are not reducible to overarching (or underlying) mechanisms but are, in fact, "overdetermined" in the Althusserian sense. Our task as anthropologists is to illustrate the shifting terrain on which the ambiguities of diverse perspectives, values, and motives of social actors are repeatedly played out.

Following two introductory chapters that weave together Samburu particulars with his approach to food and memory, Holtzman offers two multiple-chapter sections:

“Worlds of Food” and “Histories of Eating.” The first, “Worlds of Food,” offers a reexamination of Samburu (and, by implication, a host of East African pastoral peoples’) sociocultural organization through the lens of food. Here he demonstrates how complex institutions like marriage and age sets as well as critical dimensions of moral personhood are formed through but also as productive modes of eating and providing food. In this section, the chapter “The Calabash behind the Calabash behind the Calabash” is an especially rich and detailed discussion of the central Samburu value of *nkanyit*, a sense of “respect.” Here Holtzman most fully realizes his argument, showing how food-related practices construct the values critical to Samburu social life but do so in ways that both confirm and challenge these values. Thus, ambiguity is inherent in practice and pragmatically useful in Samburu relations. “Histories of Eating,” the second section, offers chapters on gastronomic transformation, exploring the confounding mixture of comestibles (and,

critically, cooking techniques) characterized as “gray foods,” the widespread contemporary adoption of tea as a “traditional” Samburu food, and the more widespread availability of beer. In each instance, the presence of these foods demonstrates the ambivalence with which Samburu both embrace and decry the changes to which they have been subjected in the (post)colonial era.

I am not a fan of reviewers who critique a book for what it does not address. Holtzman is more than justified in having focused on food practices, and if this means he has neglected some features of Samburu history, well, that is for other anthropologists and other books. I do not find myself in agreement with all that Holtzman has to say, but the highest praise I can give this book (and it is high praise, indeed) is that it really made me think. Holtzman’s writing is lucid and accessible without being simplistic. It would be a welcome text in both undergraduate and graduate courses on African ethnography or on the anthropology of food.

Pestilence and Persistence: Yosemite Indian Demography and Culture in Colonial California

Kathleen L. Hull. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009. 392 pp.

Cameron Wesson
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Encouraged by critical appraisals of the Columbian quinquennial, the application of various forms of agency theory, a post-NAGPRA era of critical engagement with descendent communities, and a host of other factors, the past decade has seen a proliferation of archaeological studies of postcolonial Native American culture change. These studies have led to a general abandonment of the previously dominant materialist “replacement models” of Native American postcontact and colonial culture change. Additionally, rather than focusing almost exclusively on the evidence of change, these newer studies also address areas of broad cultural continuity that eluded most prior efforts. Kathleen Hull’s *Pestilence and Persistence* is certainly grounded within these contemporary developments, but despite the present spate of similar studies, her work creates for itself a unique place in the study of colonial Native American culture change and continuity.

Based on the dual premises that previous scholarship has exaggerated the lasting impacts of European-introduced disease on Native American populations and that it has offered far too little direct evidence to support these claims, Hull sets out to examine archaeological and historical information on demography for the Awahnichi peoples of the Yosemite Valley. In so doing, she does not seek to diminish the impacts of European diseases on Awahnichi populations but to

frame these impacts within a longer-term pattern of population fluctuation within the Yosemite region that suggests colonial-era population loss “was not necessarily unique nor did it inevitably result in significant culture change due to depopulation alone” (p. 11). It is in developing this argument that Hull’s work makes some of its most important contributions to contemporary scholarship on these issues.

Utilizing the limited historical documents related to the Awahnichi to their maximum, Hull adds extremely detailed archaeological data regarding settlement patterning, size, and duration of use; lithic procurement strategies and reduction techniques; tribal oral histories; environmental data; and other proxy measures to reconstruct more than a thousand years of human occupation on Yosemite Valley. The results of this careful, multidimensional scholarship suggest strongly that the population of Yosemite fluctuated greatly prior to, during, and following the arrival of Europeans in North America. However, Hull never diminishes the demographic impacts of the growing European colonial presence; she simply seeks to demonstrate how a group of people with a history of demographic expansion and contraction responded to the challenges of European colonization.

In reading Hull’s argument, there were several moments when I questioned an individual element of her case, only to find that she introduces those same questions a paragraph or two later. However, she not only raises those same issues but also consistently provides a contextualization for her

interpretations that are rhetorically persuasive and clearly supported by the various elements of her data. In addition to this unquestioned intellectual vitality and integrity, the deft with which Hull employs theory is equally impressive. At times it appears as though this work could be placed squarely within the processualist paradigm, but those sections are followed by arguments that would be immediately recognizable (and supportable) by the most avid postprocessualists. It is Hull's ability to provide a rigorous analytical exploration of complex, multidimensional data while simultaneously employing sophisticated theoretical arguments that sets this work apart from other similar efforts.

My substantive criticism of this work centers mainly on Hull's compilations of other regional demographic data in chapter 9. Working through a series of short culture histories from other regions of North America that address similar issues, Hull's cultural vignettes are far too abbreviated to be impactful and are frequently based on dated source material. It is perhaps asking too much of any scholar to summarize the continental literature on colonialist archaeologies, but these sections do not display the same craft that earlier chapters of the book display. Additionally, in the middle of her excellent theoretical arguments, Hull interjects the thoroughly puzzling and discredited notion of "unilineal cultural evolution" when she suggests that

"chiefdoms may fail to make the further transition to a state-level society because of limited biotic potential" (p. 237). The past 30 years of chiefdom-level archaeology has repeatedly demonstrated that there is no a priori reason that chiefdoms will inevitably become states or that their "failure" to do so somehow requires systemic or historical explanation.

Despite these issues, Hull's work is a major piece of scholarship that promises to influence the direction of future demographic and colonial-era cultural studies in North America. Built on the careful analysis of archaeological and historical data, the argument that the Awahnici responded to European diseases using many of the same cultural practices evident in earlier periods of population decline is both compelling and well founded. Thus, by actively avoiding a priori assumptions about the nature of demographic change on Native American culture, Hull's work demonstrates "the inherent flexibility of groups with a history of demographic challenges or cultural dynamism" (p. 221).

This work raises the bar for archaeologists dealing with individual case studies in colonialism. By grounding her analysis in close readings of the early historical and ethnological records of the Awahnici, Hull has produced a volume that will have lasting usefulness for archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, and others concerned with the human dimensions of colonization.

Nature's Embrace: Japan's Aging Urbanites and New Death Rites

Satsuki Kawano. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010. 220 pp.

Katrina Moore

University of New South Wales

Nature's Embrace is a well-researched, engaging ethnography about the rise of new mortuary practices in Japan. Drawing on fieldwork with a nonprofit citizens' group known as the Grave Free Promotion Society (GFPS; "Sôsô no Jiyû O Susumeru Kai"), author Satsuki Kawano uses the mortuary rite of ash scattering as a critical lens to analyze the changing intergenerational contract and the negotiations of responsible selfhood unfolding in contemporary Japan. She focuses in particular on the "transitional cohorts" born between 1925 and 1950: urban-dwelling senior citizens, many of whom migrated to the cities from rural areas in early adulthood. As many of these people do not stand to inherit family graves, they are uncertain about the future availability of memorial caregivers. Given this situation, the choice to scatter their ashes after death is at one level a pragmatic response to the dearth of posthumous caregivers.

On another level, this choice represents an assertion of individuality and self-reliance (*jiritsu*) by senior citizens who

are seeking to rewrite the generational contract by taking charge of their mortuary remains. Kawano explains that this decision to be self-reliant should not be confused with the rise of Western-style individualism, which enshrines the individual as the autonomous unit of decision making, isolated from or independent of others. Instead, she says, this decision continues to be anchored in a sociocentric model of personhood: the individual gains a sense of meaning in making this decision to be "self-reliant" precisely because doing so reduces the burden of care on future generations. In a similar vein, Kawano argues that the scattering of ashes does not destabilize the *ie* (stem family) system's family grave system but, rather, supports a dual structure in mortuary practices where ash scattering coexists with the older system of interring cremated remains in family grave plots.

Given the focus on self-reliance, Kawano could have more explicitly analyzed how ash-scattering practices articulate with other instances in which Japanese are seeking to construct identities through the idiom of self-reliance. Ash scatterers are choosing to lighten the burden of caring for remains in the context of considerable social discussion about

the desirability, or some would argue burden, of exercising personal responsibility in the spheres of work, family, and civic life. Scholarly debates about this trend remain implicit in Kawano's analysis but are not foregrounded. It would have been helpful had Kawano engaged these debates more explicitly and helped readers understand how ash scattering can be contextualized within this more widespread effort in contemporary Japan to adopt norms of personal and social responsibility.

The ethnography balances detailed historical study of mortuary practices and household formation with in-depth ethnographic analysis. It is at its liveliest when Kawano delves (ch. 4) into the everyday travails of the GFPS staff. The group has on occasion battled direct opposition from cities that have banned the scattering practice, claiming that ashes may contaminate local drinking water or bring stigma to the city. We also gain a vivid, sometimes amusing, window into the experiences of people who opt to scatter their relatives' ashes but who are appalled when they realize that the GFPS will only facilitate, not handle, the procedure of scattering those ashes. What this effectively means is that relatives must use a hammer to pulverize their own dead kin's cremated

bones into ash. Some family members feel haunted by the possibility of retribution from the spirits of the dead. In these vivid portrayals of how her informants negotiate these practices, Kawano provides a palpable sense of the lived reality of adopting and practicing this new rite.

My main criticism of the book lies in Kawano's failure to interrogate the category of "nature"; this is a surprise, considering its prominence in the book. The concept remains largely taken for granted throughout the chapters. It would have been useful if Kawano had analyzed the discursive constructions of "nature" deployed by the GFPS members. She could also have explored how these constructions articulate with discourses espoused by similar citizens' movements that promote environmental sustainability and nature-centered living, both in Japan and in other postindustrial societies.

In spite of these shortcomings, this is a compelling and solidly researched ethnography. It will be of particular interest to students of mortuary practices and Japanese familial relationships. It will also interest anthropologists examining how intergenerational relationships are being rewritten because of changes in fertility and mortality rates.

Dancing with the Dead: Memory, Performance, and Everyday Life in Postwar Okinawa

Christopher Nelson. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008. 277 pp.

Yukiko Koga

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The proliferation of memory studies since the 1990s primarily revolves around how a traumatic past—be it the Holocaust, war, colonialism, or genocide—is negotiated in the present. Christopher Nelson's *Dancing with the Dead* significantly extends existing memory studies by demonstrating how everyday mnemonic practices defy a simple correspondence between the past and its evocation in the present. Nelson shows how memory refuses to be traced back to a singular past; rather, memory presents gift relationships with the dead by evoking layers of pasts as an embodied performative experience rather than a mere representation. He weaves this role of memory through beautifully written ethnographic collages of performances that evoke Okinawa's layered pasts, from the Japanese colonization of Ryūkyū Kingdom in the 19th century to the brutal Battle of Okinawa that culminated in the so-called "compulsory suicide" of hundreds of civilians in 1945 and onward to the postwar U.S. occupation and continued semicolonization of Okinawa as a key U.S. military base after Okinawa's 1972 reversion to Japan.

What emerges is a fundamental contradiction inscribed onto the Okinawan relation to Japanese citizenship: their exclusion from rights granted to Japanese citizens. *Dancing with the Dead* tells a story of the enigmatic relationship between Japanese citizenship in Okinawa and the Japanese state, which hinges on this principle of inclusion through exclusion by turning Okinawa into a space of exception. In the gift economy between the Japanese state and Okinawa, citizenship is exchanged for the leasing of Okinawan ancestral land to the U.S. military. This creates a void in which relationships with ancestral spirits are both severed and supplemented through performative mnemonic practices such as storytelling and dance that reestablish relationships with the dead.

Nelson's ethnography effectively untangles forces that lie between the nation and the everyday, showing how ordinary Okinawans deploy mnemonic practices as a form of everyday resistance to the narration of the Japanese nation. Against the politically charged backdrop of U.S. base-lease renewal negotiations and antibase movements, he illustrates how nostalgia, longing, trauma, silence, and demands of life in Japan's poorest prefecture drive local Okinawans to express the burdens of the present through performative

evocations of the past. For example, contemporary longing for ancestral land lost to the U.S. base is expressed through the powerful *eisā* dance, which narrates the demise of the Ryūkyū Kingdom in the 19th century and the subsequent Okinawan diaspora.

In each chapter, the temporal work of performance works to reclaim spatial loss. Sites of recounting the past—a local theater, a classroom, an alley—are central to the content of evocation, as when an *eisā* dance performance returns Okinawans temporarily back to their long-estranged hometown on the off-limits U.S. base. These ethnographic moments highlight how memory is a chain of signification taking place through mnemonic performances that, in turn, elicit chains of memories. These evocations defy attempts to identify exactly which past is most clearly in focus, and Nelson adeptly portrays memory as an associative and embodied act that complicates the common impression of memory coalescing around any one traumatic moment.

The book opens with Nelson's perspective as a U.S. Marine lieutenant stationed in Okinawa in the 1980s and later as an anthropologist in the late 1990s. In subsequent chapters, he skillfully introduces his readers to local perspectives and increasingly locates Okinawa in relation to an external entity called "Japan." Yet Okinawa's relation to Asia-Pacific or other contexts is tantalizingly underexplored, leaving me wondering how Okinawa's sense of victimhood and marginalization within Japan figures into the larger discourse of Japan's role as an aggressor in Asia.

For example, during Nelson's research, the Japanese media was saturated with debates about Japan's war

responsibility. Culminating in the so-called 1990s "Historian's Debate," these debates highlighted the tension between mourning Japanese war dead and mourning Asian victims of Japanese imperialism, thereby problematizing the very work of mourning surrounding ancestral lineage that Nelson shows as the source of empowerment and resistance for the Okinawans. Locating his ethnography in the larger context of memory work in Japan in the 1990s and Japan's role in East Asia would allow Nelson to pose the question of how Okinawan remembrance and resistance might converge with Okinawa's complicity in Japanese imperialism and its aftermath. Nelson locates Okinawans' source of resistance to the Japanese state in the shared sense of victimhood across generations. But his ethnographic material also suggests an unexamined awareness of Okinawan complicity in the suffering of "Asian brothers," as one of his informants put it, including the U.S. base's role in the Korean, Vietnam, and Gulf Wars (p. 164). Nelson's framing of Okinawans as subaltern could be usefully supplemented by showing how resistance comes from both a sense of victimhood and complicity.

This book greatly enriches memory studies by unsettling the location of memory. Nelson's honest voice as an ethnographer also opens up the welcome subject of the ethics of anthropological research through his poetic and moving engagement with the subject. *Dancing with the Dead* is an absorbing and nuanced ethnography that will be of significant interest to Japan and East Asian specialists and to all who engage with questions of history and memory, subaltern studies, and the ethnography of the everyday.

Dangerous Citizens: The Greek Left and the Terror of the State

Neni Panourgía. New York: Fordham University Press, 2009. 302 pp.

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One summer morning in 2005, the author found herself disagreeing with her uncle Tasos over whether the violent events that unfolded in Athens in early December of 1945 were or were not a manifestation of civil war. Her uncle "was there" and insisted that he saw Greeks shooting at and killing other Greeks. The author, following her parents, insisted to the contrary that the street battles pitted the resident British army against leftist agents of the Greek resistance. Their argument grew impassioned. They were "yelling and screaming." Panourgía adds:

The incident did not become part of my research until much later, when I was able to sit down . . . and record it. Once again, my

reasons for conducting this research, which seemingly deals with a fifty-year history, came back to me: it does not deal with a fifty-year history; it deals with the story that is modern Greece. [p. 64]

Here as elsewhere, her self-assessment is on the mark. She reaches back—daringly, meticulously, with dark lyricism and always with a passion for revelation and self-reflection—to trace the emergence and the persistence of an oscillating current external and internal political heavy-handedness, political demonizations, and political exclusions that have, in her persuasive judgment, reduced the Greek left to tatters and cemented its distrust of the state apparatus, which, as the 2008 riots attest, has left the civil war without end (p. 21). Panourgía achieves not a history of the present but instead a probing, a sounding of the history everywhere

within it. Literally and figuratively, the achievement is stunning.

Engaging archives and history books, conducting interviews with the living, and visiting sites barely habitable, the author in fact recounts a history of far more than 50 years. She notes an 1871 law directed toward the punishment of brigands and the *ektopismos* (confinement) of anyone who harbored them (p. 23). She mentions a law drafted during the 1912–14 Balkan Wars codifying states of emergency. She touches on the aftermath of failure of the Greek army to recapture Anatolia, which led to the 1923 “split” between Venizelist liberals and royalist conservatives. She lingers at length on the liberal Eleftherios Venizelos’s introduction into the 1929 Parliament of the *Idiônymon*, a law establishing “the persecution of ideas and convictions” (p. 41). Panourgíá sees in the *Idiônymon* the beginning of the end of a coherent political leftism. The *Idiônymon* also serves as the perfect instrument for the Metaxas dictatorship, soon to follow, to deploy in effecting the cruel heterotopias around which *Dangerous Citizens* constantly circles. The heterotopias at issue are concentration camps: places of humiliation, torture, and, for the many who refused to sign declarations of the repentance of their communist sympathies, death.

The Metaxas dictatorship was quite the enthusiast of the *ektopismos*—now “encampment”—of leftists real or imagined, establishing its technologies of terror on numerous Greek islands, galvanizing the enduring rightist conviction that the Greek communist party is an enemy of the people determined to destroy the state, in spite of every indication to the contrary (p. 175). The camps’ successors—established in immediate aftermath of World War II, during the (official) civil war and under the aegis of the Truman Doctrine—are the subject of many of Panourgíá’s interviews and the fulcrum of her attention. The camp on Makrónisos is well known, but the author dwells on its counterpart on Yioúra (or Yáros), if only because, there, inhumanities, tortures, and torturers were so extreme. The camps were closed in 1963, only to be revived and thickly repopulated again during the military junta that imposed itself on the country (with considerable U.S. support) from 1967 until 1974. They have

remained inactive since then but through inmates’, own recounting have yielded a figure not merely of resonance in the Greek present but of broader anthropological resonance as well. The figure is Oedipus, and the question his tragedy poses is, for Panourgíá as for many of the rest of us, “a pivotal moment” of “anthropology as a comparative project” (p. 165) and of the anthropological essence: “Who is constituted as self and who is constituted as other?” (p. 171). No wonder *Dangerous Citizens* is a thing of narratives disrupted, erga and parerga, chapters that rest somewhere between a linear succession and a constellation of essays. Greeks and anthropologists are fellow travelers.

A small but weak moment in Panourgíá’s analysis comes when, following Giorgio Agamben (which is always dangerous), she asks why Michel Foucault treated only “rehabilitation camps”—clinics, prisons—but never concentration camps? (p. 110). Why the neglect of the gulag? Her answer turns on a sharp distinction between biopolitics and thanatopolitics and on the claim that Foucault is primarily interested in the former (pp. 114–115). In his discussion of biopolitics and modern racism in the conclusion of the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (1978), however, Foucault offers, as a cardinal and single example, that of the Nazis, who he was well-aware interned not only Jews but also other Others such as homosexuals and indeed leftists—anyone whose “degeneracy” corrupted the social fabric. Both Stalinism and Nazism cast their shadow over the entirety of Foucault’s oeuvre, as they cast it over the work of so many others of his generation—so much so that it almost goes without saying. The point in any case only serves Panourgíá’s analysis because, as she herself knows very well, that shadow, the shadow of a biopolitics concentrating all its energies on the nexus of “health” and “security” and distorting them in the process, coalesces into the figure of the security state. Welcome—as Panourgíá herself welcomes us (pp. 112, 171) in her absolutely indispensable book—to Guantanamo Bay.

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Next of Kin: The Family in Chicano/a Cultural Politics

Richard T. Rodríguez. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009. 256 pp.

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Next of Kin: The Family in Chicano/a Cultural Politics by Richard T. Rodríguez is a very readable treatise of the complex notions of *la familia* (“the family”) as part and parcel of the

Chicano–Chicana civil rights movement that emerged in the United States since the 1960s. To unravel this history and analyze how the two related concepts of “la familia” (the family) and “la raza” (the people) have been constructed and activated within the Chicano–Chicana movement, Rodríguez maps out a critical genealogy of Chicano–Chicana

cultural politics of the family during the past 50 years (chs. 1–3). The final two chapters go beyond this deconstruction and critical rereading and search for nonheterosexual reconfigurations of *la familia*.

Chapter 1 presents in-depth interpretations of foundational texts of the Chicano–Chicana movement, especially a compelling analysis of Rudolfo “Corky” Gonzales’s epic poem *I am Joaquín* (1972). In the same chapter, the author analyzes Chicano–Chicana art productions depicting family portraits of the 1960s and 1970s. Rodríguez shows convincingly that these cultural productions are at the same time reactions to negative stereotypes of “dysfunctional” or “defective” Mexican American families (p. 53) and important stimuli for movement mobilization. However, such empowering notions have also “codified *la familia* as a sacred institution in which gender roles are fixed in the name of tradition” (p. 54). Using feminist and queer theory, Rodríguez deconstructs these heteronormative naturalizations of the family and gender identities.

The second chapter, aptly titled “Shooting the Patriarch” (p. 55), extends these findings with an analysis of visual media, particular film, video, and television. This chapter has its own chronological order. It starts with early film and television productions of the 1960s and 1970s, then focuses on several productions from the 1990s, most notably a persuasive look at Gregory Nava’s *Mi Familia/My Family* (1995), and concludes with the experimental video work of Harry Gamboa Jr. The examples are well chosen and clearly demonstrate the conflicting notions of *la familia* within Chicano–Chicana cultural production. Similarly, the third chapter on Chicano–Chicana rap stresses that there is “no single version of the family in Chicano rap music” (p. 132). Nevertheless, despite remarkable variations, most of the rap artists continue to conceptualize *la familia* in similar heteronormative and patriarchal terms, as is evident in the cultural productions analyzed in the two previous chapters (an important exception is “Homo-Hop” [p. 128]).

Building on this complex and critical genealogical analysis of the Chicano–Chicana cultural productions of *la familia*, the chapter on *carнал* (“brotherhood”) knowledge and the afterword on “making queer *Familia*” (p. 167) then aim at understanding “how reconfigured kinship arrangements

need not be established in mutual exclusivity from biological relations” (p. 167). The paintings by Eugene Rodríguez are good examples for this approach.

I am impressed by the many strengths of this book—particularly, its clarity and broad coverage. However, I want to point out two weaknesses that irritated me. First, the author presents only a very limited range of anthropological research on Mexican and Chicano–Chicana kinship. Some ethnographic work on Mexican families from the 1960s is briefly mentioned as stereotypical (p. 23), but more recent work is not included (e.g., Jennifer Hirsch’s ethnography on Mexican American families [2003]). Second, Rodríguez includes few references to new anthropological research on kinship in general. In the past years, the anthropological study of kinship has been revitalized, and an exciting and inspiring body of new approaches and ideas has been published, without doubt of great value for Rodríguez’s search for reconfigurations of *la familia* (e.g., see John Borneman [2001] on caring and being cared for). These shortcomings might stem from the cultural-studies approach the author has chosen—one that employs “multiple disciplines, methodologies, and discourses” (p. 10) and certainly leads to an impressive interdisciplinary range but also a possible lack of disciplinary depth, at least in regard to anthropological findings.

Despite these weaknesses, the topic of the book is very relevant and the interpretations of texts and visual media are superb. Furthermore, the publication of Rodríguez’s book is exceptionally timely given widespread prejudices many Chicanos–Chicanas are still facing. The book is engagingly written and will certainly be of great value for specialists in the Americas, queer and feminist theory, cultural studies, popular culture, kinship, and migration.

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Carrying the Word: The Concheros Dance in Mexico

Susanna Rostas. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2009. 303 pp.

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In spite of the growing popularity and visibility of Conchero dance in Mexico and beyond, the practice has received very little attention. The only other extensive treatment

of the Conchero dance written in English is Martha Stone’s *At the Sign of Midnight: The Concheros Dance Cult of Mexico* (1975). Susanna Rostas’s *Carrying the Word* makes an important contribution in this regard. Although I am unclear about the exact duration of her fieldwork, Rostas apparently spent an extensive amount of time, immersing herself in

the practice of the dance to become her “own informant” (p. xvii). Her ethnographic descriptions are the strength of this study, and personally I would have liked more in this regard.

After the introduction, the remaining nine chapters are divided into three parts. Part I serves to provide context for the Conchero dance practice. Rostas does an excellent job of clearly describing the complex, hierarchical organization of *mesas* (individual dance groups), the various roles within *mesas*, the loose and changing confederations or associations among *mesas*, and the way that obligations to vigils and dances, undertaken by individuals and *mesas*, work to grow the numbers of dance practitioners.

In the four chapters comprising the second part of the book, Rostas writes that her aim is “to analyze what dancers are doing . . . and how they experience it” (p. 67). But as she observes in her introduction, “experience is notoriously hard to get at” (p. 4), and in the end Rostas does not fully succeed in this effort. She provides a good survey of the literature and approaches to ritual and performance and argues for a process-oriented rather than event-oriented approach. She advocates thinking in terms of a “dialectical process” (p. 82) between ritualization as “conventional action” and performative as the creative or “more self-expressive side of the activity” (p. 73). In Rostas’s formulation, the oscillation between ritualization and performative can produce (for experienced dancers) “a state of flow” that can produce an experience of transcendence (pp. 84–85).

In the third part of the book, Rostas focuses on issues of power: power struggles and identity politics, both of which come into play among and within *mesas*, particularly at the death of a charismatic leader. The ninth chapter focuses on a survey of the complex and often contradictory archive of “Oral Tradition, Myth, and History” surrounding the dance. And if some are still searching for origins, they will not find it here. Rostas observes the “tension between Indianism—the desire for the dance to have indigenous and possibly even pre-Columbian origins . . . and orthodoxy or Catholicism,” which links the dance “to the Catholic Church and thus pos-

sibly [locates it as] Hispanic in origin” (p. 167). There are numerous myths and oral traditions drawing on each of these origin narratives, which are complicated by the way that indigeneity has been appropriated as constitutive of Mexican national identity. It is this site of tension and contradiction that is of most concern to Rostas, which becomes clear in the final chapter and epilogue as she works to distinguish between two types of dancers and dance practices: the Mexica and the Concheros. In a broad generalization, she associates the former with Indianism and the latter with Catholicism. Rostas writes, “The Mexica dance the same dances as the Concheros but give them a different ethos, have a somewhat different perspective on their origins and *raison d’être*, and are much less interested in spiritual attainment” (p. 191).

Ultimately Rostas argues that the Mexica and Concheros “have little in common” as communities (p. 213). Yet, she locates the Mexica dance as an appropriation of the Conchero dance and acknowledges that the Mexica form has had tremendous impact on the Conchero practice. The affect has been so profound as to cause her to question: “Will the Concheros’ dancing become with time much less to do with inner spirituality, the quest for self-knowledge, and the emergence of religiosity? Will following the word continue to lead to the attainment of a transcendent state . . . or will it become more like the dancing of the Mexica, which is concerned with external attainment and identity politics” (p. 210). Although some will certainly take issue with Rostas’s assessment of participants’ motivations as well as perhaps her treatment of “inner spirituality” and transcendent states, this work makes an important contribution to the field as it raises issues that continue to concern anthropologists, such as accounting for experience, analyzing states of consciousness, and assessing the relationship between ritual and performance, cultural continuity and change, tradition, and authenticity.

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