

BOOK REVIEWS

The Absent Body. University of Chicago Press, 1990.

[x + 218 pp.]

\$34.95 U.S.: cloth; \$14.95 U.S.: paper

Leder's study on the human body promises to be an interesting book, but unfortunately may leave the reader confused, exhausted, and uninterested in the end.

The author intended *The Absent Body* to be a study of how we perceive our bodily experience. This 'perceptual experience' framework, known as 'phenomenology' among philosophers, makes for good theory because of its subjective nature. However, if the reader is not acquainted with such terms as 'phenomenology', 'Cartesian method', 'ectasis' or 'corporeality', they will not find explanations of this terminology in Leder's book.

It is this use of 'foreign' terminology, and the author's assumptions that all readers are able to follow his argument, that makes *The Absent Body* such a disappointment. For instance, Leder discusses the metaphysics of body existence/non-existence, without offering a theoretical chapter in the book. He extensively reviews such philosophers as Plato, Merleau-Ponty, and Husserl -- assuming the reader has former knowledge of both these philosophers and their works.

Furthermore, Leder's book is not a 'study' as the author purports the text to be, but instead it is a polemical critique of philosophical theories of the body. The six main chapters are in fact void of any real proof of the author's ideas. For example, Leder discusses topics such as the relationship between the brain and the body, and language and eye vision without any clear logic of argumentation or scientific evidence to support his claims.

In this short book (200 pp.), Leder should have done more to inform the reader. If an author is going to make claims concerning the body, then he/she should be empirical in method. This book, then, is one that social scientists should definitely avoid.

Anne MacDonald
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Net of Magic: Wonders and Deceptions in India. Lee Siegel. University of Chicago Press, 1991.

[444 pp., illustrated]

Net of Magic: Wonders and Deceptions in India is about magicians, the universal pleasure and power of deception and the special character of the Indian sub-continent. The author, Lee Siegel, is a professor of religion with a background in the analysis of ancient Sanskrit texts. For this book he conducted anthropological fieldwork with street and stage magicians in a number of locations throughout India in addition to searching through texts for accounts of the origins of magic and its practitioners. He promises that the book is a history of the accounts of the present day "survivors". Siegel plays down the fieldwork aspect of the research, referring to himself only as a "traveler" and to the accounts based on his fieldwork as "Traveler's Journal". However, my reading of this book is that it is, for the most part, based on anthropological fieldwork and is concerned predominantly with present day magicians. The book is an ethnography in both content and form.

I found the style of *Net of Magic* both fascinating and effective. Siegel states at the beginning that his goal is to perform a magic show in writing -- to play with a form that reflects the content. The book is a "set of tricks, illusions that are meant to represent realities and realities that are meant to illustrate illusions" (p. 1). The book alternates, chapter to chapter, from novelistic fiction (Scenes), to ethnographic fiction (Traveler's Journals) to historical fiction (Historian's Notebooks). The "Historian's Notebook" chapters are narrative accounts of the lives and feats of magicians of old in which the author plays no part. In "Scenes" the author is a third person character in the text, often portrayed as Indians might see him, as a curiosity -- a foreigner asking non-sensical questions and behaving inappropriately. In "Traveler's Journals" he writes in the first person and describes his feelings and motivations in addition to the sense he is trying to make out of what he is observing and participating in. The chapters, disparate at the early stages in subject as well as in style, converge toward the end of the account suggesting the process by which Siegel himself came to understand Indian Magic.

The different styles also allow the author to do two things: to inform about what he has come to understand efficiently as only the 'all-knowing' behind the scenes author can, and at the same time to honestly show his place in both the construction of the text and the construction of the data behind the text. Where he does figure in the text, he conjures up an image of himself as a full dimensional person, sometimes delighted, sometimes frustrated, often quite patronizing -- that I found helpful to

my reading of the text. He tells of the problems he had with his translator and with lying informants who, good-heartedly, would make things up so he would have something of interest to write in his book. I ended up with a picture of the author as a guy who likes doing research, drinking beer and occasionally smoking hashish, who went to India linguistically unprepared and fumbled through his research, but who dealt with things reflectively and imaginatively.

While Siegel the author is a character in the text, he is a bit player; it is not reflexive to the exclusion of the others. The real players are the magicians and they come in two types: magicians of the street and magicians of the stage. Street magicians are members of a Muslim low caste called *maslet* and are bound together by a secret language that they learn with their tricks from infancy. Father and son teams wander from place to place performing for small crowds on crowded street corners that they gather with the ancient symbols of the magician -- the flute and the *damaru* drum. Stage magicians tend to be Hindus who perform flashy shows for large crowds almost always appearing in the guise of *maharajas*. These magicians execute extravagances of Indian and Western tricks, such as bisecting ladies with electric buzz-saws with fountains of fire and water as backdrops, which Siegel describes, in postmodern lingo, as "mystic kitsch and melancholy glitz" (p. 2). Stage magicians apparently all dream of one day going to the magicians' holy city: Las Vegas, America.

An important theme that binds everything together is the relationship of magic to religion. One aspect of this relationship is the connections between magicians and renouncers. Through ascetic practices, renouncers are thought to obtain magical powers. Street magicians have appropriated many of the symbols of the renouncer so that as the wandering holy man is seen to be a magician, the wandering magician is seen to be a holy man with magical powers (p. 151). Stage magicians, on the other hand, trace their origins to the court priest-magician of old; men who could entertain the king, influence the gods and blind enemies in battle with their illusions. This relationship between religion and magic should be of interest to Canadians since the announcement of plans to develop a \$1.5 billion Maharishi Veda Land, a theme park near Niagara Falls based on the spiritual teachings of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, for which stage magician Doug Henning is the President and Creative Director.

There have been in India, too, many religious figures who have appropriated the sleights of hand of the magicians and who pass these off as evidence of divine power. Some of Siegel's stage magicians worry about these 'impostors' a great deal and expend considerable energy in trying to expose them as fakes. The book develops this theme with reference to a

very influential religious figure of this day, Sathya Sai Baba, whom many consider to be god himself, suggesting through the magicians that he has gathered his huge following through a series of cheap sleights. It is difficult not to take this one step further, though Siegel leaves it up to the reader, and wonder if perhaps all famous religious figures, of all times and all religions, might not have been mere tricksters using the maneuvers of the magician for their own ends. In India, anyway, it seems to be difficult to distinguish the fakirs from the fakers.

For me, *Net of Magic* captures the wonderful complexity of the character of India better than anything else I have read. Magic is an apt metaphor for India. As *Net of Magic* is about magic and is performed as magic, it suggests the character of India in a complex metaphoric and performative manner.

Chris Justice
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On Concepts and Classifications of Musical Instruments. Margaret J. Kartomi. University of Chicago Press, 1990.
[329 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, glossary, index]

Concepts and classifications of instruments and ensembles are part of a seamless web of cultural knowledge. The process of classification is usually not just a one-dimensional activity resulting in the production of a tersely structured, systematic set of data. It is frequently a multilevel, creative way of thinking and organizing knowledge about instruments and ensembles in ways that are consistent with socially influenced or structured ideas or belief systems. Concepts and classifications are often so interrelated that they are practically indivisible, except on an analytical level (Kartomi 1990:271).

This scholarly text presents and explains how various cultures of the world classify their musical instruments and instrumental ensembles¹, "together with the concepts of instrument upon which the schemes are based" (p. xv). The key here is the "concepts of instrument" which encompasses a society's views of the meaning of instruments as cultural phenomena. It has been observed, however, that during the course of classification there

is significant loss of this cultural information. Concerned with this loss and aware that it is engendered by the bias of classificatory schemes used by western-trained taxonomists, the author, as a specialist in organology², proposes a truly indigenous (emic) approach. As she points out, earlier attempts at ethnoclassification have fallen short of this ideal. Citing as example the work of David Ames and A.V. King (1971) who, although they collected native terms and concepts for their book on African musical instruments and noted local categories of instrumentalists, reverted to a western classification for the instruments. By way of illustrating her proposed 'ethnoscience' type of classification, Kartomi utilized her own fieldwork carried out in Sumatra and Java.

The book is organized into three parts with short, concise and salient chapters explaining the need for classification, exploring the human desire for structure and order, presenting an historical overview of instrumental classification, and discussing the merits of fieldwork. In Part I the terminology of the taxonomy of instruments is clarified in preparation for the use of these terms in cultures characterized by literary transmission of information (Part II) and those characterized by oral transmission (Part III).

Drawing upon Levi-Strauss' statement that any classification is superior to chaos, Kartomi explores the human desire to classify and categorize information in a rational and orderly structure. In addition to the aesthetic satisfaction obtained, this seemingly innate human desire for order and rational structure generates classification as the means to understand and pass on an immense body of knowledge of the physical and ideational aspects of our world. Premised on the concept that classifications may be seen as abstractions or statements of ideas and beliefs held by a particular group, it follows that the social, musical and functional aspects of instruments are part of the entire ethos of a culture. However, because these classifications are culture specific and tend to affect our perceptions, cross-cultural application causes a loss of information with a subsequent misunderstanding of the functional, social, and aesthetic roles instruments have in a culture.

On a theoretical level, taxonomical organology stresses both the technical "creation and application of classificatory schemes" and the more sociological humanistic aspect as extremes on a continuum requiring two distinct research methodologies. Kartomi laments that the human end of the continuum has been neglected. It is her intent to promote taxonomist base on folk, or "traditionally transmitted" (p. xvii) taxonomist which reflect the cognitive structures and behaviour of the people in opposition to the schemata derived by western philosophy's literary transmission. Historically, western taxonomical thought begins with the Greek Archaic period, continues through medieval times to the eighteenth century and to

the present. Particularly significant was the era of comparative musicology which prevailed during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During this period scholars primarily studied and wrote about non-western music as it compared to western music. According to the author's conclusions, it has been difficult to shake off these western categories. She promotes her book as an initial step towards drawing "some comparative conclusion about the nature, purposes, and types of classifications of instruments in the various societies" (p. 15) based on a broad sample of the world's classifications of instruments.

For the most part, western classifications have a vertical orientation going up or down from the general to the specific, or, less often, from the specific to the general³. By way of contrast, many eastern cultures such as India and Sri Lanka use the cosmological scheme of classification of the tantric mandala. As one of the oldest known classification devices, mandalas show the relationship of various ideas or facets in non-linear fashion. According to Kartomi, this is particularly useful when dealing with dissimilar pairs or clusters that are intuitively related but which have not been previously associated, linked or combined into a comprehensive system (p. 23). The introduction of cosmology adds yet another important facet to be considered. Several examples are revealing: Chinese instruments are classified in a four-category scheme according to their materials (and associated timbre) and are directly linked to the four directions and the four seasons; mainstream Javanese concept of instruments is spiritually based; and the distinction between Hinduism and Buddhism in India and Sri Lanka today is manifested in their traditional classification of instruments. Included, too, is a discussion of national identity with examples from the Arab world.

After eight chapters discussing the theoretical, cognitive and historical facets of downward classification, one brief chapter of twelve pages is presented on upward classification. Believing that this may be the possible method of the future, Kartomi acknowledges both its short history since the 1960s and its theoretical problems. It is these very problems that have actually fostered the beginnings of critical dialogue about the problems of emic classification.

Distinctions between modes of transmission of cultural information are the factors that predict the types of classificatory schemata applicable. For example, both upward and downward classificatory schemes, as products of the western philosophical thought, as mentioned above, are applicable to those cultures characterized by a literary transmission of information. The notable differences between this mode of transmission and that of oral transmission are determined on the basis that cultures oriented to literary transmission tend to be better documented over time

permitting a diachronic approach to the classification of instruments; whereas, cultures dependent upon orally transmitted information, while usually lacking this historical aspect, have compensatory data obtained empirically and deductively.

As Kartomi points out, the significant difference between the study of orally transmitted taxonomist and schemata transmitted in writing is the method of compiling data about them. Study of oral schemata depends largely on field research in contrast to written sources. With some exceptions, the studies are largely synchronic, unable to isolate historical change. Kartomi stresses further that orally transmitted schemata in these societies tend to be (p. 212):

extremely rich in their connotations and are in some cases considered to be of great conceptual importance within the parent culture. In fact they may embody the very ideas that distinguish their particular society from others. On the whole, the key schemes in orally transmitting societies have broader and more complex cultural implications than most of the ones in written tradition.

Classificatory schemata for these orally transmitting societies are based on concepts that are related to cosmological thought, kinship groupings, components of the family, social organization, village planning linked to origin myths. There is a further tendency for sacred instruments to be classified more closely than those of lesser significance. These social dimensions so evident in oral tradition suggest that literary transmitting classificatory schemata would benefit from data derived from fieldwork to expand the human end of the continuum and broaden the social aspect of instruments.

As an anthropologist interested in material culture but musically illiterate and with no prior knowledge of organology, I found this book interesting and potentially useful for my own research. For, in essence, Kartomi's emic approach reinforces the role of material culture as an integral and tangible manifestation of the ideological component of a culture. The principles and methodology are directly applicable to any discipline requiring classification. The clearly defined thesis expanded with historical evidence and rich with fascinating ethnographic detail and analytical conclusions derived from meticulous fieldwork should appeal to anthropologists and historians. It is, of course, a must for its intended audience of musicologists in general and ethnomusicologists in particular.

NOTES

1. Kartomi includes instrumental ensembles based on a group's identification with a particular ensemble of instruments which it then subdivides into smaller units.
2. That is, the scientific inquiry into musical instruments, concerned especially with structural detail.
3. Linguists will recognize paradigms of downward classification as deep-structure while upward classification is used most often in biology.

Cath Oberholtzer
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Historisch-Anthropologische Familienforschung. Fragestellungen und Zugangsweisen. Michael Mitterauer. Boehlau Vg., 1990.

Michael Mitterauer, a professor of social history at the University of Vienna, where he has conducted interdisciplinary projects in his field of historical family studies, has written *Historical-Anthropological Family Studies. Problems and Approaches*, which is a collection of articles highlighting some of his work of the past twelve years. Mitterauer repeatedly stresses the importance of interdisciplinary studies in the social sciences, and especially the significance of the use of anthropological approaches for the future development and progress of historical family studies.

The main theme of the book is concerned with the reasons for a specifically European development of family structure (European Pattern) and the presence or absence of certain elements in the family constitution. The discussion centres around family, kinship systems, marriage and residential patterns, the study of which are seen as essential for an understanding of the development of specific family patterns.

Mitterauer uses different quantitative and qualitative methods and demonstrates the possibilities of combining these in new ways. Besides the quantitative interpretation of vital statistics and *liber status animarum* that may shed some light upon the composition of both families and households, the author also uses the anthropological family cycle and oral

history to analyse "popular autobiographies" (*populare Autobiographik*). Mitterauer convincingly presents that these anthropological approaches may provide new insights into historical family studies.

Thus, the first article "European Family Patterns in Intercultural Comparison" (*Europäische Familienformen in Inter-Culturellen Vergleich*) assesses the influence of religion and work organisation on differences in European and non-European family structures.

In Christian Europe, religion seems to have been of minor importance for family structure despite its significance in European culture as a whole. Mitterauer points to the numerous types of Christian European families as opposed to the limited variation of family structure among non-European cultures, whose family organisations are more homogeneous. Mitterauer studies family and clan, economic conditions, the choice of marriage partners, the wedding, bigamy, polygamy, housing, the roles of women, men and children in society, and supports the model of an existing European pattern which ascribes specific qualities to the European family constitution, such as a high age of marriage, a long youth phase, or the coresidence with servants.

In his second article, "Christianity and Endogamy", Mitterauer considers the influence of Christianity on the family by looking at its development in history. He concludes that the radical intensification of incest rules in Christianity, which render descent and reproduction religiously insignificant, makes patrilineage and its maintenance unnecessary, and relativizes kinship ties *vis-a-vis* bonds to a religious community, helped to give larger scope for the development of specific family structures. Thus, the marriage rules serve as indicators of outlooks and values that influenced family development.

Having determined that Christian religion has had but a small role in the development of family patterns in Europe, the remaining articles focus little on religion and instead focus on methodological procedures and questions concerning the European Pattern of the family. The remainder of the book includes a variety of comparative and regionally based studies helping the reader to understand the scope in which family studies operate.

Mitterauer raises the question about the importance of basic family patterns found by historical demography and historical family studies in western, mid, and northern Europe in contrast to east and southeast Europe, referring to the 'European' and the 'non-European' Pattern, by describing and comparing different types of complex family structures in a Europe-wide survey and by contrasting east European (Russian) complex family structures and their specific characteristics with middle European developments in particular. In his article "Social History of the

Family as a Subject of Study in Regional Research" (*Sozialgeschichte der Familie als landesdundlicher Forschungsgegenstand*), Mitterauer demonstrates the possibility of using microhistorical analyses for new interpretations in historical family studies. Through the use of registers of vital statistics, he applies approaches of family cycle studies to historical source material, thereby unfolding an interim space between 'hard' quantitative and 'soft' data in the form of life histories presented by the registers and underlining the importance of an anthropologically interested field of family studies.

In another article "Rural Family Structures in Their Dependence on Natural Environment in Local Economy" (*Landliche Familienformen in ihrer Abhängigkeit von natürlicher Umwelt und lokaler Oekonomie*), Mitterauer introduces the concept of the "ecotype" (*Oekotypus*) which was developed in Scandinavian cultural anthropology. The author studies the dependence of rural family structures on their environment using rural Austria as an example. Other than in regions with formerly strong patrilineal families, he finds that family patterns were much more flexible due to the flexibility necessary for coping with the environment and the adjustment of families to economic needs.

Servants in rural households, and the roles they play, are just starting to be recognized as an important part of family structure. Studying their role helps to break up the long-standing conviction that the family had a naturally conditioned ever-lasting and constant form. Mitterauer artfully combines the quantitative demographic approach with an analysis of autobiographic sources from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, written by servants who had worked in rural households.

In his last article, "Sexual Division of Labour in Preindustrial Times" (*Geschlechtsspezifische Arbeitsteilung in vorindustrieller Zeit*), Mitterauer is concerned with finding an explanation for reoccurring patterns of sexual division of labour. Mitterauer states that sexual division of labour is not an anthropological constant and he argues that there were 'bio-social' (*biosozial*) conditions that determined who did what. He defines bio-social as a socially necessary reaction to biologically given facts under certain environmental conditions, such as pregnancy, breast-feeding, and child rearing. But he repeatedly underlines that these biological factors were also influenced by social determinants such as marriage patterns and birth control.

A criticism of his book is difficult. One might criticize the lack of a coherent way of presenting the footnotes and bibliography at the end of each article; it would certainly be helpful to have a complete bibliography at the end of the book. However, for the most part, it was a pleasure to read Mitterauer's book. I was not only fascinated by his detailed analysis,

but after a while, I caught myself playing detective wading through the piles of facts, hoping to solve the mysteries of European family development before the author disclosed all the clues. I learned to regard even the most innocuous facts as indicators that may provide insight of a larger social context. *Historical-Anthropological Family Studies* illustrates the close connections and the necessary co-operation of both disciplines. A translation of these collected articles in the near future would definitely be desirable.

Corinna Broeckmann
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Narratives of Human Evolution. Misia Landau. Yale University Press, 1991.

[202 pp.]

\$22.50 U.S.: paper

Recent fascination with how anthropologists have historically presented non-western cultures has generated many books that are critical. Interpretive anthropologists have told us that the creative process of presenting ethnographic data is wrong. Books like Clifford and Marcus' *Writing Culture* and Marcus and Fischer's *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* are two such works reflecting this postmodern anthropology.

Landau's *Narratives of Human Evolution* does not deal with culture. Instead, it deals with how historically, the theories of evolutionists such as Keith, Darwin, Haeckel, Smith, and Robinson share common themes with the universal hero tale in folklore and myth. The paleoanthropological 'myths' have similar structures, with a non-human primate as the story's hero, who embarks on a journey, receives essential aid from a donor, overcomes tests, and in the tale's finale -- transcends to a higher state.

Landau supports her thesis by presenting the narrative structure of the major evolutionist texts of the nineteenth and twentieth century. Landau examines the social impact of texts by Huxley, Haeckel, Darwin, Keith, Smith, and contemporaries such as Gould, Tobias, and Johanson. She finds that in addition to the common narrative of a hero tale, there are discrepancies between the actual fossil record, and what the anthropologist believes to be the primary agent in evolution.

Landau calls on paleoanthropologists, and other scientists alike, to recognize that they are in fact story tellers. She considers it as important to view **narration** in science as the objective 'truth' about the phenomena under question.

The questions remains, how is this book of use to scholars and students of anthropology? Instructors and students of upper-level undergraduate and graduate-level courses will find the book to be of use in explaining just what it is that anthropologists do. Cultural influences on anthropologists are explained in *Narratives of Human Evolution*. Landau also offers a clear, consistent argument throughout the book, and does not stray from the objectives of the work.

Landau's book is an excellent piece of research on how science is presented to its audience as a story or tale, one that the reader can understand. It is in the analysis of such 'folk-tales' that we come to understand the subjective meaning of science, and more important, we come to understand ourselves.

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The Hopewell Site: A Contemporary Analysis Based on the Work of Charles C. Willoughby. N'omi B. Greber and Katharine C. Ruhl. Westview Press, 1989.

[334 + xxix pp, illustrations, appendix, references, maps, index]
\$45.00 U.S.: paper

This volume by N'omi Greber and Katharine Ruhl (curators of archaeology at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History) is a synthesis of the archaeological activities and analyses that Charles C. Willoughby carried out concerning the Hopewell Mound in the late 1890s. The authors draw on Willoughby's own field notes, analyses, and drawings (from Harvard's Peabody Museum) as well as museum collections, and modern research to synthesize investigations of this important archaeological site.

The book is divided into four broad sections: 1) the background concerning Willoughby's life and work; 2) the Hopewell Site's layout and floorplans; 3) artifacts and replications; and 4) the authors' input and views of Willoughby and the site.

One aspect that is present throughout all four sections of the book is the inclusion of so many of Willoughby's artifact drawings. The described artifacts range from beads, stone (ground and chipped), copper (ceremonial and utilitarian), textiles, shell, bone to ceramics. The drawings are well executed, giving a good visual record of the artifacts. This is important given that some of the artifacts named by Willoughby would no longer today be designated as such (i.e. what Willoughby called a pendant, could be labelled as a form of weight). However, a drawback to the drawings is an entire lack of a scale, or that the reader has to hunt through the text to find this information. Another drawback in the visual presentation of the book is the general paucity of maps of the site, and a total lack of a map showing the Hopewell Site in context with other contemporary sites. Unless the reader already has background information about the Hopewell Site and Hopewellian sites in general, references to other sites are left without context.

An interesting aspect of the book is the inclusion of Willoughby's experimental studies concerning the reproduction of some of the stone (pp. 150-170) and textile (pp. 172-178) artifacts. The reproduction of the stone artifacts piqued my interest and I attempted to follow one of Willoughby's detailed instructions. My own attempt made me appreciate the careful attention to detail, ingenuity and effort that Willoughby put into recreating the processes of making these artifacts. It also made me realize that Willoughby himself had great skill as a craftsman (my own effort at an artifact reproduction turned out to be a crude facsimile).

However, while this book provides the reader with a synthesis of Willoughby's work and is a great addition if one is strictly concerned with graphic and descriptive accounts of the artifacts themselves, it does little to go beyond this level. The title is a little misleading, as it states that the book is *A Contemporary Analysis Based on the Work of Charles C. Willoughby*. A good half of the book (not including the appendices) is the work of Willoughby. The insertion of the authors' comments at the end of Willoughby's works sometimes is confusing if the reader does not catch the authors' initials at the heading of each section. (The various sections in the book are listed as CCW (Willoughby), NBG (Greber) or KCR (Ruhl)).

There is an attempt by the authors to go beyond Willoughby's analyses and thick description with the last chapter entitled "Perspectives on Willoughby and the Hopewell Site", but this tantalizes the reader without satisfying. At a paltry 22 pages (pp. 271-293), the authors are just beginning to draw intriguing questions and comments from their data. The book would have been much more informative if the authors had focused their attention on this chapter. But unfortunately they did not.

Finally, a comment concerning the price and the quality of typesetting. The book is rather steep for the general reader's pocketbook at \$45.00 U.S. (paper), and the quality of the typesetting is poor. While I understand that Westview is trying to disseminate information as fast and as cost effective as possible (we all know of the long waits between having something submitted and publishing that work), I feel that the quality could be improved. The quality of the graphics attests to this; they are clean, crisp and an asset to the book.

If the reader is interested in the history of the Hopewell site excavations, Hopewellian artifact graphics and experimental studies, then I recommend the book. However, if the reader was hoping for something of a more theoretical nature, they will be disappointed. N'omi Greber and Katharine Ruhl give a resounding tribute to Charles C. Willoughby, but should have focused on *The Contemporary Analysis* that was indicated in the book's title in order to make it an informative read.

Jacqueline Fisher

Rules Versus Relationships. The Ethnography of Legal Discourse. John M. Conley and William M. O'Barr. The University of Chicago Press, 1990.

[222 pp., notes, references, index, appendices]

Conley, a professor of law, and O'Barr, an anthropologist, have collaborated on this ethnographic study of courtroom behaviour in small claims courts in the United States. It is often the case, in collaborations of this kind, that the reader can discern the separation of authors' voices; this presentation, however, gives a coherent account of the results of their research, in an easily accessible manner.

The authors defend their inductive research design in the Introduction (a bit too apologetically, I thought). They make it clear that their aim is to explore the nature of what they have called "legal discourse" through analysing what litigants in small claims court actually say. Too often, in their view, the voices of the parties in a court case are lost or transformed by the lawyers, judges and court recorders who represent 'the system'. Their aim is actually to look at litigants' speech, rather than take the traditional anthropological approach of seeing speech as a window through which to see something else.

Conley and O'Barr's research method was to tape-record more than four hundred court cases in various small claims courts in the Eastern United States, and then to subject the recordings to analysis by a number of researchers.

Their conclusions are expressed in the book's title. After studying the discourse of the people who have brought their conflicts to small claims court, the authors posit a spectrum of discourse style; the opposite ends of which would be the "rules" or "relationships" approach. Those parties who take a "rules" approach express their case in a framework recognizable by the legal system; that is, they state the problem in a 'factual' way, emphasizing the law that have been violated or neglected. People who take a "relational" approach, tend to express the problem in more personal terms, often emphasizing the moral dimension of the case, or the sense that they have been wronged in some way. The authors have concluded that those who take a rules approach are more successful in being heard and therefore, in winning their cases.

The results of this study are in no way 'neat', and for this reason, I feel that the title of the book is inaccurate and misleading. To the authors' credit, they recognize and acknowledge the complexity of what they discovered about courtroom discourse, although this is done towards the end of the book, and I feel with some reluctance. Few litigants, it seems, fall wholly into either of the two categories. For example, some may seem to have a relational orientation, but will employ a "rules" style to accomplish their goal. The situation is further complicated by the orientation fo the judges who hear the cases. Conley and O'Barr have attempted to assign them to one of five categories along the "rules"/"relationships" continuum. A "relational" litigant will have a better chance of successfully having his/her story heard in court if the judge also takes a "relational" stance as well.

What does all of this mean for legal and anthropological theory, and more importantly, for legal reformers and policy-makers, and ultimately, for the ordinary people who bring their cases to court seeking justice? When I asked this question of the book, I realized that there are few new insights here. While the study provides case summaries, actual speech of courtroom litigants, and a theory about discourse style, in the end it boils down to the conclusion that the disadvantaged, the powerless, the marginal people in the United States tend to be the ones who employ a "relational" style and thus are not heard. The authors stress the therapeutic value of having one's story heard in court, however, and suggest that legal reformers attend to this need and this obvious expression of the common people's legal thinking. This observation has been noted many times over the past few years, most cogently by Sally Engle Merry.

The authors state in their conclusion,

... if the concern is promoting the consensual resolution of disputes, then our findings about the therapeutic value of telling one's story to someone in a position of authority indicate that sympathetic listening should be part of any settlement procedure (p. 177).

This is too large an assumption to make of the present legal system. We are left with the proverbial chicken and egg question: are the marginalized not heard because legal discourse is structured in a particular way, or is the legal system system set up to exclude and disempower them? To their credit, Conley and O'Barr have left this question open to debate.

Marcia Hoyle
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The Mode of Information: Poststructuralism and Social Context. Mark Poster. University of Chicago Press, 1990.
[179 pp., names, index]

The Mode of Information explores the results of utilizing poststructuralist theory as an interpretive strategy for the new media, and records the ways in which such contemplation, of necessity, restructures 'traditional' patterns of poststructuralist interpretation.

Information, in an historical context, has been delineated as 'face-to-face' (orally mediated communication), written or literary (communication mediated by print), and the newest, electronically-mediated exchanges. Ong (and others) characterize oral communications as being symbolic, composed of relations of signification (cf. Ong 1977, 1982, Lord 1960, Leach 1976), with the literary stage being characterized as representative, rather, of signs (Goody 1986, Haynes 1991, Palmeri 1991). In Poster's analysis,

[i]n the first, oral stage the self is constituted as a position of enunciation through its embeddedness in a totality of face-to-face relations. In the second, print stage the self is constructed as an agent centered in rational/imaginary autonomy. In the third, electronic stage the self is decentered, dispersed, and multiplied in continuous instability (p. 6).

Poster's point is well taken. The 'self' of late 20th century human individuality is not homogeneous, not a bounded totality communicating interactively with others from a position of individual autonomy, even if that is the way we wish to view our 'selves'. We have all become so adept at attending to myriad successive TV programmes and commercials, smiling knowingly as we bypass The Shopping Channel, reproducing our assigned numbers, obediently, for electronic representatives of bureaucratic institutions, or processing screens full of numeric or 'verbal' data in the course of our days, that we seldom, if ever, contemplate our communicative world as unstable, or notice our fragmentation within all the various systems of signification in which we, as individuals, participate.

Poster's premise is that human communicators (subjects) are not bounded static entities but, rather, constituted in acts and structures of communication. In this, he is not alone. There is extensive literature dealing with the ways in which a shift from oral to literary media reconfigured the ways in which consciousness was construed; the ways in which changes in patterns of communication involve changes in the communicator, and his/her concept of 'self' (again see Ong, Lord, Leach, Goody, Haynes, and Palmeri among others).

Furthering McLuhan's statement that the "medium is the message", and building on Foucault's (1970) view that the subject is disoriented in that which Poster terms the mode of information, Poster argues that the "flexibility of language which electronic mediation allows has created decentered meanings and a dispersed sense of self and society" (liner notes).

It is this view of the individual as no longer effectively delimited as a physical being but as a generally destabilized subject which makes Poster's book important. For those interested in theories of communication or in postmodern/poststructuralist theory, this is especially true. However, *The Mode of Information* speaks to all levels of anthropological analysis of the individual within society.

Also of theoretical importance is Poster's occasional brilliant delineation of the ways in which 'popular culture' characterizes mass society as passive and receptive (i.e., feminine [cf. Huyssen 1986]), with individual subjects "configured as 'other', as different from the cultural ideal of autonomous rationality" (p. 16).

Viewing modern society as a "set of structures of domination that are linguistically based [with] one feature of these structures ... [being] ... their reliance on totalizing forms of discourse" (p. 22), Poster argues against any 'totalizing' theory of social analysis, and for an exploration of "the qualitative transformation of social relations through the insertion

into the historical field of new forms of communication" (p. 29). Included within these new forms are communicative devices such as television advertisements, digitally-encoded mainframe databases, and the electronic contextuality of BBSs (electronic bulletin boards), academic conferencing networks, and interactive electronic mail systems.

There is no better way to summarize the contexts of Poster's analysis than to list the table of contents, no matter the unorthodoxy of such a blatant practice as letting the book speak for itself:

Introduction: Words Without Things
 The Concept of Postindustrial Society:
 Bell and the Problem of Rhetoric
 Baudrillard and TV Ads: The Language of the Economy
 Foucault and Databases: Participatory Surveillance
 Derrida and Electronic Writing: The Subject of the Computer
 Lyotard and Computer Science:
 The Possibilities of Postmodern Politics

In the sections on databases and electronic writing, I found Poster's writing clearest, and his insights, growing out of Foucault, Giddens, Habermas and Derrida, almost brilliantly configured (perhaps because his theoretical constructions agree with my research findings in these areas). Looking, for instance, at systems of electronic mail messaging and computer conferencing networks, Poster touches on the possibilities they provide for an individual to 'play' with his or her identity; to communicate from a position which is neither gendered, hierarchichal, nor solidly embedded in specific positions in time or space. My one reservation was and is his conception of electronic conferencing networks as minimizing, rather than emphasizing, the idea of a networking group as community, albeit globally based. Too much of the current literature on virtual communities, as well as empirical research into this phenomenon, disagree on this point. My personal knowledge of both the literature and the pragmatic findings of rhetoric, political economy, political and computer sciences are less well developed, and in these areas I found his prose style less clear, and my intuitive concurrence much less in evidence.

A unifying theme, intertwined through Poster's presentation of various modern media and postmodern theorists, is "the mode of information" as a medium of symbolic exchange, in which

[s]peech is framed by space/time coordinates of dramatic action. Writing is framed by space/time coordinates of books

and sheets of paper. Both are available to logics of representation. Electronic language, on the contrary, does not lend itself to being so framed. It is everywhere and nowhere, always and never. It is truly material/immaterial (p. 85).

It is this dichotomous location of electronic media that is going to problematize easy analysis of its effects for theorists of all disciplines and theoretical stances. Poster, however, has made an admirable start on focusing analytic attention on the "modes of information", pointing both towards the inherent and incipient forms of domination and liberalization embedded within their configurations.

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Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives. Marianna Torgovnick. University of Chicago Press, 1990.

[xi + 328pp.]

\$24.95 U.S.: cloth; \$14.95 U.S.: paper

The emergence of critical anthropology as a sub-field in the discipline has given rise to numerous books in this area. Torgovnick's *Gone Primitive* adds to this collection. The book comprises a view of western society in which its members desire to escape modernity, and 'go primitive'. Torgovnick's book on cultural criticism adds to her previous works *Closure in the Novel* and *The Visual Arts, Pictorialism and the Novel: James, Lawrence, and Woolf*, which explored some of the ideas discussed in *Gone Primitive*.

The author essentially reviews examples from anthropology in which primitive cultures are portrayed as uncivilized, promiscuous, and violent. But the author points to how these notions of 'primitivism' have permeated our own culture. In a sense, then, westerners, whether of high or low culture, are in fact themselves primitive. Examples of this, as the author explains may be found in scholarly books and adventure novels, trends in exhibits at art galleries, and in western concepts of in vogue fashion designs. *Gone Primitive* is a remarkable piece of work that examines the fears, obsessions, and desires that have led to western concepts of the primitive.

The author also raises the question of possible ramifications of this view; the author notes that they have to a large measure gone unnoticed. In discussing numerous areas (including anthropology, psychology, literature, and art) as well as various texts (photography, travel literature, television programs, and museum exhibits), the author shows how these

conceptions of the primitive have become a vehicle for subjugating non-western societies, as well as suppressing women within them. Primitivism has also led to a conception of what masculinity is in the west, as portrayed in the Tarzan movie series. For those who reject such primitive forms of masculinity there are serious ramifications, such as 'gay bashing' that occurs in western homophobic societies.

For women who furnish their homes with African art, or for individuals who wear non-western clothing and jewelry, Torgovnick discusses what the long-term results of such behaviour may be. It is the notion of primitivism, embedded in our culture, that causes us to perceive other cultures as desirable, but at the same time of lesser worth in terms of intelligence, civility, and development. Torgovnick cautions against such negative views of other cultures, and calls for reassessment of western culture.

In the end, *Gone Primitive* is a unique book for the reader who is unaccustomed to the literature of critical anthropology. But the book repeats in parts what has been said many times. I agree that anthropology has in the past portrayed other cultures as primitive, of a lesser form than our own. But the author could have looked more closely at how colonialism led to the embeddeness of primitivism as it exists in North America. To have done so would have made *Gone Primitive* a more enjoyable read.

Despite my distaste for critical or postmodern anthropology, I did enjoy Torgovnick's book because it presents the various ways that westerners, particularly North Americans, adopt other peoples' art, clothing, and jewelry, and call them their own. The reason why we are so fascinated with what falls into the 'primitive' category probably lies in the fact that some of us are attracted to what is different from normative society. I would recommend this book to students of most social sciences, as it lends the reader insight into our own culture, something that unfortunately does not occur often enough in anthropology.

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The Family in Italy: from Antiquity to the Present. Eds. David I. Kertzer and Richard P. Saller. Yale University Press, 1991.
[399 pp., index]

This ambitious volume is the result of a conference "The Historical Roots of the Western Family: The Evolution of Family Relations in Italy", held at the Bellagio centre. The editors, David I. Kertzer and Richard P. Saller, describe the initial goal of these meetings as the bringing together of historians and anthropologists in order to "construct a developmental account of family life in Italy over two millennia" (p. 1). They subsequently point out that the impossibility of this task led to the solidification of some significant methodological *caveats* concerning the longitudinal and regional comparison of 'Italian' family history (see, for example, chapters by Garnsey, Kirshner, Barbagli, Douglass, Galt and Brettell).

The thoroughness of the scholarship of each author as it has been applied to delimited topics in the context of ongoing debates about the validity of comparative models such as those constructed by Laslett, Hajnal and Goody has generated many unanswered questions about general patterns. These will undoubtedly be explored in the future by the authors of this volume and others.

This book is crucial reading for any student of Italian social and family history or anthropology. Although valuable ethnographies of Italian family life have been available since the mid-twentieth century, it was only during the last few decades that anthropologists have discussed the need to challenge specifically general categories applied to 'Italy' and 'southern Europe' in comparative models of household and family patterns (see for example Douglass 1980; Kertzer and Brettell 1987). The authors of this volume engage in this task carefully, offering insightful and honest explorations of the weaknesses and benefits of different scopes (both in terms of time period and size of region covered) and methods in the study of Italian family life in the past and present. The thirty page reference list alone is an important resource for anyone studying the topic. There are three parts to the volume. Each (with Introduction) covers a particular broad time period: "Antiquity", "The Medieval Fulcrum", and "The Modern Period". Readers interested in only one of these periods may consult the relevant section. The import of the serious questions being asked throughout the volume, however, will not be as fully appreciated if only selected chapters are read.

In the first section on the Roman period, Richard P. Saller's chapter on "Roman Heirship Strategies" focuses on the way in which Romans did and did not use the "flexible legal instruments" at their disposal (p. 30). He illustrates that scholars must be careful to distinguish between the apparent rules set out in extant legal documents of previous periods and more limited evidence of actual patterns of social behaviour. Three topics that he suggests require more research are the role of

guardians of children who inherited significant property at a young age, the large amount of property Roman women inherited, and the heirship strategies of freedman during different periods. Chapter 3 on "Child Rearing in Ancient Italy" by Peter Garnsey, emphasizes the further difficulties of "inferring attitudes from behaviour" (p. 50). He cautions against those who " 'moralize' at the expense of past societies" (p. 51), and sets out a context of extremely high levels of infant mortality and limited resources. He argues that infants who survived in Roman Italy were highly valued and thus the terms 'indifference and neglect' are not appropriate to describe the general attitude of parents (p. 56).

In Chapter 6, "The Augustan Law on Adultery", David Cohen provides us with a fascinating account of the legal context of 'honour and shame' ideologies in Roman Italy. Unfortunately, he generalizes indiscriminately when he compares societies across space and time. Twentieth century ethnographic studies of communities ranging from villages to agrotowns are introduced, for example, in a discussion of mainly Roman city life. Terms such as "the Mediterranean imagination" (p. 115) and "other traditional Mediterranean societies" (p. 120) have been critiqued in recent years by authors such as Pina-Cabral (1989). Contradicting his own generalizations, Cohen does provide some subtle cautions in the four concluding pages to the chapter. He points out that there was a range of ambivalent attitudes and behaviours with regard to gender, sexuality and specifically definitions of adultery in Roman society. Cohen clearly shows that the significance of legislation such as the Augustan *lex Julia de adulteriis* lies with the infiltration of the state and church into what was formerly the provision of family and community (pp. 125-126).

The concluding section of Mireille Corbier's chapter on "Constructing Kinship in Rome: Marriage and Divorce, Filiation and Adoption" also leaves readers wanting more on the topic of how Italians creatively used rules to 'remodel' their families in ways they desired. She also touches on the intersection of kinship and politics in Rome whereby "kinship capital" is used in power struggles (p. 137). Another topic of cross-cultural relevance is the use of the adoption of adults to pass on inheritance portions, names, or positions (p. 142).

In the introduction to the second section on the medieval period, Julius Kirshner touches on the methodological problems involved in comparing a diversity of practices and beliefs and the fact that they often have different names in different places and times. Several levels of 'rules' guiding family life must be disentangled: Roman and canon legal codes, the Christian doctrine of the period and local precedence (p. 147). Two chapters from this section, although dealing with very different data

and topical foci, stand out -- Chapter 10 by Kirshner on "Non-Dotal Assets in Florence" and Chapter 12 by Eva Cantarella on "Italian Adultery Law".

Kirshner makes it clear that both historians and ethnographers must investigate non-dotal assets when determining the property to which married women may have access. Many of these gifts were 'encumbered' (p. 200), as is true of present-day practice in southern European intergenerational exchanges (see especially, Anthony H. Galt and Caroline Brettell in Chapters 16 and 18 of this volume, and in Brettell 1991). One of Kirshner's main contributions is to show that scholars should not rely on wills in calculating "property devolution" (p. 203). He also demonstrates that legal constraints on women controlling their own property varied across space and time; in the Florentine example this control was gradually eroded over the middle ages. In spite of this trend, families did try to and were often successful in protecting married women's property from irresponsible spouses. It was also often to the benefit of husbands to make sure that their wives' personal assets were protected from their debtors.

Cantarella's discussion of "Homicides of Honor" has a lot to offer anthropologists interested in the historical antecedents of twentieth-century attitudes regarding gender and sexuality held by individuals in Italy and other areas under Roman rule. It was only in 1981 that Italian legislators altered their penal code so that homicides of honour were no longer justifiable (p. 244). Cantarella discusses the jurists' interpretation of a nineteenth century extension of the law to include impunity for wives who murdered their husbands. Rather than allowing for more equality for women, this law was interpreted to confirm that women could only be defended as reacting to "a personal offense" (p. 244) rather than to an affront to public honour and that "The family was still offended only by the illicit sexual behaviour of its female members" (p. 244).

The final section of this collection deals with the period from the eighteenth-century to the present. David Kertzer has written the introduction to its six chapters. In his introductory comments, Kertzer remarks that Caroline Brettell's concluding overview chapter is "an appropriate way to end this book, since our emphasis has been on overcoming the simplifications that have plagued European family history" (p. 249).

The first chapter, "Three Household Formation Systems in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Italy" by Marzio Barbagli, is an excellent example of this emphasis. He adds to, for example, Robert Rowland's (1983) critique of Jahnal and Laslett's typologies of European family and marriage systems which was based on Spanish data. In this

chapter, Barbagli uses a broad base of data from different Italian regions to show that 'Italian family history' cannot be summarized as a unitary type as it was in Laslett's model, since there have always been multiple family systems. He specifically compares the Sicilian and Sardinian household systems. The typology Jahnal proposed is of more use, but several of the correlations he identifies as testable are contradicted by the Italian evidence; for example, the relationship between the age at marriage and postmarital residence.

William A. Douglass's chapter on "The Joint-Family Household in Eighteenth-Century Southern Italian Society" elaborates this theme even further. He discusses how he returned to study in more depth and with a more rigorous methodology the eighteenth-century town in southern Italy he reported on in earlier publications (see Douglass 1980; 1984). He originally argued that the joint family household along patrilineal lines was a 'cultural ideal' in this area despite the fact that only 7.2% of households in a 1970 survey fit these characteristics (Douglass 1980 and summarized in Chapter 15 of this volume). A slightly higher incidence in 1753 data for the town was interpreted as the result of demographic constraints. The research he reports on in this volume was designed to overcome the difficulties of interpretation resulting from a limited sample and synchronic data on household forms. Douglass was able to confirm his hypothesis of over a decade ago. The majority (51.8%) of these households that could be traced over the entire trajectory examined were for some years a joint family household that was described by informants as an ideal form (pp 290-293). The remainder of the chapter contains some fascinating portraits of the life-course of various households and families. Douglass concludes that "Whether a particular family-household form constitutes a societal norm, then, is more an ethnographic and historical question than a statistical one" (p. 302). He emphasizes that the reasons for complexity and variation in Italian household and family forms must be tied to factors such as the need for labour in the sharecropping joint-family households described by Kertzer (1989).

Chapter 17 by Sylvia Junko Yanagisako, "Capital and Gendered Interest in Italian Family Firms", is an excellent contribution to the theme running through this volume suggesting a careful consideration of cultural diversity. Her work on Italian family firms shows that we must examine social relationships and cultural assumptions in detail rather than assume any unified model for 'capitalism'. She considers the gendered goals and strategies of women and men of different age cohorts working for four family firms in order to illustrate that 'individual' goals are in many ways collective.

As I mentioned above, Brettell's concluding chapter entitled "Property, Kinship, and Gender: A Mediterranean Perspective", provides

a final set of cautionary notes regarding over-generalization. She uses the example of 'dowry' to illustrate variation in 'Mediterranean' patterns of kinship, marriage and property. Her goals are to 1) emphasize the variation in behaviours that fall under 'neat labels' such as 'dowry', and 2) call for more attention to the "social relationships and cultural values that are expressed and reinforced in association with the transmission of property" (p. 340).

Both Yanagisako and Brettell close this collection by focusing on the cultural settings, human relationships and the "meanings" (Brettell, p. 353) that form anthropology's legacy to family history. Galt, Douglass and others similarly emphasize these foci, while also demonstrating that family history methods have a lot to offer anthropologists who require a longitudinal and statistical backdrop for their informants' statements of cultural ideals regarding both the past and the present.

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Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques. Strauss, Anselm and Juliet Corbin. SAGE Publications, 1990. [270 pp., index, references]

Grounded theory research: the qualitative analyst's answer to positivistic, statistical data presentation. The methodology has been in existence for years (see Glaser and Strauss 1967; Glaser 1978; Strauss 1987); a methodology which assists the qualitative researcher in the building of theory from data, a "composite of situational contexts ... plus theoretical and social sensitivity" (Strauss quoted in Strauss and Corbin:9). This particular volume in what almost appears as a series is the basic methodological text, a 'how to' manual that begins with an outline legitimating the method as 'scientific' and ends with a chapter on how to write such research as either monograph or thesis, or give oral presentations based on grounded theory research.

Strauss and Corbin spell out the procedures and techniques of what they (and other social scientists) present as a scientific method for the analysis and presentation of research which attempts to uncover the nature of individual experience with both social and 'natural' phenomena (i.e., physical disability, illness, addiction, etc.). As a textbook or reference book for students and researchers in applied disciplines, the book outlines the ways in which qualitative research data may be assessed as "good" science: significance, theory observation compatibility, generalizability, reproducibility, precision, rigor and verification" (p. 27) all being present and demonstrable.

The neophyte researcher is led through each step of the qualitative analysis, through both careful definition and delineation of the processes and useful examples that show how the process is effectively applied to

research situations and data. Creativity and theoretical sensitivity are advised, although open coding, axial and selective coding, conditional matrices and theoretical sampling are the vocabulary of the presentation.

Qualitative analysis, in grounded theory, emerges from a kind of quantitative look at the themes running through the texts, the number of times they are repeated, their juxtaposition with other themes, etc. The initial idea is to take an exploratory look through one's data, segmenting the interview contents into units of analysis, and coding words, phrases and sentences according to any unlimited number of categories -- 'unlimited' meaning just that; each word could, conceivably, carry any number of codes [anxiety, fear, stress, etc., for example. Selected text passages within each document are grouped within certain categories, some predetermined by the researcher's intuition concerning his/her data, others emergent as the data is scrutinized. These groups of 'meaning categories' are compared between interview documents, and conceptual networks and hypertextual structures are organized, analyzed, reorganized and reanalyzed. For research that is meant to illuminate changes in behaviours or attitudes over time, this methodology is reapplied to subsequent interview data using the initial 'meaning structures', and comparing initial networks with subsequent ones.

The idea of grounded theory is to support (or negate) the researcher's intuitive interpretation of the text. In other words, if the textual analysis does not support the preinterpretation, then the analyst can rearrange how the codes might interrelate, until the conceptual relationships emerge into complex informational structures that are coherent with a theory. A postmodernist's dream ... first you really deconstruct the text, and then you reconstruct it in such a way that you reveal the subtexts.

It is on this methodology that the recently emergent computer text analysis programmes are based (e.g. Tally, Ethnograph, Atlas/ti, etc.); programmes which provide both generic and general interpretive possibilities to assist qualitative researchers in presenting their data as systematically 'scientific', and also in building theory useful to their applied disciplines. A more visibly 'scientific' presentation is more possible through the computer-assisted text analysis, since the researcher can show intermediate stages of analysis, explaining codes and categories, and even charts, through various built-in features of the programmes.

Despite the expressed fears of some researchers, the goals of a computer-assisted text analysis are not in the direction of removing the expert knowledge of the researcher from the analysis. Explicit and implicit in grounded theory research is the necessity for the analyst's constant expert interaction with the data, his/her intuitive feel for the

issues that are being elicited through the interviews -- issues that may seem irrelevant to the texts themselves, but that impact on exploratory directions that are likely to shape the final analysis.

Coding and networking techniques in various text analysis programmes produce secondary documents from the initial texts, which thus remain untouched by the process, and these text interpretations contain outlines of formal characteristics of the types of relations between networks. Relationships might be either transitive (causal, perhaps, or part/whole, or exact), symmetric (contradictory or descriptive), or merely reflexive. The themes that emerge can be hierarchically ranked to show the importance they may hold in subsequent analysis (i.e. the construction of a theoretical framework), or they may be analyzed in their juxtaposition with certain other themes, creating a conceptual image of how certain themes may be linked. Because of the analyst's intimate knowledge of the changes in 'meaning' that reinterpretation in this manner may show, there is a constant exchange of information between the researcher and the data, ensuring that false premises are not followed, and that alternative strategies are not overlooked.

A final merging of the comparison of the networks between the various stages of analysis may provide other conceptual frameworks that will speak to the theories the researcher wishes to illustrate; this only becomes evident as time and the analysis go on. These networks can be set up in visual blocks, arranged and rearranged in causal, relational and symmetric patterns that allow the researchers to see what theory/ies best explain the relationships.

As methodology, computer-assisted text analysis is merely a tool to create a quantitative analysis of trends in 'meaning' that may interrelate between discrete interviews, as well as in longitudinal studies of the same interview subjects. Since the researcher can show intermediate stages of analysis, explaining codes and categories, and charts, this methodological tool can support intuitive, 'non-scientific' statements through the documentation of actual frequencies of core concepts as they are illustrated by the texts.

For researchers in applied disciplines, where positivist concerns for 'proof' are still a requirement for the acceptable presentation of data, both grounded theory research and computer-assisted text analysis programmes are ideal methodological tools. For interpretive scholars in any field, they provide an opportunity to manipulate texts in innovative ways that are currently considered fashionable. In a way, such definition of these

methodologies does them little justice: they deserve better than a 'dabble' by playful postmodernists.

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Television and Its Audience. Patrick Barwise and Andrew Ehrenberg.
SAGE Publications, 1988.

[xii + 207pp.]

\$39.95 U.S.: cloth; \$16.95 U.S.: paper

The influence that television has on our lives is the subject for this book. Barwise and Ehrenberg have done an excellent study in their present work.

The authors state in their introduction that television or the 'box' is the focus of much conversation in our daily lives, yet we have little to show for the many hours that we spend in front of our sets. Furthermore, television is a big industry in many nations around the world.

Given a medium of information and entertainment that plays such an important role in our lives, there is much discussion about its influence on culture. Accordingly, censors, moral activist groups, and concerned parents' groups have emerged to protest what they see as the negative consequences of television as popular culture. The authors say that in these debates, there is little attention paid to the audience. How is it that viewers consume television programming? These are the interests of the authors of this book.

From this point of departure, the authors discuss how, where, when and why individuals watch television. We learn for instance, that the average North American watches the equivalent of two months of television per year! If this surprises you, then you will certainly learn more, for *Television and Its Audience* gives more interesting information.

Peak viewing times for audiences are between eight and ten in the evening. Despite the stereotype that women watch a lot of soap operas, in reality they watch a wide variety of programming on many different subjects. In fact, most audience members do not watch programmes regularly. What is important to an audience member is not that there are good programmes, but a good selection of them.

Another interesting factor is that low ratings do not mean that the audience likes the show any less. It means that there is an alternative show that involves less emotional commitment than the lower rated show.

What the reader derives from the book is a clearer picture of what they are consuming. We realize that television is watched several hours a day, but with little involvement on our part. Television offers the viewer relaxation, with little variation in what they watch -- no matter to how many channels they have access. Furthermore, television remains the cheapest form of popular culture, for while programmes cost millions of dollars to produce, they cost only pennies to watch. These facts all contribute to making television the most widely consumed form of material culture around the world.

The reader is left surprised, and with the sense that reading this book was not a waste of their time. Reading this text also fills a tremendous void in our understanding of the television medium. This book should be read by anyone interested in the study of popular culture, mass media, or the psyche of the American public.

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The Aymara: Strategies in Human Adaptation to a Rigorous Environment.
William J. Schull and Francisco Rothhammer, editors. Kluwer Academic
Publishers, 1990.

[261 pp.]

\$69.00 U.S.: cloth

The name of the people on which this book ostensibly focuses is contained within its title, *The Aymara -- Strategies in Human Adaptation to a Rigorous Environment*. The Aymara are Indians who live in the high altitude environment of the Andean mountains of northern Chile and western Bolivia. However, the Aymara are secondary to the editors' primary focus, a summary of an ambitious study undertaken between 1973-75 by the Multinational Andean Genetic and Health Program. The editors, Schull and Rothhammer, are, from the outset, explicit about their framework: "Our interest in the Aymara and thus our perspectives are essentially biomedical but in an anthropological and genetic context" (Rothhammer and Schull 1990:viii).

Human adaptation to high altitude has been of interest to physical anthropologists since Jourdanet and Bert's pioneering experiments at the

end of the nineteenth century on the biological effects of high altitude (Frisancho 1981:102). The stress of hypoxia, due to the marked decrease in the partial pressure of oxygen above the altitude of 2500 metres, affects the human system in a way that is not easily buffered by cultural adaptations (Frisancho 1981:102). Thus, ideally, a high altitude environment acts as a 'natural laboratory' in which the action of natural selection on human populations can be witnessed and measured.

The high altitude experiment, however, is confounded by other environmental stressors such as high solar radiation, cold, low humidity, high winds, rough terrain, and a limited nutritional base (Frisancho 1981:102). Moreover, physiological traits that might be attributed to the effects of high altitude could also be a function of genetic population differences. The complexity of the environment and the consequent multi-factorial biological response warrants an ecological study of high altitude populations. And indeed, this is the aim of *The Aymara*, making it an important contribution to high altitude literature.

The study involved the collection of anthropometric and medical data from 2525 individuals living in fourteen villages in northern Chile and western Bolivia. The subjects occupy three environmental niches: the coastal valleys, the sierra (3000 to 3500 metres), and the altiplano (above 4000 metres and in some parts exceeding 6000 metres). The subjects' Aymaran ethnic and biological ancestry was judiciously determined through an analysis of paternal and maternal surnames as well as through the use of genetic markers. What is exceptional about this study is that the subjects are genetically and ethnically homogeneous; hence, when comparing the populations dwelling in the three environmental niches, genetic and cultural differences are, for the most part, controlled.

The book itself is a collection of individual essays, beginning with the Aymara's environmental setting, including studies of flora, fauna and trace metals. Rothhammer provides a brief summary of their pre- and post-Columbian history, followed by Allison's study of Aymaran paleopathology based on a collection of mummies (BC 500-AD 1000). There is a chapter on nutrition, which is an essential factor influencing the health of high altitude populations, and a survey of current Aymaran reproductive patterns. Chapters 8 through 13 investigate various aspects of Aymaran health, including: child health; general disease and disability; physical growth; the effects of hypoxia on hearing and cardiopulmonary health; and oral characteristics of the Aymara. The final two chapters of the book are devoted to Aymaran intratribal genetic differentiation and ethnogenesis.

There are some results of the study which differ from other high altitude research. Nutrition is generally assumed to be compromised at

high altitudes because of the detrimental effects of hypoxia and cold on agriculture (Frisancho 1981:148). Yet, among the Aymara, the caloric intake, due to increased consumption of fresh meat, cereal and sugar, was reported as being higher in the altiplano than in the sierras or along the coast. Also of interest is the finding that fertility differences among the populations of the three altitudes were negligent, despite many claims that fertility is reduced at high altitudes.

However, rather than presenting any exceptional results, the book gives the reader an appreciation of the inherent difficulties of studying human genetic adaptation to high altitudes. The chapter on growth at high altitude examines the theory of stabilizing selection with regard to chest size and stature. Mueller, Soto-Heim and Schull present a good discussion of some of the difficulties involved in directly uncovering the role of genetic factors influencing growth and adult size. Similarly, the chapter on cardiopulmonary fitness and altitude highlights the challenge of separating the effects of hypoxia from population differences in body weight.

The Aymara is commendable because it is based on a long-term, interdisciplinary study. However, the chapters seem to be written in isolation, and there is very little integration of information throughout the book. Moreover, if one surveys the list of contributors, there are conspicuously few anthropologists; and consequently, after reading the book, one never really gets a sense of the Aymara as a people. The ethnohistorical chapter describes their ancient lives, but there is no account of the current Aymaran community. The essay on nutrition depicts Aymaran agricultural subsistence activities; but their political, economic and religious lives as indigenous people living in the South American nations of Chile and Bolivia are completely ignored.

The authors admittedly assume a biomedical perspective; yet, they at no point even acknowledge the existence of Aymaran indigenous medicine. Moreover, there is little discussion regarding how the Aymara, as subjects, reacted to the study, although it is remarked that they were keen to receive western medical aid. Compensating somewhat for the absence of this information, the epilogue provides a candid examination of some of the pitfalls of conducting such an ambitious, multidisciplinary study.

The lack of integration and ethnographic content in *The Aymara* is discouraging. Nevertheless, as a biomedical profile of a population living in a high altitude environment, this study is worth reading for its methodological rigour and comprehensiveness.

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[201 pp., illustrated, maps, appendix, index]
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While doing fieldwork among the people of Pukapuka, Borofsky observed a form of social organization (the Akatawa), that had not been described by previous researchers. The mystery of why this was 'missed' by previous anthropologists (p. xii), leads to a discussion of the construction of anthropological and indigenous cultural understandings. The author uses this particular situation as a means for understanding how Pukapukans and anthropologists accumulate and validate knowledge, what influences their 'ways of knowing', and how they influence each other. Borofsky explores the limitations of ethnographic accounts which, he states, emphasize stasis and uniformity, and are influenced by theoretical and research biases.

Borofsky's (1989:142) main argument is that we need to "understand subtle dynamics involved in indigenous constructions of the past and how these constructions change over time" in order to present accurate cultural representations. He quotes Hutchins (p. 125): "It seems the search for representations of what people know ... got into trouble largely because it ignored the processes of how people go about knowing". Borofsky raises issues important to the anthropological construction of knowledge, and presents them in a thought provoking manner intended to create dialogue among anthropologists (p. 143), and promote a re-evaluation of their data in light of the issues he raises (p. 144).

Borofsky provides us with an insightful discussion of how Pukapukans learn. He effectively "draws readers into both the analysis and experience of making history" (p. xvii), by his liberal presentation of ethnographic detail, using anecdotes and case histories. The reader is able to build a rich and colourful picture of the social and psychological factors

which affect Pukapukan construction of knowledge and relate these to how their cultural understandings are shaped. Borofsky describes the pervasive elements in Pukapukan culture which influence this process as being status rivalry, an egalitarian ethos, and the desire for social harmony (pp. 77, 114, 121). How these work to promote cultural diversity is interesting in that to avoid humiliation and subordination, education is informal (p. 76), and learning through listening, observation and repetition are the norm (pp. 80, 83, 88). To avoid being ridiculed by showing others a lack of knowledge, people do not ask questions, or ask them indirectly (p. 85). What is important, is to appear knowledgeable. As a way of asserting status, opinions are openly challenged, often in a public forum (p. 95): knowledge is negotiated (p. 121). Discussions are often left unresolved to avoid social conflict, or a consensus of opinion is reached to keep the peace (p. 115). This way of learning results in a diversity of opinions (p. 104) and ambiguities which need to be resolved on a personal level. "They often creatively transform ambiguities of the past into plausible accounts of the present" (p. 122), and if the whole picture is not known, knowledge is constructed to fill in the gaps (p. 117). When informants are asked for specific answers they do not possess, they may fabricate answers. Borofsky points out that "anthropologists must ask questions, but in asking questions they at times create traditions that do not exist" (p. 152). It is easy to see, therefore, how anthropologists are able to shape or distort culture. Cultural traditions will often be altered in the process of learning and validation of them (p. 140). If the new information 'fits' with what the individual knows and values, or is heard from more than one source, it is more likely to be accepted as true (p. 114).

The concept of truth raised by Borofsky is intriguing, and I would have liked him to have pursued this aspect of analysis more fully. He offers three philosophical perspectives of truth (p. 16): truth that deals with the connection between belief and fact (correspondence theory); truth that says whether something fits with what we already know (coherence theory); and truth that works at solving problems (pragmatic theory). The knowledge constructed by Pukapukans is pragmatic truth, not necessarily the 'correct answer'. The Pukapukans " ... are interested in the application of knowledge to specific ends -- to resolving problems faced in particular contexts, with particular audiences" (p. 104). To them, consensus and social harmony are more important than accuracy. The common good, making sense and having something that works is highly valued. Borofsky provides the reader with several anecdotes which indicate that the Pukapukans are not really concerned with the how or the why of the past. This is a marked contrast with our peculiar need to pursue the 'right' answer -- the 'real' truth, and should perhaps give us

insight into a cultural construct of our own making. Borofsky speaks of the difficulties inherent in historical accuracy in his response to the book review (Borofsky 1989:143). But, I would ask, that if a constructed history works for a society, should the history be considered a 'true' history -- the pragmatic truth that Borofsky offers us?

Borofsky continues his thesis by showing that many similarities exist in the way Pukapukans and anthropologists construct and validate knowledge. But even though both groups evaluate what they learn against what they know, Borofsky points out that what is known is different in each group and this results in different conclusions and different historical perspectives (p. 146).

Borofsky then draws attention to the limitations and strengths of anthropological accounts and the implications that his insights might have for anthropology as a whole (pp. 152-155). He sees advantages in anthropological constructions because they provide opportunities in which to compare and analyze cultural differences relatively free from cultural contexts. In addition, accumulation of knowledge of cultures allows for more complex understandings and contributes to increased self-awareness. He states, however, that ethnographies are only partial accounts of cultures, and need to be built upon to gain fuller perspectives. Ethnographical accounts must also ignore some diversity in order to present information to outsiders in a meaningful way, and cultural subtleties may be lost. Borofsky questions whether anthropological constructions can "properly represent indigenous constructions" (p. 153) since they are developed in different contexts and directed toward different audiences.

In discussing these points, Borofsky introduces several inconsistencies in his work. These pertain to anthropological biases, and the inherent characteristics of ethnographies. Early in his book, using the Akatawa as an example to make his point, Borofsky criticizes the work of other anthropologists for 'missing' this form of social organization. He blames their research biases and what he feels to be their emphasis on stasis and uniformity for this 'oversight' -- they did not see culture in its diversity and fluidity (pp. 72-3). He criticizes these researchers for the very things he later states are inherent in the nature of ethnographies; that is, the need to organize information to make it meaningful, and the limited insights which can be obtained about culture from any one study. If he is able to say at a later point that he sees individual ethnographies as "a partial account and perspective" to "establish a framework for discussion" to be built on by others and viewed as a continuum (p. 152-153), then why does he criticize the work of the Beagleholes and Julia Hecht? Borofsky is also quite ready to discredit them for their biases, but

does not say much about his own. Borofsky, as Howe (1989:133) points out, is also influenced by theory. Borofsky (1989:149, 150) admits his biases in response to Howe's review, but states that he prefers others to draw attention to them as an intellectual exercise, and that what he himself sees as biases may not be the ones which influence his work. Borofsky states that he tries to overcome the effects of his biases by emphasizing ethnographic data, allowing readers to build their own pictures. But he does not address the fact that his biases may still be projected by the selection of informants whose activities or anecdotes support his theories.

Borofsky does not see that he shares the problem of status rivalry with the Pukapukans. Howe's (1989:135) cutting assessment of Borofsky's attempts to assert his status captures the irony of the fact that Borofsky's work itself is an example of how biases and human characteristics are able to influence the work of anthropologists, despite their best efforts to prevent this from occurring, and despite their own awareness of the problems these influences create. Borofsky uses many techniques to establish his status and authority. In the preface, he indicates that his work is based on 10 000 pages of fieldnotes, 3 000 microfilm exposures, and 100s of informants (p. xv). His liberal use of the Pukapukan language, which he knows and the reader does not, establishes an authority which is transposed to his argument. Borofsky, having laid this before the reader, then asserts his dominance by attacking and discrediting the work of his colleagues since they do not mention the Akatawa in their ethnographic accounts. His use of language is particularly effective and sets the tone of this section. Borofsky spends considerable time casting aspersions on the academic background and research of his colleagues through innuendo and implication, but he says he will "ascertain there has been no slight of hand, no writer's artifice" (p. 2) in this discreditation. Borofsky (p. 12) questions "how could such highly trained anthropologists miss something so many Pukapukans willingly and spontaneously discussed with ... [him]?" After arrogantly reanalyzing their data, Borofsky (p. 53) states that the Beagleholes "fit their data into somewhat arbitrary, somewhat inaccurate categories", and that they "misinterpreted a rather complex situation". Finally, Borofsky (p. 59) asks, how can we "overcome such biases and write valid ethnographies?" He reaffirms his authority and position as he describes the Pukapukans' attitude toward his work and its importance in helping them to preserve their traditions. Borofsky (p. 88) "knew the broader questions to ask ... [and] how to fit various data together".

I found Howe's (1989:129-135) article interesting and enriching in that it confirmed and emphasized many of my own feelings about Borofsky's book. Howe (1989:129) states that the Akatawa problem

"provides a convenient excuse" for Borofsky's thesis, and if it ever existed, does not deserve the attention it gets. Howe (1989:133) adds additional information that serves to put some of Borofsky's arguments in perspective, including the fact that Borofsky was able to depict cognatic descent groups "only because several decades of terminological deconstruction of kinship studies since the Beagleholes' time have empowered him to do so". Another reviewer, Caroline Ralston, adds a historian's perspective. Ralston (1989:138) welcomes Borofsky's criticism of overstructured and overgeneralized descriptions, but comments that among anthropology ... the tendency has been to believe that conflicting data and interpretations meant one or the other anthropologist had got it wrong, rather than to recognize that different viewpoints and different points in time will inevitably influence both observation and interpretation.

In summary, I enjoyed the intellectual exercise that Borofsky's book involved. It was well written and thought provoking. Borofsky structured his argument persuasively and accomplished what he set out to do -- he drew people into dialogue about the issues surrounding anthropological constructions of other cultures. His work serves to further highlight the need to reflect on how we present history, and appreciate its impact on our intellectual perspectives.

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Ancestral Connections: Art and an Aboriginal System of Knowledge. Howard Morphy. 1991. The University of Chicago Press, 1991. [329 pp., glossary, index]

This is a significant book. It is no exaggeration to say that anyone writing about Australian Aboriginal art in the future will undoubtedly find it impossible to ignore the thought-provoking insights to be found in *Ancestral Connections*. Within this frame of reference, it has all the makings of a minor classic. These include, but are not limited to, important substantive contributions and a theoretical sophistication that adds to, rather than detracts, from these contributors.

The reader should be offered a *caveat* before I begin reviewing the book in more detail. I am not an expert in either Australian Aborigines or in the anthropology of art. I am a Melanesianist who has conducted research on educational practices in Papua New Guinea. The overlap between my interests and this book can be found within its subtitle: *Art and an Aboriginal System of Knowledge*. My own research has been fundamentally concerned with the construction of knowledge and it is from this perspective that I will be offering judgments concerning the work under review.

Morphy begins by telling us that he will be treating the art produced by members of the Yolngu communities from Northeast Arnhem Land as if it were a system of communication (p. 6). He ends the book in a similar fashion, declaring that "Yolngu art mediates between the ideology of immutable forms and order originating in the ancestral past and the reality of sociocultural change and political process" (p. 300). In between we are offered a provocative book that carefully argues for the understanding that, among the Yolngu people at least, art is knowledge. He goes on to inform us that the art in question is neither static nor unaffected by historical change, and yet it remains simply and profoundly constructed through an internal understanding of the ancestral past. In a sense, it is the past, painted in the form of bark paintings, on coffin lids, as body decorations, and so forth.

This must have been a difficult and frustrating book to write. The original fieldwork for a doctoral dissertation was carried out between 1974 and 1976, with repeated sojourns from that time until the writing of the book. This suggests that the author's understanding of Yolngu art underwent constant adjustment and re-evaluation, even as he attempted to write yet one more 'final' version of the manuscript (e.g. p. xiv). Added to this was the problem that art is part of a 'restricted' system of knowledge among the Yolngu. Morphy repeatedly warns us that he had

to be very careful about the extent to which he felt he could reveal aspects of this 'inside' knowledge to us, the readers.

One of the ways he attempts to escape from this problem is to construct the book itself as a form of understanding that proceeds from the relative generality of 'outside' information (e.g. abstract theories; descriptions of Yolngu social organization) to the more 'inside' knowledge of specifically constructed meanings (e.g. the interpretation of real paintings in the context of particular groups of people, ceremonies, and ancestral stories). Unwrapping his understanding of Yolngu art in this fashion parallels, to an extent, the way Yolngu learn about it through their own prolonged exposure to both outside and inside constructions within ceremonial events, the initiation experience, or just informal, everyday contexts. To learn about art is, for example, to learn about *mardayin*, a term that Morphy glosses as "history law" or "sacred law" (p. 49). It is, in other words, part of the way that Yolngu learn about their own past as members of clans or other groups. At the same time, it serves as a form of rules, or more accurately a repertoire of conduct for contemporary times.

Not all members of a clan, however, have an equal 'right' to gain all of the forms of knowledge associated with paintings and ceremonies. The most important differences operate along lines of gender and age distinctions. Morphy reminds us, however, not to confuse the ideology of women's restriction to largely 'outside' knowledge and men's control over 'inside' knowledge with actual practices. He then goes on to give many concrete examples that show that women's understanding about important ritual matters is far less restricted in practice than in theory. He goes so far as to suggest that the combination of normal creative changes within the forms of painting, along with the contemporary pressures of producing for a tourist market, may be reducing rather than increasing gender differentiation in this context:

If, as I have argued, men use their control over the *mardayin* to keep women as outsiders, then increased access to the *mardayin* may function to shift women toward the inside (p. 302).

This also brings up the topic of change. As I indicated earlier, painting among the Yolngu is not 'timeless'. In chapter nine, Morphy uses the earlier (1930/40s) work of Donald Thompson on art from Northeastern Arnhem land in comparison with his own research to address the issue of change within traditional forms of painting. If the painting does not remain timeless -- which it cannot if it is to serve as a set of dynamic

communicating devices mediating the world of the ancestors and the world of contemporary Yolngu -- the messages concerning the importance of ancestral knowledge does. Morphy effectively takes us into this world through the use of Yolngu terms such as *mardayin*, *wangarr* (ancestral being), *garma* (publicly performed enactments of the *wangarr*), and *rangga* (sacred objects). These and other terms from the language of the Yolngu are scattered throughout the text and serve to remind readers that we are considering art in a quite different but equally sophisticated form than the European one that most of us are probably more familiar with. The reader is reminded of this not just through the use of Yolngu terms, but also because Morphy makes a conscious effort to evoke the message by relating stories that question the naturalness of categories such as 'artist', 'works of art', or intrinsic artistic 'value'. One of my favourite stories (p. 29) concerns a Yolngu man in his thirties who was becoming noticed among collectors as perhaps the 'leading artist' of his generation, when he decided to give up bark painting to take up a 'proper job' as a house painter. This occurred, even though he could never hope to earn as much money with the latter form of work. Interceding in this process was a complex combination of the traditional devaluation of the importance of the person who happens to paint something (since the real 'power' derives from the ancestors) and the recent devaluation of Yolngu art by missionaries and educators as belonging to the 'primitive' past. This understanding seems a considerable distance from the celebration of individual artists that we find in many European traditions.

Other notions than those concerning what constitutes 'an artist' are different in the Yolngu context. If these paintings are about, or perhaps more accurately come from, the ancestors, then they are also fundamentally about clan rights in relation to the land. Morphy summarizes this type of connection in the following excerpt:

In many respects, rights in MM clan paintings are similar to the rights a person holds in his own clan's paintings. Not only are the paintings used in similar contexts, but both are associated with land ownership. Paintings are seen explicitly as charters for land ... (p. 68).

All paintings have clan designs incorporated into them, both as a sign that the painter obtained the correct permission in order to portray a particular theme and as a way of reminding the viewer that there is a fundamental continuity between the ancestral past, clan membership, and clan ownership over land.

Paintings themselves can be read as a kind of topography, with specific designs and divisions evoking a particular 'map' of clan-owned land (p. 221). Another way to read them, however, is to consider them as manifestations of mythological meaning: ... paintings trigger

interpretations that scan a broad range of related mythology. Paintings, like the myths themselves, do not have finite limits to their content; the limits are more a matter of focus than exclusion (p. 273).

Actually, the same could be said about Morphy's book. There is much, much more to it than I have been able to delineate within this short review. Morphy's exploration of numerous interrelationships between the mythological past, ancestral charters, rights over land, gender and other authority issues, and the symbolism of paintings as read by individuals both 'inside' and 'outside' interpretive frameworks, is too layered and complex to be summarized here.

This is not a simple or easily accessible book. It is not, for example, something that most instructors will choose to use in undergraduate courses. It is more likely to be at home in advanced graduate seminars concerned with the anthropology of art, the construction of knowledge, or the interpretation of land and kinship rights in aboriginal cultures. Without a doubt, the individual scholar concerned with these issues will be rewarded for his or her patience and the repeated readings necessary to begin to become initiated into this way of understanding the art of the Yolngu people.

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Cultural Theory. Michael Thompson, Richard Ellis and Aaron Wildowsky (editors), Westview Press, 1990.

[296 pp; index, bibliography]

\$49.95 U.S.: (cloth); \$16.95 U.S.: (paper)

Part of a Political Cultures series from Westview Press (which includes, as well, Daniel Elazar's *The American Mosaic*), *Cultural Theory* explores a number of sociocultural typologies based rigidly on Mary Douglas' grid/group model. (In Douglas' model, "group" and "grid" designations may be seen to occupy the axes of a graph, with measurements of "group" showing the extent to which an individual is a part of bounded units, and "grid" position indicating the extent of imposed restrictions, in opposition to the amount of idiosyncratic negotiation an individual may exercise.) The authors posit five (and are explicit that there are only five) distinct mutually interactive culture types evidencing various permutations of grid

and group and, using this typology to analyze such political cultures and national 'characters' as those of China, Britain, Mexico, and the United States, they propose a theory of sociocultural viability that posits an explanation of how ways of life maintain (and fail to maintain) themselves.

Their typology includes hierarchichal, egalitarian, fatalistic, individual, and autonomous strategies for interacting with nature, bureaucracy, tastes and change (for them the major modes for the organization of both hierarchy, and markets). Note that the theory Thompson *et al.* propose encompasses change, occurring, in their estimation, as

successive events intervene in such a manner as to prevent a way of life [i.e. cultural bias; heuristic] from delivering on the expectations it has generated, thereby prompting individuals to seek more promising alternatives (p. 3-4).

There are a number of useful ideas in the book; the first of which is the expansion of the usual dualistic view of culture as the result of ongoing tensions merely between hierarchy and individualism. With the acknowledgement of a dynamic, rather than static, typology, the authors present social scientists with a set of categories within which differential human attitudes may be mapped and explored. It is the discrimination of categories on the basis of common criteria that makes this typology different than that of other sociologists (cf. Radcliffe-Brown, Parsons, Elazar) and this, too, provides a useful tool for utilization in sociocultural analysis.

In positing a constrained relativism, the authors reject the dichotomy between absolutism (realism) and relativism, delineating a mutually-interactive typology constrained by the need for congruence between social relationships and cultural bias(es). In this they provide viable refutation for the absolutist argument concerning the nature of nature, and an interesting look at management strategies that provides an argument against the economic theory that needs and resources constrain behaviour, positing that constraints on behaviour are located in ways of life. The major illustrations of their typology at work are delineated in the third section of the book, which looks at pluralistic civic cultures.

Cultural Theory presents the reader with what appears to be a viable new tool for the analysis of the interactions of cultural phenomena, in a style that is mostly logical and pragmatic. My sole reservation concerning the book deals with its middle section, devoted as it is to a comparison of Thompson *et al.*'s theory with those of sociologists (from Comte and Spencer to Merton) and anthropologists (Malinowski and Radcliffe

Brown). Although the authors found it, perhaps, necessary to delineate the ways in which their hypothesis both built upon and differed from 'The Masters', I found this section almost peripatetic in its shifting comparisons dichotomizing the similarities and differences between cultural theory and functional explanations of sociocultural heuristics.

Aside from that, however, the book provides a fascinating new look at some troublesome old epistemological dichotomies.

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