

AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Nexus has now expanded its Book Review section to include Book Notes. These are short, non-critical summaries of recently published works. We invite our readers to submit either reviews (for books from 1983 and on) or notes (on books from 1985 and on) for consideration. All contributions should follow the format established in this issue of Nexus.

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NOTE DE PRÉSENTATION

NEXUS a maintenant augmenté la section de la critique de livres pour inclure une section de remarques sur les livres. Ces remarques sont constituées des brefs compte-rendus non-critiques sur les récentes publications. Vous être invité à soumettre, soit des critiques (sur des livres publiés depuis 1983), soit des remarques (sur des livres publiés depuis 1985). Toutes les contributions seront considérées pour publication, et doivent suivre le format établi dans le numéro actuel de NEXUS.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Culture, Health and Illness: an introduction for health professionals.
Cecil Helman. Bristol: John Wright and Sons, Ltd., 1984 (paperback 1985,
242 pp.)

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The aim of Culture, Health and Illness is clearly stated: "to demonstrate the clinical significance of cultural and social factors, in both illness and health" (P.5). In demonstrating the breadth of that significance, Helman covers a wide number of topics in his book such as cultural definitions of anatomy and physiology, nutritional beliefs, pharmacology, medical pluralism, transcultural psychiatry, culturally mediated expressions of stress and pain, and cultural factors in the epidemiology of disease.

Helman's text has several strengths. First, it provides a good survey of medical, scientific, and ethnographic investigations of the relationship between culture, health and illness. Second, the book contains a useful discussion of cultural conceptions of anatomy and physiology - a topic that is often missing from medical anthropology texts. Third, many of the book's examples of the cultural construction of beliefs about health and illness are from a British context (ie. 'colds', 'chills', 'the flu', the 'plumbing model of the body'): using examples from a Western society is important in demonstrating that culturally constructed notions about health and illness do not occur only among 'primitive' or 'foreign' peoples. Fourth, the text uses "case histories", a format familiar to health professionals, to demonstrate the concepts Helman raises in each chapter.

Unfortunately, one of the major weaknesses of the book is its lack of integration. Although Helman has selected a wide range of topics for his chapters a more focused introduction and a stronger conclusion would help to tie the chapters together.

A second weakness is the large amount of space Helman devotes to describing other authors' investigations at the expense of his own insightful or fresh perspective. This omission may be more dissatisfying to those readers seeking an innovative approach to improving medical care; Helman often presents information without comment. The section entitled "Doctor-Patient Interaction", for example, includes two social scientific models of interaction (Zola's "Pathways to the doctor" and Kleinman's "Explanatory Models"), but the limitations of these models are not dealt with. Furthermore, Helman's version of patients contact with the healthcare system is rather diluted; he does not deal with asymmetric relations of power in the medical world, the unequal distribution or accessibility of healthcare resources, or the social production of sickness (the writings of Vincent Navarro and Allan Young, for example, are never mentioned).

A third and worrisome point in a book for health professionals, many of whom will be unfamiliar with the concept of 'culture', is the occurrence of the implicit theme "culture is dangerous to your health".

Statements like the following demonstrate an appalling lack of cultural relativism: the "clinical significance [of food classification systems] is that they may severely restrict the types of foodstuffs available to people - and that diet may be based on cultural, rather than nutritional criteria" (p.24). Unfortunately similar statements occur in the sections on culture and nutrition, lay theories of physiology, and prescription non-compliance.

The subtitle of the text, "An Introduction for Health Professionals", explains the emphasis on medical studies, statistical/quantitative analysis, the use of undefined medical terms, and the emphasis on the clinical context of consultation and therapy. Helman stresses the clinical significance adequately by demonstrating the cultural factors in health and illness beliefs, and by showing how these beliefs can be encountered in the clinical context (misunderstanding between patient and doctor and non-compliance, for example). But despite the detail Helman culls from the studies he reviews, he glosses over the issue of what or how medical anthropology can contribute to the alleviation of these "problems." For example, Helman suggests "the clinician should acquire a knowledge of the specific 'language of distress' utilized by the patient" (p.93), but there follows no discussion about how a clinician can hope to do so. Helman is also unrealistic in his demand that all dimensions of the patient's 'illness' can be treated, as well as any physical 'disease' (p.93).

In conclusion, Helman has been able for the most part to point out the clinical significance of cultural beliefs and social behaviour, but he has done so at the risk of making such behaviour seem troublesome, interfering, and an obstacle health professionals must be on guard for. Anthropologists may find the data in Helman's book useful, but they may also be dissatisfied with the lack of attention paid to the meaning of these findings for the people concerned. Culture, Health and Illness is not suitable for an introductory course in medical anthropology, but it may be of interest to graduate students who are already well versed in medical anthropology.

Where the Waves Fall: A New South Sea Island History from first Settlement to Colonial Rule. K.R. Howe. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984. xix + 403 pp.

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K.R. Howe both begins and ends his book with the same message: in the 'new historiography' history is considered to have no independent existence apart from the present. History is, necessarily, a product of assumptions and values - true for the historian no less than for those who originally wrote the documents he or she studies.

Historians have, Howe tells us, only recently learned to value the role Pacific Islanders have played in the formation of their own history. Much greater emphasis was previously given to the European point of view - often assuming that Europeans dominated every course of events in which

they participated. Where the Waves Fall is a work in which Islanders, no less than Europeans, actively influence the course of Pacific history.

Howe begins with a look at the archaeological record; bringing together many previously scattered publications concerning the early settlement of Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia. This alone is a substantial undertaking and Howe carries it off at least well enough to convince me, a non-archaeologist, that he has a firm grasp of the relevant archaeological record.

Most of Howe's book, however, is dedicated to documenting the arrival of Europeans in the Pacific islands and to islanders reactions to this arrival. He is almost obsessively even-handed in his treatment of the effects of contact between Islanders and Europeans:

In some situations Europeans held the advantage; in others the Islanders did. But usually, as I have attempted to show in this book, there were many subtle and complex levels of mutual exploitation and accommodation (p.348).

Refreshingly, Howe portrays Europeans as human beings; differing as individuals, yet clearly having a collectively patterned impact on the lives of Pacific Islanders.

In one of Howe's many sections concerning the impact of trading patterns on local areas, for example, he notes how the massive labour trade in Melanesia from the 1860s on (especially in what are today called Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands) has perhaps been unfairly over-portrayed as "blackbirding." Kidnapping of Islanders did take place on occasion and violence or the threat of violence did play a role in some labour 'recruitment'. Many thousands of Islanders, however, more or less voluntarily contracted themselves out as labour for cotton and later sugar plantations in Australia, Fiji, and elsewhere.

... one of the most compelling arguments against the labour trade being based on kidnapping and slavery is the fact that numerous Islanders made several trips to the plantations or stayed on for additional terms. Overall, about one-quarter of all recruits from the Solomon Islands in Queensland and Fiji were time-expired boys. By the 1890s this figure was approaching 50 per cent (p.339).

Howe does point out, however, that even if most of the labour trade during the late 1800s in Melanesia was 'voluntary' the consequences of the labour trade as a whole for Island communities was to help set up the Island as a 'labour pool' for European Capital based in Australia, Fiji, Hawaii, Samoa, and New Caledonia. If Howe's book has a major fault it is that Howe has been, if anything too 'even-handed' about trade in the Pacific as a whole. Although he sporadically notes the collective impact Europeans had on Islander's lives, he never systematically examines that impact. He notes, for example, that on many islands in Melanesia the local people became increasingly dependent on European trade goods, and that this "...provided a valuable point of entry for European planters later in the century" (p.341). Such points deserve more than a note here or a mention there; they deserve the same amount of attention Howe gives

to particular situations and individual choices if an analytical balance is to be achieved.

Perhaps I have given the impression that most of this book concerns Melanesia. Actually, the majority of the material in this book is concerned with the Polynesian Islands. This no doubt reflects the vast amount of historical, archaeological and ethnographic work that has been done on this area of the Pacific. If Melanesia comes off second best, however, Micronesia does not come off at all. Other than the excellent coverage it receives in the previously mentioned section on pre-contact migration there is nary a mention of this area of the Pacific - an oversight that really is not acceptable in a work that is a 'general history' of the Pacific.

Maybe I am being too harsh here. This is an admirable book in many ways. Howe's coverage of the activities of missionaries in the Pacific and the ways Islanders react to missionization, for example, is excellent. He has done an especially good job at pointing out the various ways missionaries and islanders made use of each other in Polynesia. On some islands (e.g. Tahiti, Tonga, Hawaii) already strong chiefs used missionaries and their influence to extend their sway over neighbouring chiefs. On other islands (e.g. New Zealand, Samoa, Fiji) existing social organization (and individual choices) mitigated against the emergence of a single, centralized, chief (even though strong chiefs did exist on some of these islands, e.g. Fiji). Howe's main point is that missionary influence was anything but uniform in the Polynesian Island; this influence was shaped as much by local politics as it was by European Missionary goals.

Perhaps the most delightful aspect of Howe's book lies in the way he uncovers little known but significant features of island life during the post-contact period. We learn, for example, that a number of Hawaiian Islanders played important economic roles in North America:

By the 1840s over 1,000 Hawaiians left annually for employment and adventure. In 1844, some 400 were employed by the Hudson's Bay Company in Oregon, and in the same year over 600 were reported sailing on American whaling vessels (p.101).

We also learn about the impact of Beachcombers on the Pacific Islands and that women often played a far more important role in Island politics than they have generally been given credit for (e.g. important women served as 'powers behind the throne' during certain periods of Tongan and Hawaiian history).

If Howe's book pays too much attention to Polynesia and not enough to other parts of the Pacific for my liking it is still, everything considered, a very good introduction to this area of the world. Rather large to use as a textbook for a course on the Pacific it would serve as an outstanding resource for anyone teaching such a course. It is also a very good place to begin researching a paper on missionary activity in the Pacific; the importance of Sandalwood in opening up Pacific trade; or the post-contact impact of epidemic diseases on certain island communities. The list could go on and on. In fact, I would defy anyone to read this book and not come up with at least a half a dozen interesting topics for future research. For those with an interest in the Pacific, this alone would seem to recommend a reading of Where the Waves Fall.

Politics and Dependency in the Third World: The Case of Latin America
 Ronald Munck, London: Zed Books (374 pp.).

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Throughout much of the 1950's, a naive optimism existed in the field of developmental studies. It was felt that the Third World would move towards "modernization" if only an elusive "take-off" point could be reached (Munck 1984:7). "Development" came to be associated with embarking upon a path, chartered by others. Moreover, it was held that aid, along with the diffusion of ideas, would ensure the success of this venture from the onset. Enthusiasm for this scheme waned as "modernization" failed to achieve its goals, and a new idea known as the "dependency approach" became the dominating theoretical paradigm. Like its predecessor, however, "dependency" too suffered from serious drawbacks. It was largely deterministic in nature, and failed to account for events in the "real world" (Worsley 1984:23). Clearly, the need exists once again for a new paradigm to explain continuing international inequalities.

Ronaldo Munck describes his book, Politics and Dependency in the Third World: The Case of Latin America, as an attempt to provide 'elements toward a general theory' of Third World politics and economic underdevelopment (1984:4). More specifically, he endeavours to uncover the relationship which exists between class economy and politics in Latin American polity.

Unlike many early writers, Munck sees the need for emphasis to be given to the process of class formation and achievement of bourgeois hegemony. "Underdevelopment", he notes;

...cannot be reduced to the effects of Europe's predatory needs - it is the social and historically determined class structures that determined what types of relations imperialism would establish (Munck 1984:25).

Thus, he coins the term "independent reproduction" to describe what he believes is a useful theoretical approach. This formulation combines, in essence, a macro-historical understanding of dependency, with concepts typically associated with mode of production analysis (Munck 1984:31). Imperialism retains its overall import within this scheme, but it is not used to explain internal economic development. To elucidate this, the author feels it is necessary to examine the means by which the capital relation is recreated through time.

According to Munck, a complex web of class inter-relationships serves to create and sustain dependent reproduction. The first link in this chain is the subsistence sector, which, by providing low-cost housing, and inexpensive food, is crucial to the cheap reproduction of labour. Industrial workers and agricultural labourers are, in turn, directly exploited by the capital relation. Profits generated in this sphere are then transferred abroad through the operation of various multinational corporations. Technological dependence also plays an important role, for it precludes the development of primary industries. This coupled with low

wages, then, creates a situation in which consumer goods have at best a negligible market potential. Finally, the commercial banking and financial sectors intermediate between the national and international markets such that the entire system is integrated into the world economy, where a process of unequal exchange operates to the dependent economy's disadvantage (Munck 1984:34).

Drawing upon data from a wide range of Latin American countries, Munck applies the above mode of "dependent reproduction" historically, in an attempt to isolate the evolution of three main state forms: the oligarchic state, populist state, and military regimes. Contributing to the strength of his analysis is the fact that with each of these forms, he strives to assess the relative weight which should be given to internal and external variables, (ie. factors associated with the internal class struggle, as opposed to events occurring in the world economy). The author concludes that the instability of Latin American political forms is due to a contradiction which exists at the heart of the system: the external domination of capital accumulation processes on the one hand, and the internal structural heterogeneity of relations of production on the other.

Given that Munck's approach is unique as well as unusual, it is not surprising that some of his ideas conflict with those of earlier theorists. His approach to class constitutes a good case in point, for instead of locating "marginals" outside the dominant system, he argues that they are very much integrated within it:

The marginal underclass of sub-proletariat is not lacking in integration with a dominant capitalist mode of production. The expanding service sector is an integral part of expanded capitalist reproduction at the periphery (Munck 1984:102).

Like Perlman, (1976) Munck points out that capital-intensive industry has frequently absorbed "excess" labour. (In fact, between 1950 and 1970, manufacturing grew by one and one half million jobs). Moreover, this sector is by no means politically marginal. While Munck rejects Fanon's (1969) idea that the urban poor constitute a revolutionary class, he argues that shanty-town dwellers are politically important in that they frequently support populist regimes (Munck 1984:102).

In contrast to this view, is the work of O'Donnel and Cardoso who advocate the notion of "bureaucratic authoritarianism". According to this idea, military regimes are likely to occur when economic policy-making escapes the control of the elite (Philip 1984:6). Such "escapes" are the consequence of modernization-mobilization, and owe their primary impetus to the exhaustion of import substitution industrialization. In my opinion, neither of the above theories is entirely satisfactory. While Munck emphasizes politics as the "prime-mover", O'Donnel stresses economic variables. Perhaps the answer to this dilemma is a more complete integration of political and economic considerations.

While Munck's work is essentially well-written, his analysis does contain certain flaws. One of these centers on his treatment of capitalist development, and in particular, his presentation of the export-oriented economy. Munck notes that the emergence of this system coincided with a period of British hegemony, and that Latin America was integrated into the world system under its aegis (Munck 1984:354). He fails to

consider, however, that the nature of this integration varied according to the type of export economy which was produced. Both Stavrianos (1984) and Futado (1976) have shown that there existed three divergent economic systems, (temperate agricultural products, tropical agricultural products, and mineral products). Each economy required its own infrastructure and consequently the type of commodity that was produced significantly influenced the possibilities for subsequent development. Given that Munck claims to utilize mode of production theories, his failure to note this point is somewhat surprising.

The above criticism notwithstanding, perhaps the greatest failure of Munck's work lies in his inability to completely escape the problems of economic determinism. He states that a major goal of his work is to move beyond the economic implications of "dependency theory", and to construct instead a model of "dependent politics" in the Third World (Munck 1984:4). Toward this end, he includes a section which deals with the non-class cleavages of society, emphasizing, in particular, the role of women in politics and economy. One may ask, however, where these women go, for the remainder of his analysis, they are conspicuous only by their absence. Similarly, while he considers class to be an important variable, the various sectors of society remain firmly entrenched within the economy. One leaves Munck's book with the uncomfortable feeling that Latin Americans do little more than produce, consume and quibble over the means of production.

Munck's inability to escape the pitfalls of economic determinism is further reflected by the concepts included in his working definition of dependency. We become acquainted with the facts of financial, technological, and political dependency, but nowhere in his analysis do we see any mention being made of what may be referred to as "cultural imperialism". As Paul Harrison has pointed out, however, the Third World today has become a vast melting-pot of Western ideas, creating not only economic forms of dependency, but social, ideological, and legal ones as well (Harrison 1979:55).

The criticisms levelled above are by no means intended to detract from the overall significance of Munck's work. His analysis is both dynamic and persuasive, and throughout the course of his work, he raises and deals with a number of important theoretical issues. We see the relationship which exists, for example, between politics and economy, and the means by which internal and external events have guided social processes. In short, Munck achieves his stated goal, that is, he has laid the foundation for a new theory of dependency.

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The Creative Explosion: An Inquiry into the Origins of Art and Religion.
John F. Pfeiffer. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 1985 (paperback 270 pp., illustrations).

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Palaeolithic cave art has interested, and intrigued, both the layperson and the scholar for quite some time. Pfeiffer's discussion of the phenomenon should appeal to both audiences.

The wider audience, for example, will find that Pfeiffer presents the material in a clear and accessible style. An important feature of this style is Pfeiffer's ability to include himself in the work, by describing his personal experiences in some of the more famous art caves of France and Spain. This personal element, combined with the numerous illustrations (including color prints), seems to bring the artwork to life. For the layperson, then The Creative Explosion provides a good introduction to the Upper Palaeolithic period, the artwork, and its various interpretations in a manner that facilitates understanding.

Pfeiffer's main contribution to the study of Palaeolithic cave art, however, is his attempt to discuss the phenomenon in evolutionary terms. More specifically, he relates the artwork to the increasing complexity of life during this time period. Pfeiffer discusses some of the major changes that were taking place in the tool industries, hunting strategies, residence patterns, social organization, etc. He suggests that these changes led to an "information" explosion. This "information" explosion, in turn, created a need for developing new methods of remembering. Pfeiffer argues that survival depended on the ability to generate improvements in the "art of memory". He suggests that the explosion of artwork is linked to ritual activity directed toward imprinting the "collective knowledge of the band" in the minds of young initiates. Thus,

The Creative Explosion synthesizes previous information about the artwork, combines it with information from ethnographies dealing with initiation rites, and discusses all this in terms of modern developments in the study of mnemonics.

In conclusion, The Creative Explosion provides a good introduction for the study of Palaeolithic cave art. It would make an excellent text for an introductory course in European Prehistory, or Prehistory in general. The reader, however, should be aware that the evidence Pfeiffer utilizes to support his arguments is more suggestive than conclusive. In addition, the reader should note that Pfeiffer's use of modern ethnographic analogy, and modern theories of mnemonics, can only inform our understanding of Palaeolithic art if we accept the notion that there is a "psychic unity of mankind" and that this "psychic unity" extends not only cross-culturally, but also diachronically. Although this assumption is made by many scholars, it should be stated much more explicitly in a work that deals with the art of memory among prehistoric peoples whose mental capacities may or may not have approximated our own.

BOOK NOTES

Aging and Its Transformations: Moving Toward Death in Pacific Societies.
D.A. Counts and D.R. Counts (eds.) ASAO Monograph No. 10. Lanham, MD:
University Press of America. 1985.

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This monograph contains a series of readings that examine the process of aging in diverse Pacific societies and relates the process to issues of gender, dying and death. The introduction by Counts and Counts aptly provides the necessary background for readers uninformed about the Pacific and the subject of aging, while it achieves a level that is not only interesting but provocative. We are introduced to the concept of the aging-dying-death continuum and to the arbitrariness of the division between the living and the dead. Furthermore, ideas are presented concerning the effects of aging on gender and of gender on aging, as well as the cosmologies that structure the process of dying. The readings expand upon these issues and provide ethnographic material from the Pacific to illustrate them. As is usual with good anthropology, we are exposed to the paradox of extensive cross-cultural variation and the commonality of man's life experiences. The conclusions, by sociologist Victor Marshall, demonstrate the place of anthropology in the theory of social gerontology: the anthropological perspective allows one to see that the life course is not inexorable but negotiated according to cultural, social and situational factors. Thus, the monograph presents