

BOOK REVIEWS

JAMES CARRIER (ed.), *Meanings of the Market*, Oxford: Berg 1997. xvii, 276 pp., References, Index. £34.95 / £14.95.

In 1992, Roy Dilley edited a collection of papers called *Contesting Markets*. This was one of the most important contributions from the discipline to economic theory for some time, in that, using a series of well-researched case-studies, it backed up a general scepticism about whether markets really work according to theoretical economic principles. Nonetheless, it does not appear to have had anything like the impact it deserved. For this reason it is worth emphasizing as strongly as possible that Carrier's *Meanings of the Market* is another major contribution by anthropologists to one of the most important issues of our time, an effective and scholarly critique of what is becoming the most powerful institution of our age. It would therefore be a great pity if it did not achieve a significant influence, not only on anthropology but also in political economy, sociology, geography, and other disciplines which cannot help but wrestle with the extraordinary influence of the concept of the market.

There is at least one reason why Carrier might be taken up in a way that Dilley's book was not, namely that while Dilley concentrated on what might be seen as the more obvious 'classic' contribution by anthropologists, based on the twin foundations of relativism and fieldwork, Carrier's collection strikes at the heart of market theory, its history, and its role as ideology within the major economies. In one sense, merely to make the point that markets do not actually operate according to market principles would hardly have much impact on current debates. The question therefore becomes why, if we all know that market theory does not describe the world of actual markets, does this not seem to make any difference to the credibility of market theory? This then becomes a matter of power and ideology—precisely the starting-point of Carrier's collection.

The volume achieves the rare result of making its disparate parts into more than a single authored text, since each paper is based on parochial expertise which then serves to make a scholarly and convincing contribution. The introduction contains a clearly written argument that touches most of the relevant points, going beyond the strict requirements of such a piece in addressing the dual problems of whether we can find institutions in the world that constitute manifestations of markets as they are theorized, and the growth and influence of market theory per se. It therefore points back to 'classical' discussions of Polanyi and others, as well as to recent developments in the rise of market theory in economics, following the collapse of socialism in the world at large.

There then follow what are, in effect, three pairs of chapters. Those by Kahn and Brown both dwell on the history of the discourse of the market and its current representations. Khan's chapter, linking debates during and after the Enlightenment (par-

ticularly the expressivist discussions that influenced Hegel and Marx) with current discussions about the market in Malaysia, strikes a particular chord in its relevance to recent clashes between one of his key protagonists, Dr Mahathir Mohammed, and currency speculators, the latter being among those who most closely represent a pure market in contemporary capitalism. Brown provides a well-grounded analysis of the positions of the more extreme exponents of what she calls the 'anarcho-capitalist' groups that have arisen in the United States in strident opposition to the federal government.

The next pair of papers deals with the market as encountered in mass movements and practices. Carrier's neat and effective contribution provides a direct comparison between the work of Adam Smith and one of the most popular self-help books in the United States advising people how to establish a successful business. In particular, he notes the interesting ways in which this popular capitalism differs substantially from purer market theory in, for example, its emphasis on moral values and sentimentality. Smart provides a clear and fascinating portrait of one of the most extraordinary phenomena of our age—the sudden but effective rise of 'communist capitalism' in China. The viability of this apparent oxymoron is used to demonstrate other problems with a market theory that could never have envisaged such an ungainly beast, let alone predict that it would produce the fastest-growing major world economy.

The final pair of papers brings us closer to a more precise point-by-point comparison between aspects of economic and market theory, and the actual workings of the particular institutions they purport to describe. MacLennan writes about cost-benefit analysis in the United States, in particular its importance in effecting the penetration of market principles into many areas of political life. Chapman and Buckley go still more deeply into the arguments behind a theory of 'transaction-cost economics' and the problems that arise on close inspection of it. Although making dryer reading, these two papers are clearly important within the overall case being made by the volume as a whole. The collection is rounded off by a succinct and useful conclusion by William Roseberry relating the theme to wider issues, in particular those raised by Weber.

I have two main criticisms of the volume. First, I feel that it surrenders too much to its opponents by focusing entirely on the market as opposed to capitalism. Economists have tended to promote this shift in our discourse partly, one suspects, in the hope of getting away with a more purely decontextualized concept of the market, while capitalism pointed back to a larger historical and social context. The collection therefore appears somewhat *sui generis*, without sufficient acknowledgement of older critiques of capitalism that are still pertinent. Secondly, although there are some advantages in addressing 'Western' economies rather than anthropological ethnographies of small-scale societies, Carrier tends to a generic 'Western'. The effect is to ignore one of the most interesting outcomes of this collection, namely that between them, the papers by Brown, Carrier, and MacLennan provide a fascinating analysis of the specific nature of capitalism in the United States and its roots in aspects of American society (and not just individualism) which make it very different from other capitalist regions, such as western Europe. A bit of traditional relativism would not have done any harm here.

But notwithstanding these criticisms, this book represents a major achievement. This critique of the market as ideology and practice is by no means the only contribu-

tion anthropology can make at the present time, but it has to be one of the most urgent and significant. Carrier's collection provides an ideal starting-point.

DANIEL MILLER

DANIEL MILLER, *Capitalism: An Ethnographic Approach*, Oxford and New York: Berg 1997. x, 357 pp., Bibliography, Index. £39.95 / \$17.95.

Daniel Miller's newest book is almost as ambitious as its title suggests. This follow-up to *Modernity: An Ethnographic Approach* (Oxford: Berg 1994) continues the author's analysis of commodities and consumerism in Trinidad, this time focusing primarily on the institutional settings in which commodities are conceived, produced, advertised, marketed, and distributed. Miller presents this account as a contribution to the 'general project of de-fetishizing the commodity', highlighting the social contexts from which commodities emerge (p. 16). Ethnographic material for the book was gathered solely in Trinidad; yet in examining the operation of capitalist processes within and across Trinidadian institutions, Miller aims to clarify larger issues in the analysis of global capitalism.

Indeed, while Miller is dedicated to demonstrating the local specificities of Trinidadian capitalism, he insists that these practices should not be understood merely as aberrant, immature, or inefficient versions of the more normative capitalism that is assumed to exist in metropolitan centres. Nor, he argues, do current developments in commodity production and consumption in Trinidad represent, in any simple sense, the accommodation of a pre-existing local culture to inexorable global capitalist forces. Rather, born as a capitalist periphery, Trinidad still develops 'in tandem with capitalism and is not separable as a "context" to capitalism' (p. 5). Miller sets out to examine the nature of that dynamic relationship, using ethnography to get at 'organic capitalism'—commerce as it unfolds in historical practice, particularly as seen in the institutional norms, ideologies, and trajectories of capitalist firms in Trinidad (p. 55). This 'organic capitalism' is opposed to the 'pure capitalism' which Miller attributes to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Such institutions draw upon classic premises in economic theory, assuming, for example, that free markets and the absence of trade barriers constitute ideal and necessary conditions for 'efficient' production and trade (pp. 39, 42). The author notes that, at the time of his fieldwork there in 1995, post-oil boom Trinidad was just beginning to acquire a strong taste of how the structural adjustment policies that were based on such assumptions would adversely effect its population.

The bulk of the book is devoted to an investigation of the institutional structures and rationales which give shape to commodities in Trinidad. Miller conducted both formal interviews and informal observations among business people (mainly mid-level executives), following them in their daily activities and, when permitted, tracking particular product line decisions and advertising campaigns. One chapter is devoted to an analysis of dominant brands in the 'sweet-drink' (soft-drink) industry, including how products are promoted and distributed; another explores the local advertising industry

and its workers' motivations and assumptions; and a third describes a thriving shopping area and its retailers' concerns and strategies. A recurring theme is that of 'localization,' or the formulation of consumer interests and images as understood by advertisers and retailers (as well as consumers) as representative of Trinidadian practices and identities.

The content and significance of the 'local' in commodity production and consumption are not straightforward, however. Miller explains the difficulty involved in classifying particular companies as 'local' or 'global': transnational corporations may be represented by extremely autonomous local subsidiaries with long-standing local reputations, while some companies founded in Trinidad have moved into transnational ventures. Goods produced by both types of company can be portrayed in advertising as either the 'local' or the 'global,' for while the general public often believes foreign products to be of higher quality, 'local' goods also arouse particular loyalty, and there is no consensus among executives as to which image is more reliably appealing to consumers.

Challenging 'pure capitalist' assumptions about how business decisions are arrived at, Miller further observes that profitability is not always the primary goal for local firms. Subsidiaries often create advertising campaigns locally, at a higher cost to transnational parent companies and with no proven increase in profits, but increasing the volume of funds channelled through Trinidadian offices and emphasizing their expertise and knowledge of the local scene. At the same time, advertisers' creative decisions are often based more on their fear of competitor firms than any clear conceptualizations of consumer desires (p. 194). Thus executives' actions are shown as they emerge from particular institutional contexts as well as more general sociocultural ones. The executives, like other Trinidadians, are more than anything else simply 'engaged in the creation of generalized models and normative expectations', and their models sometimes take cues from, sometimes influence, those of their consumer audience, either coinciding with or departing from them (pp. 151, 240).

This rather benign portrayal of producers' and advertisers' roles is juxtaposed with attention to the contradictory power available to consumers. Despite the bias towards industry in the volume, Miller argues that consumption and shopping constitute 'skills fundamental to modern life' which must be treated as central to the study of capitalism (p. 301). Consumers themselves do make some appearances in the ethnography, as in a sample group's reactions to a hundred taped television advertisements. Revisiting themes introduced in *Modernity*, Miller argues that a fundamental, culturally specific dualism structures Trinidadian approaches to consumption, namely the opposition between 'transience' (associated with freedom, fun, and spending) and 'transcendence' (associated with intergenerational stability, continuity, thrift and/or particular kinds of purchases). In addition, he highlights the roles of commodity production, advertising, and consumption in the construction of ethnic categories. Of ultimate importance to Miller is the fact that contemporary Trinidadians consider access to inexpensive, high quality foreign goods as their right. For this reason, they in effect vote for the same free market structural adjustment policies which will oppress them at other levels (pp. 310, 333-5). Miller concludes that the examination of such structural contradictions in consumption should be at the heart of future studies of organic capitalism.

Read without the companion volume, some of Miller's claims, particularly those regarding Trinidadian consumer motivations and perceptions, are a little too vaguely supported and broadly painted to be truly convincing. Miller admits that much of the detail on the business world is being presented here more for the sake of future comparative possibilities than in support of any immediate analytical points (pp. 7–8; see *Modernity*, also *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*, New York: Basil Blackwell 1987, for more thorough developments of Miller's theoretical bases). Nevertheless, Miller's ability to present the semiotic aspects of the representations of commodities in advertisements, as well as the immediate institutional structures that shape them, is instructive, even if he accounts less well for consumers' experiences of economic change and incipient hardship. More importantly, his investigation of a wide range of settings admirably displays the rich possibilities in store for the ethnography of capitalist enterprise and consumption. For despite the increased interest in anthropology and other disciplines, regrettably few precedents have been set for long-term ethnographic inquiry in this area. This renders Miller's somewhat experimental work particularly useful for prospective researchers, making this volume an especially important and welcome contribution to the field.

JENNIFER PATICO

BRUCE KAPFERER, *The Feast of the Sorcerer: Practices of Consciousness and Power*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1997. xix, 367 pp., Bibliography, Indexes, Illustrations, Glossary. £52.00 / £21.95.

This book examines practices of sorcery among Sinhalese Buddhists in Sri Lanka, especially in the southern region of the island. In part, its ethnographic and theoretical concerns are an extension of the author's earlier project in *A Celebration of Demons*. However, whereas the latter work concentrates primarily on demon exorcism (particularly the ceremony for Mahasona, the great cemetery demon), the main focus of the former is the anti-sorcery rite known as the Suniyama (the rite for the demon deity called Suniyam).

The author of *The Feast of the Sorcerer* states in the Preface that the material on which the book is based was collected at various times over a period of twenty-five years and that much of it comes from intensive fieldwork carried out between 1984 and 1991 (p. xvi). Yet, although the book is ethnographically rich, Kapferer gives few details about the circumstances of alleged victims of sorcery for whom the Suniyama rite may be performed. The claim that in the anti-sorcery rite the victim or patient is 'turned around and reoriented toward the life world'—a motion in which 'the victim is progressively imbued with the ordering qualities of the cosmos, his body and mind harmonized, and ultimately thoroughly reconstituted as a being-consciousness' (p. 131)—is thus difficult to evaluate. Kapferer does provide some case-study material, but this is often quite sparse. In the second of the two chapters on the Suniyama ritual itself (chapter 5), for example, the author discusses the case of a seventy-five-year-old businessman living on the southern coast between Galle and Weligama, a man who

suspected that his business and health (and possibly some of his family members) had become the object of sorcery attack (pp. 106–7). Kapferer states that he attended the Suniyama performed for the victim but gives no details of how the performance may have changed the victim's circumstances. No follow-up investigation to ascertain whether or not the rite had been successful in its purpose in this case (or in any of the other cases discussed by the author) is mentioned either.

But, although there is a paucity of empirical evidence in the book to support the claim that the Suniyama has a powerful transformative potential, a potential to change or to reorient the victim and his or her household (as well as the wider social and political relations in which they are embroiled), the argument that the anti-sorcery rite or sorcery practices enable human beings to make and break their life world, to create as well as to destroy their social and political realities, is theoretically appealing. Kapferer's approach, which combines or draws together phenomenological concepts, deconstructionist concepts, and concepts culled both from Bourdieu's discourse on practice and writings of Deleuze and Guattari on power, is skilfully articulated in the book and provides a new way of investigating, analysing, and understanding sorcery practices. Indeed, in *The Feast of the Sorcerer*, Kapferer not only re-directs the study of sorcery but the study of ritual too. Common ways of accounting for sorcery or ritual have focused on representation. Scholars often see sorcery practices as a reflection of social and political forces or as an expression of inner psychological conflicts. However, while Kapferer does not dismiss the validity of explaining sorcery in such terms, he concentrates on the dynamics of sorcery practices, the dynamics engaged in the process whereby human beings constitute and reconstitute themselves and their world. In addition, because Kapferer is fundamentally concerned with the way in which practices of sorcery open out into wider issues of vital import in the understanding of human consciousness, action, and society, *The Feast of the Sorcerer* is not only an essential book for anthropologists, but for scholars or students of the social sciences too, as well as South Asianists.

GRAHAM DWYER

IRNA IMRAN and TIM SMITH, *Home from Home: British Pakistanis in Mirpur*, Bradford: Bradford Heritage Recording Unit 1997. 64 pp., 59 colour and black and white plates. £7.50 plus £1.50 p&p from B.H.R.U., Bradford Industrial Museum, Moorside Road, Bradford BD2 3HP.

When in the beginning our people went to Britain, they were just going to work there. They were not interested in education, they were not interested in local politics, they were not even interested in buying homes or staying there. But now it is a reality that Britain is our home. We have got two homes, one in Britain and one in Mirpur (p. 63).

A recent statistical survey by the Policy Studies Institute showed that Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are the most disadvantaged of Britain's South Asian minorities in terms

of employment, income and housing (Modood *et al.*, *Diversity and Disadvantage* 1997). The authors explain this primarily in relation to racial exclusion and the class origins or 'human capital' of these groups of migrants. But while surveys such as these have their uses, they imply that the groups compared are equally committed to social mobility as defined by the criteria of the survey. In so doing, they may obscure some of the other processes that are involved.

British Pakistanis and Bangladeshis who came to Britain forty or so years ago were concerned initially, at least, with social mobility in terms of the socioeconomic hierarchy at 'home' rather than in Britain. To this end, they have maintained close links with their villages of origin and made quite considerable investments there. They may not have achieved social mobility in 'British' terms, but have been concerned to divert the resources that could have been used for this purpose to Pakistan and Bangladesh instead.

What makes Imran and Smith's book a welcome addition to the literature on British Pakistanis is that its focus is on precisely these links between Britain and Pakistan. About three-quarters of British Pakistanis come from Mirpur, an area which, like the Sylhet district of Bangladesh which is the origin of most British Bangladeshis, has a long tradition of labour migration. Mirpuri seamen in the British merchant navy who settled in Britain provided contacts for subsequent Mirpuri migrants to Britain, especially during the era of post-war reconstruction in that country. Even after the men in Britain had been joined by wives and children, remittances continued to be sent back to Mirpur, to be saved in banks there or used to build new *pakka* (brick) houses.

But have the remittances to Mirpur enabled migrants to achieve social mobility there? The evidence suggests that they have purchased the outward signs of social mobility: they have built large *pakka* houses with amenities such as running water and toilets, they can show that they are 'good' families by repatriating the dead, often at quite considerable expense, and they can purchase more gold jewellery than 'locals' when marrying off their daughters. There is little evidence, however, that they have made any lasting income-generating investments in Mirpur. Many of the palatial new houses are empty for much of the time, and most of the business enterprises embarked upon by returnees to Britain merely service other visitors from there. There are snooker halls to provide entertainment for young male visitors frustrated by the slow pace of Mirpuri life, shops selling Weetabix and Cornflakes to cater for British tastes, and Top Man and London tailors to clothe the returnees. More substantial investments tend to flounder, for reasons that are historical, political, and bureaucratic: for instance, it may take six months to obtain a licence to use electricity for a business.

Among the many striking photographs in this book, collected during a four-week trip to Mirpur, are some which show aspects of the turbulent history of the area. Before Partition, Old Mirpur city was predominantly Hindu, and the Dadial area of Mirpur mainly Sikh. Mirpur is now, of course, predominantly Muslim, but photographs of a derelict *gurdwara* and a disused Hindu shrine testify to this mixed heritage. Then, in the 1960s, Old Mirpur and 250 villages in the area were submerged when the Mangla dam was built, and 110,000 people were displaced in the process, many of whom came to Britain. There are photographs of Old Mirpur, and of people leaving their homes by boat when the city was submerged. Today, photographs show, in the main part of the reservoir, the tower of a Hindu temple and the dome of a Muslim shrine are the only

evidence above the surface of the water of the submerged city, but, eerily, tombs and other structures appear in the shallows and when the water level falls during the dry season.

The oral histories and photographs also document the contradictions and frustrations inherent in maintaining social ties in two countries, as well as the power of these ties. Marriage is central to sustaining these links. Photographs depict the marriage of a young man from Walsall to a woman in Mirpur. There are comments from both the older and younger generations on the advantages and disadvantages of bringing a bride or groom from Pakistan. Some young British women are being educated in Mirpur about how to be good wives when they go back to Britain. A young woman from Britain obliged to stay in Mirpur with her mother-in-law worries that her children will become sick. A grandmother talks of how she dislikes coming to England, but misses her children and grandchildren when she stays in Mirpur.

The authors provide no formal analysis and do not pretend to do so, yet there is plenty of material here which touches on the themes raised by international labour migration. The book constitutes a valuable social history; perhaps those who will most appreciate it are British Mirpuris themselves and their descendants.

ALISON SHAW

BONNIE O'CONNOR, *Healing Traditions: Alternative Medicine and the Health Professions*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1995. xxiii, 195pp., Bibliography, Index, Tables, Appendix, Glossary. £34.95 / £15.95 paper.

[A] person coping with cancer may be following a course of chemotherapy while simultaneously using prayer for healing, together with the application of sacred relics to the afflicted part(s) of the body; following a natural foods diet and taking large doses of vitamins and minerals in an effort to eliminate toxins and bolster the immune system; practicing meditation to reduce stress, and visualization to mobilize the body's healing forces; using botanical or homeopathic medicines to combat the side effects of chemotherapy; and seeing a chiropractor to help restore vitality and proper functioning, or an acupuncturist for pain control or restoration of critical internal balance. (p. 26)

Depending upon your biases, this text is set to become either an informative key reading in the anthropology of health, or a controversial example of overstated folklore. For me, this text has already become the backbone of a new course that I teach, 'Sociological and Anthropological Perspectives on Health', and it has stimulated me to consider practising anthropology down some new and different avenues.

As suggested by the quote above, this work examines the US health-care environment, one which has become more rather than less diverse and pluralistic in practice in recent times. What is also interesting are the findings in this book, which show that despite all the advances in scientific medicine, the expected decline in non-biomedical health-belief systems has not come about: traditional systems such as 'folk

medicine' and the New Age healings or holistic health of 'popular medicine' remain with us and are even growing in the US as well as the UK. Indeed, complementary medicines quite literally co-exist alongside conventional medical systems. These unexpected and unpredicted developments lead O'Connor to attempt to fathom lay people's health-belief systems, specifically, how people define health and illness, how and why people believe they become sick, how they decide what to do about it, under whose care they decide to put themselves, and what implications all this has for health professionals (p. xvi).

Borrowing extensively from her mentor David Hufford, O'Connor, a folklorist by training, uses a phenomenological approach to belief to counteract what she sees as the 'medicentric' myth that science is eradicating non-conventional health-care systems. Borrowing also from language studies, O'Connor distinguishes between standard (conventional) and 'vernacular' (non-conventional) health-belief systems: the former is both 'authorized and authoritative' (p. 4), enjoying the approval, co-operation, and protection of the country's legal system and other supporting social institutions (such as government licensing and regulatory bodies) (p. 5); lacking such professional status and social standing, the vernacular systems (such as aromotherapy, naturopathy, and homeopathy) are relegated to a second-league table of practices that are not state-supported and have to be actively sought and paid for by the patient. Yet, despite NHS support, many people in the UK are attracted to expensive visits to health shops, practitioners of Chinese medicine, or the hot/cold health theories originating from Latin America. This may be because of the ability of such systems to go 'beyond' the range of medical diagnoses, explanations, and treatments: like Evans-Pritchard's analyses of the persistence of Zande witchcraft, vernacular health-belief systems are well placed to address the meaning of illness and to answer questions like 'why me?', and 'why now?' (p. 32). Medicine addresses only symptoms, whereas it could be argued that homeopathy and naturopathy look at ultimate causes—they see the disease as a symptom of another underlying problem (p. 27). Such systems are also increasingly being used to cope with controversial and often not medically treatable diagnostic entities such as pre-menstrual syndrome, chronic fatigue syndrome, chronic multiple sclerosis, chronic back pain and even soul loss.

O'Connor spends the first two chapters of the book assessing the field of alternative medicine and defining her folklore-based ethnographic approach. In the third chapter, she shows just how important it is to be aware of the plurality of health systems. She does this very effectively by looking at illness in a Hmong ethnic minority group living as refugees in Philadelphia, in particular the case-history of Mr L and his chronic liver disease. After being rushed to hospital, Mr L was diagnosed with chronic hepatitis B, a damaged liver, and bleeding of the oesophagus. The doctors recommended immediate cauterising of the bleeding veins and a liver transplant. They did not expect the following problems in treating Mr L. First, Mr L had to consult with Hmong elders before he could sign any consent forms because the Hmong do not have any private rights. Secondly, when they prepared Mr L for surgery by denying him any solid foods, the Hmong interpreted this as starvation by witch doctors who were preventing Mr L from consuming any rice, the Hmong nutritional staple and socio-cultural staple ('staff of life'). Thirdly, the very idea of a liver transplant was anathema for the Hmong, who believe that the liver is where moods and character come from

and where one of the body's three spirits resides. Unable to have the operation according to his Hmong health-belief system, Mr L was eventually discharged as a model example of an 'uncooperative patient' by doctors who did not appreciate alternative world-views. As a postscript to plurality, O'Connor notes that Mr L did not die and has followed a course of out-patient prescriptions, though this has not led to a dilution of his health-belief system.

For contrast, O'Connor looks at a group who lack the ethnic-based health-belief system described in chapter four. She turns her attention to AIDS, the gay community, and the People With Aids (PWA) community. This is a study of the 'cafeteria approach' to medicine, as consumers search for any cure or effective treatment among the kaleidoscopic range of conventional and non-conventional medicines. O'Connor again demonstrates her thesis about the complementary nature of medicine as vernacular practices augmenting the standard. This moves the book to its conclusion, where the author instructively looks at the implications of the previous chapters (followed by forty pages of glossary and notes, such as how to take a patient's health-belief history). Rather than do away with standard health care, O'Connor follows the 'augmentation' approach found among many of her subjects by calling for greater patient consideration in the realm of health-care delivery—cultural diversity in particular (the problems of patient expectations and compliance, for instance, can be addressed through medical training in the ethnographic perspective (p. 187)).

When O'Connor writes about the folklorists' ethnographic perspective, I read anthropology. Her ethnographies are fascinating and easily grasped, her thesis straightforward and clear. But when it comes to fitting it all into a theoretical framework, O'Connor might have benefited from anthropology's comparative strength. O'Connor cites Berger and Luckmann's social construction of reality thesis in order to bring socio-cultural world-views into her hospital settings. She also makes an interesting distinction between belief (the conviction of truth) and knowledge (the apprehension of truth), both being equally relative and socio-cultural constructs. However, she shies away from any form of evaluation of specific health-belief systems even in terms of power or dominance, if not in terms of validity. Reading classic anthropological debates on rationality by the likes of Horton, Gluckman, and Tambiah might have allowed her to formulate more practical tests and strategies for diverse health-care delivery in a plural environment, rather than the bland 'educational implications' of her conclusion. A follow-up study on precisely this issue is eagerly awaited.

JONATHAN SKINNER

DAVID E. SUTTON, *Memories Cast in Stone: The Relevance of the Past in Everyday Life*. Oxford: Berg 1998. xi, 241pp., Illustrations, References, Indexes. £39.99/£14.99.

From the start of the war in Kosovo and Serbia, the walls of buildings in central Athens were marked every morning with the ephemeral signs of its residents' political dreaming—graffiti condemning the United States, the 'S' of the 'U.S.A.' twisted into a swastika or doubled into an 'SS'. My American students in Athens were stunned by

the radical dissonance between the metaphors invoked in the American press and those employed by Greeks. One young woman asked, 'Does the swastika *mean* the same thing to Greeks as it does to us?' Appearing at the crest of the vogue for studies in anthropology and history, but also at a moment when the signifier 'history' in the Balkans could not be more contested, *Memories Cast in Stone* by the American anthropologist David Sutton offers ways to transform such a question from a perplexing dead-end to the opening for a productive cross-cultural dialogue.

Based on the author's fieldwork on Kalymnos, a sleepy Dodecanese island best known for its sponge-divers, this engaging ethnography addresses the cultural construction of Greek (and specifically Kalymnian) historicity. Currently, 'anthropology and history' refers to a variety of trajectories, some contradictory, within anthropological thought. However, Sutton's research can be situated in a symbolic/interpretative anthropology paradigm, inspired by the now classic works of Rosaldo, Sahlins, and Herzfeld in defining different cultures' relationships to, and uses of, their past. In critical dialogue with nationalism studies, Sutton is not interested in exposing 'invented traditions' or in providing a 'counter-history' that would illuminate aspects of 'specific, competing pasts,' but in understanding how the past is used in the present. The book is composed of two main parts. The first examines the metaphors, practices and categories ('custom', 'heritage', 'tradition' and 'the old years') in which local history surfaces in public debate. The second considers how national history and global events 'look' from the vantage point of Europe's periphery.

Feeling their island to be a mere pawn in world politics, the residents of Kalymnos (which has been occupied by Venetians, Genoese, Ottomans, Italians, and Germans among others) cannot afford to be indifferent to history. In a society that Sutton finds to be saturated with historical reference, he seeks especially for stories and practices that have not been 'cast in stone' in official histories and are not staid rehashings of folk culture. For instance, he is intrigued by the yearly dynamite-hurling at Easter. The bombs, made from defused Second World War mines and bombs used in illegal dynamite fishing, represent dense symbols of the islanders' resistance to harsh Italian rule (1912–47) and, in general, to meddling by state or international powers. However, an analogous emblem of resistance, the 'Rock War' of 1935, when women pelted the Italian authorities with stones to protest at attempts to usurp control of the Orthodox church administration, has been essentially written out of official histories of the island. Like memories of matrilineal residence patterns (or 'matriarchy', as the islanders call it), these stories of the past seem to threaten male privilege in the present. While Sutton shows an eagerness to examine gender inequalities in these discussions of local history, he relies on a conception of gender as 'women' rather than as a relationship of power linked to other asymmetrical social and political relationships. Thus, the family remains for him prior or distinct from state discourses and international politics instead of, as others might argue, intertwined and often strategically manipulated by them.

Indeed, Sutton is struck by how talk on the island, far from being limited to local happenings, is, if anything, more focused on national and international events in which residents feel themselves thoroughly implicated. One of the most interesting chapters of the book concerns Kalymnian outrage over the way the Western media stigmatized Serbia during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Sutton finds, for instance, that Kalymnians *cannot* turn history into metaphor; the swastika cannot be detached from the

specifics of the history of the Second World War, which scarred Greece so deeply. As Sutton notes: 'For a Kalymnian to compare present-day Serbs to Hitler would be as incongruous as comparing Greek revolutionary leaders to Turkish pashas.' It took all Sutton's powers of anthropological listening to understand the Kalymnian viewpoint, which he initially feels to be a 'wilful misreading of events'. As he watches the unfolding of events and sees American political interests in the region emerge, he comes to feel that the 'normally vigilant' and 'reliable' left-wing American press on which he had depended for his views might also be co-opted by mainstream American politics.

At this point, though, one senses an unresolved tension in Sutton's book between two ways of explaining the different 'weights' that history possesses in Greek and American society (in the latter, he suggests, history is more a sign of backwardness, a drag on progress): these are the different *experiences* of historical events from the perspective of a peripheral or dominant geopolitical standpoint or a different *logic* of history. Unable to accept the former fully, he sets himself the task of validating the latter. In the last part of the book, Sutton attempts to understand the deeper existential underpinnings of Greek historical thinking by mapping 'non-discursive' cultural practices, like genealogy, naming practices, and reciprocity (though, notably, not religious conceptions of time and memory). Thus, in the final chapter, Sutton links Greek outrage over the naming of one of the breakaway states of Yugoslavia, 'Macedonia', to the significance of Greek family naming practices, which are a critical means of establishing intergenerational continuity and legitimating property transfers. Is this the hidden reason for Greeks' passionate 'Battle for the Name' of Macedonia, which is also the name of one of Greece's northern provinces? While Sutton says that he does not want to treat Greek and Kalymnian historicity as radically 'other' and, by extension, 'backward' or 'irrational', this kind of argument sidesteps discussion of the issue on the level on which Greeks want to discuss it—in other words, in terms of the geopolitical past, present, and future of the Balkans. One questions whether anthropology, as it continues to mediate these pressing cross-cultural dialogues, can afford to overlook the complex array of historical, literary, and anthropological discourses which circulate so intensely in a place like Greece and are themselves in critical dialogue with popular media and official histories.

To sum up, *Memories Cast in Stone* is a neatly presented ethnography. Sutton succeeds in showing us that anthropology can 'return' to a traditional fieldwork setting, such as this relatively remote island, but see it in a new way by insisting that the local be situated within global conversations. The great virtue of this book lies in posing the ambitious and difficult question of the relevance of the past in everyday life in a remarkably clear and pointed manner, while also marking out specific ethnographic strategies with which it can be explored.

PENELOPE PAPAILIAS

PAT CAPLAN, *African Voices, African Lives: Personal Narratives from a Swahili Village*, London and New York: Routledge 1997. xiv, 267 pp., Illustrations, References, Index. £45.00/£14.99.

As Caplan notes in her introduction to *African Voices, African Lives*, the emergence of life histories as a mode of ethnographic writing can be traced back to at least the late 1920s, when writers such as Radin (in his *Crashing Thunder*, New York and London, D. Appleton & Co., 1926) first advocated the use of 'self-told' biographies as a means of representing the ethnographic subject. Despite this, it was not until the late 1970s that the approach was taken up by more than a handful of anthropologists, and the emergence of 'life histories' as a distinctive sub-genre of ethnography can be traced to the period of burgeoning production that occurred around this time.

Caplan's presentation of the life history of Mohammed (a pseudonym: p. 4), a Swahili peasant from Mafia Island, Tanzania, in this current work can therefore be seen as a contribution to a relatively new, and growing, genre of ethnographic writing. The book provides a chronological account of Mohammed's past life, structured around certain key events, such as his circumcision, his marriage, and his achievement of parenthood. The event most poignantly described here, however, is the illness and death of his eldest son, Seleman (p. 52) and Mohammed's subsequent attempts (eventually realised) to travel to Dar es Salaam to attend the funeral. The description of these events highlights the specific qualities of the life-history approach, recounting as it does events which are deeply personal to Mohammed, but in which the reader is nevertheless able to identify a general predicament; 'what many have termed the "human condition"' (p. 18).

But to describe this ethnography as simply another contribution to the burgeoning life-history literature does not do full justice to what Caplan achieves here. In itself, Mohammed's life history in fact accounts for only the first of the book's four parts (and about one-seventh of its total length), with the remainder of the work seeking to explore the events that have shaped his life in other ways. And while the second part of the book can be seen to develop in the generic style of the 'traditional' ethnographic life history, the later sections subvert its conventions in several interesting ways. The book's second section (entitled 'Mohammed as ethnographer') contains the actor's own descriptions of a diverse number of subjects, ranging from the system of land tenure which operates in his village, to 'ancestor' rites, to parental curses, drawn primarily from the diary he kept for Caplan during her 1966–7 field trip. Mohammed's words (as derived from this diary) are here interdigitated with Caplan's own analytical commentaries. In this way the section can be seen to be constructed of a 'dialogical' perspective (of a similar type to that first developed within the ethnographic life-history genre by writers such as Oscar Lewis, for example, in his *The Children of Sanchez*, New York, 1961).

However, the latter sections of the book move beyond such generic conventions. To begin with, these sections cannot properly be described as life history, moving forward as they do from the point at which that part of the book ended (a textual possibility achievable only through the unusually long time-span of Caplan's field materials). Drawing on material gathered during her four visits to Mafia Island between 1965 and 1994, Caplan also here 'gives voice' to other actors (most notably Mohammed's wife

Mwahadia and his second daughter Subira) as Mohammed's story is brought up to date. The inclusion of such alternative voices has the effect of creating an internal dialectic within the text, so that the previous accounts of events given by Mohammed in the description of his life history now become opened to challenge. To take one example, the observations Mohammed makes about married life in the 'history' section of the book (pp. 39–41) are later contested by the descriptions of his wife (pp. 128–9). The subjectivity of Caplan herself is also brought to bear here, as she fulfils the request of Mohammed's elder brother for her to try and effect a reconciliation between the two protagonists (pp. 131–3). In this way Caplan achieves here a 'suturing' of discourse and text in a subtle and innovative way, an effect which is further facilitated by her liberal use of first-person dialogue, which often takes the form of literal translation from the Swahili.

These subtleties do not, however, detract from the self-confessed aim of the book, to present 'an essentially humanistic enterprise' (p. 233). The descriptions it presents of the events which have shaped Mohammed's life do indeed enable the reader to identify the 'extraordinary' in the life of this 'ordinary' man, as well as presenting her with a detailed ethnographic account of life on this part of the Swahili coast. Above all, though, the book demonstrates that life narratives have an increasingly important part to play in the anthropological enterprise.

RICHARD VOKES

EMMA HELEN BLAIR, *The Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley and Region of the Great Lakes* (two volumes in one), Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 1996. 372 and 412 pp., Illustrations, Bibliography, Index. £23.95.

The original two volumes of this work were published in 1911 (the year of Blair's death) and 1912. Blair's previous work included editing the *Jesuit Relations* with R. G. Thwaites, assisting in editing the works of Father Louis Hennepin and of the journals of the Lewis and Clark expedition, and editing with James A. Robertson the fifty-five volumes of *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898*. This compendium presented, for the first time in English, Nicolas Perrot's *Memoir on the Manners, Customs, and Religion of the Savages of North America*, written ca. 1680–1718 and first published in French in 1864, followed by part of volume 2 of Roy de la Potherier's *History of the Savage Peoples Who are Allies of New France* (1722) (the other volumes have not been translated). To these, Blair added memoirs on the Sauk and Foxes by Morrell Marston (1820) and Thomas Forsyth (1827). There are four appendixes, 'Biographical Sketch of Nicolas Perrot', 'Notes on Indian Social Organization, Mental and Moral Traits, and Religious Beliefs', and 'Various letters, etc., describing the...Sioux, Potawatomi, and Winnebago'. An obituary of Blair follows the index.

In his introduction to the present edition, Richard White describes Blair's compilation as in some ways a flawed piece of scholarship, because of the use of abridgements and narrowness of interpretations, but defends the present edition as 'a sedimented piece of scholarship', essentially a witness to the history of scholarly attitudes in the

same way, as are the components from which it is made. Blair retained the original editorial comments on Perrot by Fr Jules Tailhan in condensed form. Blair's own attitudes were anti-racist, but conventionally evolutionist. She regarded Indians as needing to be subdued and improved. Indian cultures were backward and primitive, though the Indians themselves were equal to whites in intelligence and ability. As White remarks in passing, the programmes of the United States government which she supported were already doing great damage and were to come under harsh attack within twenty years. Her work made much valuable information available for the first time in English. Today it offers a useful starting-point for readers interested in the early documentation of the peoples of the upper Mississippi valley, although serious scholars will also wish to go beyond it to the originals in their complete form.

R. H. BARNES

JONATHAN D. HILL (ed.), *History, Power, and Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Americas, 1492–1992*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press 1996. vi, 277 pp., Figures, Bibliography, Index. £30.95 / £14.95.

Ethnogenesis is a term introduced by William Sturtevant in 1971 in a study of the origin of the Seminole through a process of amalgamation of Creeks with other (including Negro) groups under the pressure of British and United States military activity. Subsequently, Norman E. Whitten, Jr., argued that a process of ethnocide and ethnogenesis had taken place in the Americas. Since then there has been considerable discussion of particular experiences of ethnogenesis there. This discussion has, of course, been influenced by the debates about ethnicity. This collection begins with a general account, 'Ethnogenesis in the Americas, 1492–1992' (Jonathan D. Hill). There follow papers on Native Surinam (Neil Lancelot Whitehead), the Seminole (Richard A. Sattler), Kiowa (Nancy P. Hickerson), the Northeastern Plains, Plains Assiniboin, Cree and Ojibwa (Patricia C. Albers), Maroon peoples of the Guianas and Jamaica (Kenneth Bilby), Northwest Amazonia (Jonathan D. Hill), the Alleluia religion of Guyana (Susan K. Staats), African festivals of Venezuela (David M. Guss), and an Indigenous movement in Ecuador (Norman E. Whitten, Jr.).

As indicated by the beginning date of the period covered in the first contribution, most cases of ethnogenesis were greatly influenced by the presence of and contact with Europeans, whose illnesses, trade, political ambitions, and military struggles profoundly influenced indigenous populations. Hill writes that, 'By the end of the colonial period and the rise of independent states in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries, indigenous American peoples had been so marginalized and demographically reduced that they could hardly be seen as a threat to state sovereignty.' I would disagree with this characterization as applied to, for example, the Spanish in what is now the American Southwest, the Republic of Texas, and the involvement of the United States in the Great Plains up to the final settling of the plains tribes on reservations in the Dakotas, Nebraska, and the Indian Territories (Oklahoma) in the 1870s. Recent discussions, including this one, have stressed the role of the nation-state in ethnogene-

sis but have tended to take it as a given. In fact, it was in particular the process of forming nation-states, itself a form of ethnogenesis, which set going the dynamics which led to the consolidating of ethnic identities which have subsequently become familiar.

Similar patterns of identity change and formation are to be found in literature from other parts of the world that have been influenced by European colonialism. As some of the authors here show, in circumstances of fluid ethnic identities, persons could participate in more than one. 'There is compelling evidence to indicate that the Assiniboin Broken Arm and the Cree Broken Arm of the Wood Mountain area were one and the same person.' These comments bring to mind Edmund Leach's description of Kachin becoming Shan while remaining Kachin in Highland Burma, as well as his comments on the deleterious effects of the nation-state model on non-European populations. Some reference to this or similar discussions of instances outside of the Americas would have been in place. Taken as a whole, the collection presents a reasonably similar set of cases and usefully assumes a place within a broader literature pertaining to the Americas, but might have been situated more firmly in an even wider literature.

R. H. BARNES

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