

BOOK REVIEWS

Single Reviews (reviewer in parentheses)

Managing Ambiguity: How Clientelism, Citizenship, and Power Shape Personhood in Bosnia and Herzegovina by Čarna Brković

New York: Berghahn Books, 2017. 196 pp.

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This ethnography of “getting by” in the Republika Srpska offers a range of perspectives on the contemporary Western Balkans. Brković engages with a wide set of literature on sociality and modes of citizen interaction with institutions and political structures. The book marks a refreshing break with the rigid demarcations of “gatekeeping concepts”—whereby anthropologists of Southeast Europe and, in particular, the former Yugoslav space are expected to contribute to literatures on ethnonationalism, collective violence, the politicization of history and memory, and trauma and reconciliation. In addition to acknowledging this expectation, Brković also refers to negative reactions to her decision to pursue research in Republika Srpska as opposed to the more populous Federation. This is hardly surprising, given professional anthropology’s tendency to align with victims rather than perpetrators of state violence. Republika Srpska owes its existence to the military successes of Bosnian Serb forces, who enjoyed the backing of the Yugoslav National Army and its successor structures throughout the period from 1992 to 1995. Brković acknowledges that the town where she focused her fieldwork, Bijeljina, was the site of Serbian paramilitary massacres of Muslims in 1992.

Reflecting the author’s primary engagement with British social anthropological traditions, *Managing Ambiguity* foregrounds social personhood, showing how “individuals” are in fact networked, connected, obligated, and interpellative selves-in-suspension. The particular field of action that the author explores is the domain of care for others, tracing the ways families needing special medical or other therapeutic care beyond the capacity of local providers mobilize financial support. Successful families appeal to any and all possible resources in this effort, and Brković shows the key role of relationship-building through Ratka, an influence

broker connected both to the ruling political party as well as a charitable organization.

Among the suggestive and thought-provoking metaphors in this richly referenced work is that of navigation, traced back to a 1993 book chapter by Edward Hutchins. Brković takes that metaphor into the world of social relations—where the book also speaks to more recent anthropological approaches to the impacts of capitalism and neoliberalism on self-fashioning, including works by Elizabeth Dunn, Alena Ledeneva, and Ilana Gershon. In Republika Srpska, though, Brković identifies a common yearning for “normality” that includes, as she puts it, a world in which “welfare would be framed as an unambiguous citizen right—rather than as a prize for being a proactive, self-sufficient welfare subject” (p. 114).

This observation is backed by a range of empirical data—which includes testimony from job seekers Petra and Zoran as well as families associated with the religious welfare organization The Sun—indicating that these citizens know how to leverage different kinds of cultural and social capital to achieve personal ends but assert that they would prefer that they did not need to do so. Only those who appear to control the web of connections and favors and accrue power through them (those, like Ratka, for whom Brković uses Janine Wedel’s [2009] term “flexians”) do not view them as corrosive or inimical to a preferred mode of relations between polity and citizen.

Brković’s fieldsite exhibits a similar, overlapping range of attitudes and strategies toward the precarity of shrinking social safety nets and straitened paths of socioeconomic mobility that anthropologists have documented globally. There is some irony that these impacts of economic globalization are felt even in Srpska Republika, whose elected political leaders persistently flirt with the prospect of seceding from Bosnia-Herzegovina. But the familiarity of the dilemmas faced by town residents, and their recourse to instrumentalization of affective ties, accords with Brković’s agenda to correct the stereotype of the Balkan “other,” which took such deep

roots in the Western psyche during the wars of Yugoslav secession. The tension that this engenders with the book's insistence on the cultural specificity of the repertoires that citizens deploy—*veze* and *štele*—is productive and provides an intriguing platform to bring these anthropological debates into dialogue with the wealth of work by other social scientists on networks and relations—grounded in classic ethnographically infused work by Granovetter and Milgram, and more recently by Anne-Marie Slaughter, among others.

Brković engages broadly within the domain of anthropological theorizing but misses opportunities to transgress across disciplinary boundaries. From Brković's careful narrative exposition, Ratka's control of ambiguity—in particular, the categorical fungibility of the assistance she is able to channel to people, which may come from "state" resources but from which she gains status for her generosity—is key to her political, moral, and social prominence. Social network analysis could turn ethnographic analysis into sociograms that would map the interpersonal flows of resources—including information, influence, and care—and show Ratka as a node. An alternative analysis could draw on David Harvey's (2003) work on "primitive accumulation" and argue that Ratka operates at the dynamic frontier between systems of value, tapping into the undermonetized productivity of those who lack her easy access to exchange networks. Brković instead chooses the anthropological literature of Oceania of "keeping-while-giving" to explain Ratka's success in simultaneously providing resources on demand while maintaining or growing her capacity to do so in the future.

This choice is shaped by the hierarchies of knowledge production within academic anthropology. This impetus is perhaps also behind what I experienced as a jarring note

in an otherwise fluent and engaging book—the coining of the term "moveopticon." Brković here briefly discusses Latour's "oligopticon" and Bigo's "banopticon," both recognizable engagements with Foucault's canonical critique of the principles behind on Jeremy Bentham's "panopticon." But her effort to contribute a further twist to a prestige-bearing strand of scholarship, although ingenious, feels forced.

Elsewhere, Brković shows the possibilities inherent in what we might, following Wittgenstein, call "ordinary language anthropology." She uses, for example, a phrase she heard in a seminar on social protection, "Sort it out by yourself," as a section heading. In so doing, she implicitly and holistically acknowledges the collaborative, networked nature of ethnographic knowledge production. In combination with the high theoretical aspirations with which the book concludes, the result is to make this book salutary reading for anthropologists. Bravely, compellingly, Brković asks us: What is the place of the single-authored monograph—which lays authoritative claim to a field site, which holds back information in the name of preserving anonymity, and which turns the particulars of life into grist for theorizing—in a profoundly networked world?

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The Archaeology of Large-Scale Manipulation of Prey: The Economic and Social Dynamics of Mass Hunting edited by Kristen Carlson and Leland C. Bement

Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2018. 296 pp.

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Communal hunting is a critical topic for understanding human evolution and hunter-gatherer lifeways. Large-scale prey manipulation relies on cooperation, communication, and advanced planning, and results in unique patterns of labor, social organization, and economic scheduling. Cooperative hunting and, by extension, the sharing of foodstuffs have long been considered essential to hunter-gatherer societies, and these topics are of interest to anthropologists across specialties.

Understanding the specifics of such hunting tactics in different times and places is the goal of this edited volume. In its eight chapters, a small number of authors rely on archaeological and nonarchaeological data to tackle these questions. Chapter 1 provides an extensive introduction that is thematic rather than descriptive and beautifully outlines the broader issues revolving around large-scale cooperative hunting, including labor, territory, social organization, political hierarchy, ecological ramifications, ethnographic models, and ritual and/or supernatural factors.

Chapters 2 through 7 are individual case studies, and the majority focus on communal bison hunting in the North American plains. Chapter 2 challenges long-held tenets of hunter-gatherer anthropology, specifically that mobile

peoples have unstructured geopolitical attitudes. Instead, this chapter offers evidence that large hunting sites, in addition to other features, structured group territories. Aided by historical accounts, Zedeno explores territory formation among foragers.

Chapters 3 and 4 are the only chapters that focus on other geographic regions and prey species. Chapter 3 provides ethnohistoric descriptions of hunting in Australia. Although communal hunts did not leave much in tangible material culture, historic accounts provide evidence of targeting nonmigratory terrestrial game (e.g., kangaroo and emus). In addition, there is some material evidence of fishing traps and nets. Chapter 4 explores the complex relationship between ethnographic/historic views of caribou hunting in Greenland with a detailed archaeological record. Odgaard presents the apparent disconnect between a modern hunting ethos, which highlights an avoidance of overhunting, with archaeological evidence of mass kills.

Chapters 5 through 7 take different approaches to investigating prehistoric bison hunting on the North American plains. Chapter 5 investigates modern wildebeest migrations to develop models of prehistoric prey populations to ask if models of ancient bison population structure and movement are valid. The use of modern wildebeest data shows great variability in herd structure and concludes that the traditional “catastrophic” mortality models used by archaeologists cannot account for this variation. Chapter 6 concerns bison mobility during the Paleoindian period and uses trace-element analyses of bison teeth to show that Folsom-aged animals were moving moderate, latitudinal distances. This movement of animals likely influenced seasonal hunting strategies and further refines models of Folsom hunter-gatherer mobility and settlement. Similarly, chapter 7 concerns Paleoindian hunting and bison mobility through the lens of isotopic analyses. This case study reveals that hunting strategies remained consistent despite demonstrable changes in herd migration routes and local environment. Studies of prehistoric prey behavior as those in chapters 5 through 7 are commendable as these sustained projects are time consuming and detail oriented but are essential for understanding hu-

man behavior and adaptation to changing prey behavior and resources.

Overall, chapters 2 through 7 are concise, well written, and structured. The final chapter of the book is by far the longest (pp. 161–285), and in it Speth works to “question assumptions” concerning the time depth of communal bison hunting, Paleoindian projectile points, and why people cooperate to hunt big game. The chapter centers on Paleoindian lifeways, specifically embedded procurement and what the large portion of high-quality lithic raw materials in Paleoindian assemblages may mean, ideas originally developed in Speth et al. (2013).

There are larger issues that this book just touches on. For example, the location of cooperative hunting sites goes beyond large numbers of animals in predictable places; the best spots on the landscape can also accommodate large domestic spaces for processing near firewood and fresh water, and such places were likely the locus of early territoriality (chapter 2). Ethnographic/ethnohistoric data indicate that communal hunts were completed by large and diverse social groups, including men, woman, and children; how can these different actors be distinguished and identified archaeologically (chapter 1)? Reconstructions of prehistoric animal migrations and herd structure ask how useful modern observations are (chapter 5), demonstrating that the relationship between biology/paleontology is similar to that of ethnography/archaeology, with issues of uniformitarianism and analogy. Finally, this volume takes steps to change our idea of communal hunting from herd following to strategic, sophisticated, and planned interceptions during migrations (chapter 6). This should not be surprising as our early human ancestors also practiced intercept hunting, and the deep time depth of communal mass-hunting techniques is a testament to their success. As always, foragers prove to be more complicated than we tend to assume.

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Transforming Therapy: Mental Health Practice and Cultural Change in Mexico by Whitney Duncan

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A Mixe family takes refuge from the rain. A cave collapses, and tragedy follows. In the aftermath, a family falls ill.

“My mind wasn’t working,” one of them explains, as another starts talking to herself and having trouble sleeping. Eventually, these and other members of the family seek treatment in Cruz del Sur, Oaxaca’s only psychiatric hospital, where they meet the ethnographer, Whitney Duncan. With this gripping vignette, Duncan opens *Transforming Therapy: Mental Health Practice and Cultural Change in Mexico*, an

extraordinary ethnography of mental health care. In this book, Duncan introduces her readers to the uncertain terrain of contemporary mental health care in Mexico and brings to life the experience of *psy-globalization*—the transnational spread of psychological and psychiatric ways of knowing—in a variety of places, from a busy, big-pharma-sponsored psychiatry conference in Oaxaca City to the hallways of Cruz del Sur and to the quiet villages occupied by those left behind by transnational migration in the Mixteca region. Duncan's holistic approach does justice to a variety of experiences and approaches to mental health care, all while being carefully cognizant of the broader sociopolitical context of life in twenty-first-century Mexico.

Among the greatest strengths of *Transforming Therapy* are its theoretical contributions to anthropological understanding of the field of global mental health. Specifically, the notion of *psy-sociality* explains the ways people on the ground come to understand and adopt the logics of psy. Initially characterized to the author by mental health professionals as a “closed” society unwilling to accept the psy-worldview, Duncan finds that rather than resisting psy-globalization, her interlocutors embrace it alongside other forms of traditional and allopathic care.

The title, *Transforming Therapy*, carries several meanings. First, it speaks to the way therapy is transforming Mexico. As neoliberalization, migration, and economic reform continue to impact Mexicans of all walks of life, psy-globalization ensures the emergence and prevalence of mental-health-care models prevalent in the Global North. Psychologists advertise on every corner, self-help groups and seminars abound, and psychiatric care is, at least on paper, available to all who need it. At first glance, one might think that Mexicans in Oaxaca are readily embracing the values and worldviews of psy characteristic of the Global North. However, psy-globalization is not a linear process by which the local is subsumed to the global. Second, the title alludes to the way that therapy transforms subjects on the ground and their relationships to themselves and those around them. Finally, *Transforming Therapy* speaks to the way therapy itself is transformed by interlocutors on the ground, who interpret their psy experiences in their own ways. As much as Oaxacan mental health professionals seek to diffuse psy-imaginaries through *psicoeducación*, patients readily accept treatment but continue to see themselves and their illnesses within the

context of their immediate social worlds. The challenge to successful treatment, Duncan finds, is in the structural obstacles that make mental health care inaccessible to many who desire it.

Without a doubt, one of Duncan's most important contributions is her discussion of the mental-health effects of transnational migration on communities left behind. While limited to a single chapter in the volume, Duncan's articulation of the mental suffering of families separated by transnational migration presents an important and original argument in the context of the field of global mental health. Beyond idioms of distress and health care access, Duncan shows, it is neoliberalism itself—this time in the guise of economic migration motivated by the economic suffering brought by NAFTA—that generates mental anguish. Rather than rejecting mental health, Duncan's interlocutors yearn for it but are prevented from accessing it by Mexico's own structural limitations.

Transforming Therapy is rigorously researched and quite readable. Duncan's narrative style is pleasant and accessible. Throughout the book, her persona shines through in a way that makes the ethnographer present without centering herself in the story. Duncan makes herself uniquely vulnerable as she shares her own stories of unexpected turns and loss along the way. In this sense, Duncan's approach to self-reflexivity presents a valuable methodological contribution, both in conducting and writing up ethnographic fieldwork.

It is difficult to find fault in this book. It accomplishes exactly what it sets out to do. However, some lingering questions do remain: I am left wanting to know more about the communities left behind in the wake of transnational migration, particularly the parents and children of migrants in the United States whose anguish is palpable in the book. I wonder how racial and class dynamics may have played out in the unusually diverse La Paz women's support group or what a live-in Neuróticos Anónimos (Neurotics Anonymous) community might look like. I find myself caring deeply about Amapola's struggle with HIV. But this yearning for more is a sign of the book's success rather than a weakness.

This book is an excellent addition to any upper-level undergraduate or graduate anthropology course, particularly those focused on medical or psychological anthropology, Latin America, or mental health.

Power Struggles: Dignity, Value, and the Renewable Energy Frontier in Spain by Jaume Franquesa

Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018. 264 pp.

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With climate change emergencies being declared all around us, the need to decarbonize energy systems is increasingly urgent. Moving from fossil fuels to renewable energy is imperative, and one might expect that all right-thinking people would be in favor of a transition to a decarbonized world. Yet many people around the world are antagonistic to renewable technologies, particularly wind power. Why would this be, when wind turbines seem to offer the most promising clean replacement for coal, oil, and gas-fired power stations? Windmills are one of the oldest human technologies, yet modern electrical wind turbines seem to provoke ire in communities around the world. Although one reason for this may be the propagation by oil industry actors of rumors and “fake news” about the health effects of wind turbines, this doesn’t explain everything.

Power Struggles, Jaume Franquesa’s detailed historiography of energy generation in southern Catalonia, offers valuable insight into why people might protest against wind turbines. By taking a “deep dive” into the history of development in this region, from the rise of peasant resistance in the late nineteenth century through the civil war and nuclear power installations, Franquesa shows how wind energy did not appear here as the means for a transition to a renewable energy system but as the latest incarnation of political corruption and territorial exploitation amid a declining agricultural economy. The story of energy developments here fulfills many of the worst tropes of colonial development, from the declaration of *terra nullius* (or the definition of land and people as “waste,” in Franquesa’s terms) to the selling of local enterprises to global conglomerates. Franquesa draws a historical trajectory from the peasant rebellions and the organization of labor through the civil war and the so-called economic miracles of the post-Franco and early EU period. He traces the transition from peasant economy and landed property ownership to the municipal cooperatives of the 1970s, showing how a discourse of fighting for peasant dignity has echoed through the generations in relation to repeated rounds of industrial development and expropriation of farmland across the region. Franquesa details successive development periods, focusing on agriculture, water, nuclear power, and then wind power. Resistance to nuclear

power in the 1970s is described here as anti-authoritarian and antifascist, illustrating how long energy has been politicized in southern Catalonia. The siting of nuclear power plants is always controversial, because power is mainly required in urban centers, but it is safest to build the plant in areas of low density. Hence a pattern of expropriating agricultural land begins, and the logic of development drives it toward the cheapest land. Franquesa shows how the land of southern Catalonia, while of high value to its farmers, could be construed as having little economic value from the perspective of the state and industrial developers, in a manner reminiscent of the aeolian politics of Tehuantepec (see Cymene Howe, for example). A more explicit comparison would indeed have been welcome here. In southern Catalonia, these mechanisms enabled the identification of sites for energy development that brought a typically ambivalent partial combination of welcome work and unwelcome development.

The pattern was therefore set before wind energy came along. Which areas typically have the most wind? Mountains areas that are often difficult to farm and hence have the lowest economic return. Many of Franquesa’s informants assure him that they are not against wind energy in principle but are against the exploitation of their lands by international conglomerates for the benefit of far-away shareholders or urban energy users. In Franquesa’s telling, the persistent favoring of an oligopoly of energy interests slid into plain corruption, reinforcing the sense of defiance of the people with whom he worked, and fueling their resistance. Despite their attempts to contain wind energy by contracting with a local development company, concessions were ultimately sold first to Portuguese energy corporations and then to a Chinese energy company, leaving locals again feeling they had been sold out for the benefit of others. The problem, in other words, was not wind turbines themselves but the colonial logic of capitalist development that brought the exploitative politics of the industrial oligopoly’s extractive mentality.

Franquesa is strong on the Marxist analysis of energy interests and masters the intricate political history of the region but is on less firm ground in relation to energy technologies or the functioning of an electrical grid. However, the book is full of interesting remarks and observations. As an account of the politics of energy development and as a study of the efforts of people to obtain dignity in the face of development, it tells an important story. As an explanation of why wind energy might meet resistance, it offers a useful comparison to the work of other ethnographers of wind energy.

Water Histories and Spatial Archaeology: Ancient Yemen and the American West by Michael J. Harrower

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I recommend Michael Harrower's book to scholars of Yemen's archaeology, history, and geography. It makes an original theoretical contribution to the emerging discipline of archaeohydrology. Although the focus of Harrower's research has been Yemen, this focus is discussed in the book (for the period 3500 BC–AD 600) alongside a comparison with water management in the American West (2000 BC–AD 1950). Yemen is uniquely contextualized with the American West example. Harrower explains and justifies this comparison, emphasizing similarities between irrigation methods found in both areas, such as check dams and terraces (p. 69), despite the different histories of the two regions (p. 3).

There is a large and unavoidable body of existing literature that Harrower reviews, including Wittfogel's 1957 publication, which proposes that large-scale irrigation required administration to maintain it and led to the development of "despotic" states. Although Wittfogel used little evidence to support his hypothesis, it has been frequently revisited. Subsequent research has debated the theory, with some scholars suggesting that water management was not a prerequisite for states (e.g., Lees 1994). Harrower addresses Wittfogel with the benefit of empirical evidence deriving from his extensive archaeological research in Yemen.

This is a key book for the archaeology of Yemen, a region that is less-extensively studied than Mesopotamia and is at risk of damage and destruction (e.g., see Khalidi 2017). Harrower describes a variety of irrigation techniques used over time in Yemen, including wells, cisterns, runoff capture, damming, and canals (e.g., p. 53), and compares early diversion of water in both ancient Yemen and the prehistoric American West (p. 55). Later larger-scale state systems, which created verdant oases appearing in the second millennium BC, are described in the context of power and political rhetoric (e.g., pp. 150–51). Harrower then discusses the evidence for the shift in agricultural production to the highland areas of Yemen, which occurred during the first millennium AD, when smaller-scale methods using rain-fed spring water and capture by terraces were favored, methods that were less dependent on the state (p. 147).

This book discusses water history in the context of geospatial evidence, which elucidates the complexity and

scale of ancient irrigation from a perspective that is difficult to achieve through archaeological survey and excavation alone. The challenges and benefits of doing so are acknowledged: "Attempts to reconcile and integrate views and practices of spatial analysis with those of interpretive landscape archaeology have proven challenging . . . Reflexive scepticism that acknowledges the malleabilities of spatial analyses helpfully bridges divides between scientific and humanistic archaeologies" (p. 36).

Harrower mapped the location of water-management features and used elevation models to model the hydrological environment in which traces of past water management are situated. A low-resolution DEM (digital elevation model) is represented by SRTM (shuttle radar topography mission). Photogrammetry allowed 3-D reconstruction of a higher resolution DEM from ASTER (advanced spaceborne thermal emission and reflection radiometer) satellite imagery, orthorectified accurately using ground-control points collected during survey (p. 106).

This analysis proved to be particularly revealing of the decisions behind the planning of ancient water-management systems; for example, irrigation features on the Wadi Sana were located in places with low-moderate runoff, which were more manageable than areas prone to dangerous flash floods (p. 106). When flow-accumulation models were calculated for watersheds where key archaeological sites were located, it was found that these sites tended to be located on less-steep slopes with abundant but controllable flows and at the outlets of watersheds draining inward with higher elevations, which meant cooler temperatures and lower evapotranspiration (pp. 134–35).

Harrower emphasizes the significance of locally devised irrigation in ancient Yemen in state formation (p. 158). However, he addresses the debate around water and power by highlighting ideological manipulation around scarcity and surplus, which could be used by past states to dominate agricultural production (p. 77). Most importantly, Harrower proposes that "in counterpoint to Wittfogel's hydraulic hypothesis, it was not, I argue, an unavoidable need for centrally managed large-scale irrigation that contributed to the rise of complex societies in arid regions, but rather spatial heterogeneity of water that politics exploited to rationalize highly concentrated agricultural production in ways that perpetuated state sovereignty" (pp. 53–54).

This concept of spatial heterogeneity as a rationalization used by states for ideological, political, and physical control of water is a key contribution of this book. Harrower

asserts that the large-scale irrigation systems of Yemen were not necessary for food production but were an element of state rhetoric around water (p. 158), using ideology to take advantage of fears of scarcity (p. 11), and cites inscriptions describing construction of irrigation features that invoke gods (p. 41).

This book is foremost a theoretical resource using key archaeological, historical, and spatial evidence. It serves as an effective theoretical contextualization for Harrower's extensive list of works using remote-sensing evidence where the methodological details and results for specific case studies in Yemen can be found (e.g., Harrower 2010). This book addresses the long-term environmental as well as economic history of the Yemen case study and contextualizes it within

the wider discipline. Archaeohydrology as a discipline benefits from the approach taken in this book.

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The Battle for Fortune: State-Led Development, Personhood, and Power among Tibetans in China by Charlene Makley

Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018. 324 pp.

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Charlene Makley's *The Battle for Fortune*, the latest contribution to contemporary Tibetan studies, is a laudable accomplishment of her long years of ethnographic work with Tibetan communities in Qinghai Province. It documents the impacts of state-sanctioned development and the agentive responses from Tibetan communities in the Rebgong area of Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. The ethnographic threads that weave the book together involve both human and nonhuman participants. The latter refers to mountain deities and the mountainous environment in which both humans and deities coexist. The five chapters together sketch a figure of the Chinese state as a political system of "authoritarian capitalism" and "a totalitarian threat" (pp. 17, 19), and discerns cultural Tibet as a site of "counterdevelopment" (pp. 17, 93, 153), a form of local Tibetans' economic and political endeavors to retain their ancestral land and economic interests. As the book includes nonhuman constituencies as its ethnographic interlocutors, "Tibetans" also refers to invisible beings, such as mountain deities. They are what Makley calls "deity activists" (pp. 91–101) and an integral part of Tibetan counterdevelopment embodied in human deity mediums (*lha pa*).

In the multidimensional encounters between state development projects and local counterdevelopment, the focal

point of the battle of fortune (Tib. *g'yang*, essence of vitality and productivity, p. 51) is the land. Land, on the state's development agenda, is the fundamental material resource directed toward urbanization and economic modernization. However, for local Tibetans, the land signifies their ancestral history, the embodiment of their protective deities, and the earth's fertility that ensures the sustenance and nourishment required for their biocultural continuity. Land is therefore the physical but animated container of both fortune (pp. 51, 79, 191) and cultural sovereignty, and is to be fought for. Makley unfolds the complexity of this battle as a "territorialized contest" (p. 16) in her ethnographic narratives and profuse theoretical interpretations.

One of the book's praiseworthy aspects of anthropological significance is Makley's dialogic ethnography conceived with Bakhtin's notion of dialogue, which is always saturated with manifold worldviews, perspectives, and subjectivities. This dialogic ethnography is centered on "personhood as an unfolding politics of presence" (p. 38). For instance, Dorje and Tsering, two of her ethnographic interlocutors, are both Tibetans from the same village; however, their personhoods are socially and politically complex. Dorje is not merely a human individual but is also a spirit-medium for Shachong, the local protective deity and deity activist. In Goffman's linguistic terms, Makley deems the human medium the "animator" (p. 75) who utters the words of the deity. When possessed by Shachong, Dorje speaks with the voice of the deity rather than with his own. He is thus both an animator and an embodiment of the invisible deity. Tsering is also Tibetan.

Unlike Dorje, however, he represents the interests of the state more than those of his fellow villagers. In spite of this, he is credited with saving the villagers from direct physical confrontation with Chinese riot police (pp. 78–90). Thanks to Makley's dialogic approach, the complex personhoods of Dorje and Tsering unfold Tibetans' intrasocial communications and public expressions of counterdevelopment.

Appreciating the strengths of Makley's ethnographic approach, this reviewer would suggest that the exposition and the use of "frontier zone" (pp. 41–46) are not nuanced enough given the fact that frontier is a conceptually rich phrase in modern area studies. While the introduction presents a diverse ethno-demographic look at Qinghai Province, the textual description of the frontier zone largely implies a Sino-Tibetan, bilateral frontier rather than a multiethnic frontier, which makes sense in terms of the Chinese state's development programs implemented in specific Tibetan villages or townships. However, in an ethno-geographic sense, Rebong and its adjacent areas are a type of multiethnic contact zone where hybrid modes of subsistence and cultural practice are commonplace. Frontier in this sense is a meeting ground of multiple "edges," each of which comes with its transformative force or adaptive resilience for biocultural continuity. Historically, Rebong was a part of the region where four larger civilizational-imperial systems of Mongolian, Tibetan, Chinese, and Islamic origins once edged with each other and transformed

the local cultural landscapes through imperial conquests, trade, biocultural hybridizations, and religious amalgamations. In this case, one linguistic system could harbor several cultural and religious practices of different ethnic origins. The adoption of Tibetan language by Mongolians and Tuzu (Mongour 7) in Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture is one of the historical consequences of these imperial or civilizational "edging" processes in this frontier zone. The currently Tibetan-language-based Lural festival is a hybrid religious practice celebrated together by both Tibetan and Tuzu. The latter's Indigenous contribution is often under-rated as it is being expressed through Tibetan language.

Overall, the book is a well-written dialogic ethnography—a solid addition to scholarship on the region as well as testament to consequences of modernization in a Tibetan region. For a comparative perspective, it can be read in conjunction with its peer publications, such as Andrew Fischer's *The Disempowered Development of Tibet in China* (2014) and Emily Yeh's *Taming Tibet: Landscape Transformation and the Gift of Chinese Development* (2013).

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Songs for Dead Parents: Corpse, Text, and World in Southwest China by Erik Mueggler

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This dense yet elegantly and poetically rendered ethnography is based on multiple fieldwork visits conducted by the anthropologist Erik Mueggler over a period of two decades (from 1993 to 2012) among the mountain villagers of the Lòlop'ò people in north-central Yunnan Province, southwest China. The Lòlop'ò are speakers of a sub-branch of Tibeto-Burman languages and have been grouped within the larger Yi minority nationality category in the People's Republic of China. Unlike some of their neighboring compatriot groups, the Lòlop'ò do not have a writing system for their language (though they have taken up Chinese in some domains of life, especially in the form of tombstone inscriptions); instead, they have an elaborate tradition of laments, speeches, and

chants for all kinds of ritual occasions, especially at funerals and death commemorations. The contents of these vocalized expressions, together with the accompanying ritual acts, form the core of Mueggler's analyses and meditations on death and its relationship to the living. This book is very much a sequel to Mueggler's first ethnography on the same community (*The Age of Wild Ghosts: Memory, Violence, and Place in Southwest China* [2001]). Though one can read the two monographs independent of each other, the combined reading of both will give the reader intimate insights, through the eyes of the ethnographer, into a community facing the dire challenges of state intrusion, Han Chinese influx, political suppression during the Maoist era, resettlement down valley, outmigration (especially of young people), cultural-heritage fetishization for tourists, and, most worryingly, sociocultural anomie caused by widespread "bad deaths" and resulting wild ghosts. Hence the formation of what might be called a "cult of the dead" and increased need for

elaborate ritual actions, including the laments and chants, around the corpses of deceased persons (ideal-typically parents). Mueggler argues that through these ritual actions the dead are reconstituted material-semiotically and these corpses in turn material-semiotically constitute the living as kith and kin, ideal-typically as well as ideologically bound by a complex web of bilateral cross-cousin marriages.

Alarmed and troubled by the fact that he might be the only person in the world owning a sound recording of two of the most important long chants (each taking several hours of rapid chanting to complete) of the Lòlop'ò due to the death of the last known ritualists who were able to perform them (one of whom was the source of this very recording), Mueggler spent hundreds of hours transcribing and translating (eventually into English) the chants (with the enthusiastic help of a few elderly local exegetes). From Mueggler's first book we learned that the Lòlop'ò ritualists are proud that their chants, unlike those of the Han Chinese, are not written down and that the transmission of the repertoire of chants (some extremely long) depends on mouths and ears rather than paper and brush/pen. The irony is that for the sake of saving these chants for posterity and scholarly analysis, Mueggler had to transcribe the chants, present them (only select segments) in written form in his ethnographies, render them pronounceable in sound to nonnative readers—the modified International Phonetic Alphabet adopted supposedly renders native words phonologically faithfully but achieves, probably intentionally, a sort of orthographic fetishism—as well as intelligible in meaning (all quoted passages are given in English translation in parallel).

Readers familiar with his second book, *The Paper Road: Archive and Experience in the Botanical Exploration of West China and Tibet* (2011), would be tempted to liken Mueggler's

self-declared obsession with the chants and laments of the Lòlop'ò with colonial botanical collector Joseph Rock's obsession with Dongba ritual writing of the Naxi people (another southwestern ethnic minority group). Indeed, many parallel themes appear in the two works: the construction of texts, listing (e.g., of place names or flora and fauna), archiving, materiality, death rituals, and the relationship between fieldworker and natives. Just as he questioned the motivations behind Rock's project of collecting and translating as many Dongba ritual texts as he could, Mueggler acknowledges that his own project of collecting and rendering into English Lòlop'ò ritual chants departs considerably from "the point" of these ritual chants: both Dongba ritual texts and Lòlop'ò ritual chants are recited by ritual specialists on ritual occasions and are targeted at spirits (especially the souls of the dead) rather than humans. Most participants at these rituals are not expected to listen in or to understand the contents of these recitations; the few elderly nonritualist villagers who are familiar with some of the contents of these chants are a true rarity. Additionally, one may query or even object to Mueggler's choice of calling ritualists "shamans" (why not "priests"?), and segments of their chants "songs." What is gained (or "smuggled in") and what is lost by such rhetorical choices? This book evokes and provokes in equal measure.

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Dreams Made Small: The Education of Papuan Highlanders in Indonesia by Jenny Munro

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Jenny Munro, in *Dreams Made Small: The Education of Papuan Highlanders in Indonesia*, has provided an excellent analysis of the structural and cultural constraints experienced by Dani higher degree candidates at university in North Sulawesi. In doing so, she also provides a nuanced understanding of Melanesian/Indonesian relationships in two very different field sites.

The everyday experience of the relations between hierarchically organized Indonesians and the egalitarian Melanesians is a key element of this book. As the analysis develops, two key motifs wend their way through the book: stigma and diminishment. Based on her doctoral fieldwork among Highland Dani people in Wanema (Papua) and a broader group of Melanesians at the University in North Sulawesi, Munro's ethnographic sensitivity is discriminating and her conclusions incisive.

After an examination of the Indonesian state and taking account of the government's public stance with respect to education, Munro explores the positive valence given

to education and Dani understandings of what gaining an education can achieve for the community as well as the individual. The author then moves us into the life-world of Dani in Wanema, where disempowerment due to political rearrangements (brought about by colonizing processes and the Second World War) are a strong influence in Dani's own notions of diminishment and even their physical shrinking. For Dani, education is the key to re-establishing and even reconstituting themselves.

Having supplied the context for Dani in Wanema, Munro moves the narrative to North Sulawesi, where she explores the social world entered by the Melanesian graduate students along with their Indonesian counterparts. It is a highly differentiated and racialized world where Munro herself as a white female was expected to fit into the more modern sophisticated lifestyle of the Indonesian population rather than with the Melanesian student population. It is in her discussion of her experience in the initial stages of her fieldwork and the subsequent acceptance of her as belonging with the Dani group in the dorm that the pervasiveness of the stigma attached to the Highlanders begins to emerge.

This is also the point at which she notes that the Dani students, due to their poverty in this new situation, are structurally repositioned. They are forced to engage in activities, such as gardening and washing their clothes in streams, which may not have been their lot in Wanema yet are cited as aspects of the backwardness that is attributed to them. But this social repositioning is not merely a construct of the world within the halls of learning. In chapter 3, the crucial elements of stigma are developed as we are shown how they apply in the political context of Indonesia and how they affect the student population.

It is here that Munro reaches the crux of the matter. The highly problematic relationship between the colonial power and the Indigenous population of Papua is laid bare. It is a

relationship that is literally conceived of as being about skin. Stigma, in Goffman's (1963) sense of being "an attribute that is deeply discrediting," is then the lens through which Munro explores this relationship—and the ramifications for the Dani students are countless.

Stereotyping is the close correlate of stigma, and the students find themselves in sets of relationships that are defined by group stereotypes. Backwardness in learning ability is one of the perceptions the Indonesian tutors have of the Dani students; however, it is not the most damaging result of stigma. Students are presumed to be members of, or at least sympathetic to, the Free Papua Movement. The description of the humiliation of the student leader who objected to a raid on the dorm in the early morning and his subsequent loss of authority is one of the most poignant in the book (p. 88).

It is impossible here to dwell on all the aspects of Highland Dani life in both of the ethnographic settings. It is, however, vital to note that the gender relations and the importance of Christianity are carefully woven into the ethnographic settings, as are the obligations and rights that underwrite kinship societies.

One of the pleasing things about this ethnography is that while we are aware of the author's presence, there is no sense in which she is the star. Her writing style has a clarity that makes confronting the analysis inescapable. This book is a must read for those of us with an interest in Melanesian/Indonesian anthropology and political life. It should also be a starting point for those educators seeking to improve outcomes for people on the margins. Ultimately, as an ethnography, it is a gem.

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Selling Hope and College: Merit, Markets, and Recruitment in an Unranked School by Alex Posecznick

Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017. 213 pp.

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Alex Posecznick's insightful *Selling Hope and College* would be an important read for most academics at any time of the year, but I found it especially intriguing in the midst of my department's admissions season. Though his ethnography centers on college admissions counselors in a "mediocre" private university, it considers tensions with which various employees in an array of institutions of higher education now grapple,

such as: How may adherence to meritocratic expectations and practices affect commitments to equity and access? How may the need to maintain student enrollment numbers be incompatible with the industry of ranking, measuring, and funding colleges?

On the one hand, the urban Northeastern US institution that Posecznick considers, "Ravenwood College," shows a numbers-focused bent seen throughout higher education. In this case, the quest for more tuition dollars drove recent efforts for inclusion, bringing additional minoritized and nontraditional students but often without appropriate financial support (p. 150). This dilemma was further

compounded by how, increasingly, financial aid officers at the institution professed a version of what Posiecznick terms the Jeffersonian ideology of merit: all should have an opportunity for schooling even as colleges aim to accept the “best” students and then to further sort them in grading practices (p. 22). As colleges and universities increasingly face budget shortfalls, this book shows a remarkably haphazard and detrimental way that such orientations can fuse and play out.

On the other hand, Ravenwood College is set apart from other universities as “neither particularly selective nor particularly affordable” (p. 5). Though one might argue that few universities today are inexpensive, admissions counselors at Ravenwood had the difficult task of convincing prospective students that the school was worth significantly more tuition dollars than neighboring public universities, even without the markers of prestige that such costs tend to yield. Posiecznick documents in detail what unselective and unaffordable look like for admissions officers and other administrators, many who are desperate—though not to the degree of “a salesman,” as one admissions officer put it (p. 123)—to have applicants move from inquiry status to student. Their role change is necessary for the institution’s solvency and, not insignificantly, the admissions counselors’ jobs. Counselors’ employment was stressful, such as advising distraught applicants that had failed their second attempt at the admissions exam, even when the counselor had coaxed them to try again. This book shows how the anxious, overworked admissions employees experienced ongoing uncertainty as to whether the college would continue to operate. For those employees at Ravenwood who subscribed to meritocratic ideals and professed concern with being an “un-ranked” institution, admissions dilemmas were all the more acute.

Though the book focuses on personnel, we see traces of how students, too, mainly “working, urban professionals of color” (p. 43), are caught up in the college’s precarity. For example, prospective students could apply for admission and financial aid, take and pass the entrance exam, and register for classes all in the same day (p. 166). However, they might not find out about financial aid until three weeks

into the semester. At that point, the student would only be reimbursed 25 percent of the course’s tuition if they were to withdraw. Such difficulties led admissions officers to struggle with the ethics of their jobs and, ultimately, the functions of the institution.

I appreciated the details that shed light on the application, admission, and financial aid process with which faculty should be more familiar. For example, chapter 5 shows how admissions staff could themselves award thousands of dollars in scholarships, yet many had no idea of this capability even after months on the job. Each had different criteria and some were more forthcoming with aid than others, meaning that student financial situations depended on with whom they met. This contrasted with some other universities that outsourced their financial aid to companies that claimed to calculate award packages to the dollar that would lure admitted students to enroll (p. 163).

This look at the daily apprehension and disorganization in university admissions left me with a couple of questions about the overall theme of the book. For example, I appreciated the window into college “branding” efforts to find students, though I was also curious, given the employees’ contrastive opinions, high turnover rates, and general decentralization: How cohesive must promotional material be to constitute “branding”? Like most of the activities in the book, it seemed like many of the employees were so busy and distant from colleagues (such as when each counselor was tasked with individually running twenty recruitment events) that enacting “branding” efforts might be difficult. Foregrounding a “target” population seemed further complicated by the fact that the college needed every student in order to operate. Indeed, I wondered if “branding” and “selling hope” might be described also as something like “desperation,” or as one counselor put it, “preaching,” which carries other epistemological assumptions (p. 150). To conclude, this book’s easy-to-read yet complex analysis should be important for undergraduate and graduate students and faculty interested in the anthropology of education, neoliberalism, North America, and, of course, higher education recruitment and retention.

Robo Sapiens Japanicus: Robots, Gender, Family, and the Japanese Nation by Jennifer Robertson

Oakland: University of California Press, 2018. 260 pp.

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Sometimes my heart just goes out to humanity: so imaginative, so inventive, so aware of being all alone in this

ever-expanding universe. We continue to imagine beings much like, and often much better than, ourselves. Now we want to make them. How about a companion, a helpmeet, a creature so much like ourselves in every way that it can pass the Turing test without giving us the heebie-jeebies? Robertson is quite clear on this point: Japanese efforts now underway to develop humanoid robots far exceed those of

everyone else, but human-seeming robots are still very far off and may not be an achievable goal. She is exceedingly clear on two further points: (1) this effort arises out of some of the most conservative elements in Japanese culture and history; and (2) such robots, if they ever are achieved, will be as much like their taken-for-granted apprehension of Japanese women and men as their engineers can design them. The current administration wants them to live—yes, that’s right, live—with Japanese families whose American equivalents are the Cleavers and the Nelsons. But there are no fully functional personal robots yet, not even remotely. They remain science fiction.

For a book, then, about something that does not yet and may never exist, *Robo Sapiens Japonicus* is a remarkable accomplishment. If you read this book, you will know exactly at what Japan’s robot creators are aiming. The book comprises seven chapters, starting us off with early imaginings, Robertson’s own as a child of Japanese TV robot cartoons and, since 2006, as a robotics researcher, and robot general history. The second chapter introduces us to Japan’s ambitious National Robot Strategy, unveiled on January 23, 2015, the initiative of Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, who declared 2015 to be “year one of moving towards a ‘robot society.’” The strategy outlined aims to quadruple the current domestic robot market from ¥600 billion to ¥2.4 trillion in 2020. Japanese authorities intend to expand the use of robots in such spheres as services, construction, disaster resilience, farming, and elderly care.

Chapter 3 examines the fictitious ethnography of the life of these Japanese Cleavers and their robot as imagined by the extremely conservative Abe administration. The family’s name is Inobe, from the Japanization of the English word “innovation,” and that is the name given to their robot factotum as well, Inobē-kun, or “little Inobe.” Robertson’s documentary research here is as meticulous as in her earlier work, and while chapter 6 examines the possibility of a reaction of dismayed shock at the uncanny nature of possible humanoid robots, here what is authentically uncanny is the resemblance between current propaganda for robotics and the earlier propaganda generated for the Greater East Asian

Co-Prosperity Sphere, Japan’s empire that ended in 1945. Robertson tells us in no uncertain terms, “Abe’s robot revolution is premised on a future imagined as an improved and improvised version of the past” (p. 79).

Chapter 4 digs into the evidently inevitable requirement that robots be masculine or feminine, nothing in between and nothing other than. Why not an R2-D2 with arms? Or, for that matter, why not the ultimately Japanese robot from the twenty-second century, the earless blue cat Doraemon? But Japanese gender is a well-known performance, as we see in the mainstream theatrical productions of all-male Kabuki casts and the all-female casts of Takarazuka, which Robertson has previously documented so thoroughly. She finds it wryly amusing that the only occupation in Japan today that could never be overtaken by gynoids is “elevator girl,” whose rigidly regimented bowing and expression can be best described as “robotic.” “Gynoids and feminine humanoids are being developed and experimented with as teachers, nurses, translators and newscasters, and yet human females are said to make the best elevator girls, showcased as the embodiment of ‘Japanese hospitality’” (p. 102).

I struggled with chapter 5, which explores the connection between human rights and possible robot rights within the context of Japan’s understanding of the place of individual rights within the nation and the *ie*, the form families take in Japan, which emphasizes continuity through the generations. I say “struggled” because, while the Japanese promoters of robots are intent on introducing them as members of Japanese families even with appropriate bureaucratic documentation that will allow them to die registered deaths (chapter 7), doubtless American readers will only think putting worn-out Inobē-kun’s name on a memorial tablet is just one more example of Japan’s weird orientation to weird technology. But I personally cannot conceive robots as other than learning machines for “which,” never “whom,” it is ontologically impossible to have agency, an intrinsic and inalienable property of humanity. Maybe your imagination is more expansive or more inclusive than mine. But you cannot yet have this discussion with a Japanese robot. Robertson has tried.

Palma Africana by Michael Taussig

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. 224 pp.

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Palma Africana is a meditation on capitalism and ethnographic writing inspired by one of the world’s most ubiquitous cash crops: oil palm. Drawing from fieldwork in rural Colombia, Michael Taussig situates the expansion of oil palm within

long-standing histories of destruction, terror, and dispossession involving wealthy cattlemen, drug men, guerillas, paramilitaries, and now “(X)paramilitaries.” Cows, cocaine, and cash crops entangle with swamps, migrant camps, and ancient Indian fields in the overlapping spatial histories of Colombia’s agribusiness zone. Uncanny assemblages of places, people, and species abound in these amphibious spaces—female inseminators and oil-palm seeds, hippies and missionaries, and heaving rivers and braying donkeys. In

particular, Taussig examines the mimetic qualities of human paramilitaries and plant monocrops—the one waging “war against the peasant” and the other “war against nature” (p. 5). Both entities are characterized by a seemingly limitless capacity for transformation, proliferation, and mimesis. Both are endorsed, promoted, and engineered in the image of the state (p. 176). Together, plants and paramilitaries point to the spectral quality of evil, or what Taussig calls the “negative sublime” (p. 140).

Palma Africana is also a book about the absurdity inherent in humans’ assumed mastery of nature. The oil-palm variety cultivated in Colombia goes by the name of “Hope of America,” yet the plant is incapable of reproducing without help from humans. Swamps are far from ideal ecologies for cattle rearing or oil-palm cultivation, yet both industries have dictated the violent dismemberment of places and peoples in Colombia. At the same time, the book examines how humans and other-than-humans resist the hegemonic visions of capitalist “anti-natures” (p. 176)—peasants involved in land-reclaiming movements, slum rappers and graffiti artists who plant seeds to connect with victims of paramilitary violence, and rivers and swamps that refuse to be controlled by dikes and drainage.

The violence of agribusiness and its colonial-capitalist precedents, Taussig notes, is all too often normalized into indifference—even as we, too, partake in a global “becoming palm” through the food and fuel we consume daily (p. 117). Instead, Taussig provocatively harnesses violence and terror as *generative* forces. Seeing dismembered or destroyed nature destabilizes our relationship to the world. Disfigurement concomitantly destroys that which it animates (p. 105). Writing serpentine texts like *Palma Africana* that shock, terrorize, and confound the reader, and that in doing so link “the writing with what the writing is about” (p. 192), may pave the way for different economies, landscapes, and relations.

Described by Taussig as “animistic writing” or “ethnographic (sur)realism” (p. 190), *Palma Africana* is populated with diverse human and other-than-human actors—from lawyers, shamans, and peasants to donkeys, jaguars, and

caimans. Weaving ethnographic description with existential philosophy, magical realism, and literature, Taussig’s amorphous narrative (composed entirely of paragraphs and no chapters) intentionally jolts the reader from the empirical to the reflexive, the violent to the mundane, and the human to the other than human. In these vertiginous shifts, distinctions between the textual medium and its objects of analysis fall apart as the object infiltrates and enlivens the writing about it (p. 189). “Thought-images,” in the form of anecdotes, introspective musings, hand-drawn pictures, and uncaptioned photographs, open the reader to the sounds and atmospheres of monocrop plantations, desolate oil-palm towns, and gnarled tree trunks. More than just objects of ethnographic inquiry, animals (and, to a lesser extent plants) in the book *are* the words that describe them. Restless, elusive, and disorderly, they escape the pages and carry away the reader in ways that both endanger and engender the magic of reality (p. 206).

Readers hoping for solutions or remedies to the palm-oil sector’s destructive social and ecological effects may find *Palma Africana* lacking in applied or political value. Others may be somewhat put off by the lack of structure of the book that, albeit intentional and intrinsic to what the book is *about*, at times ends up sacrificing ethnographic depth for introspective speculation. This includes ethnographic attention to oil palm itself, the plant at the heart of the “animal-language-tree nexus” (p. 188) examined by Taussig, yet one whose biological lifeworld merited a more detailed empirical treatment. Nonetheless, *Palma Africana* offers an important complement to anthropological works that have examined the agribusiness sector primarily from a political-economy perspective. It is one of the first works to focus specifically on the form and effects of oil palm—one of today’s most polemical cash crops—as these are embedded within long-standing legacies of capitalist violence in South America. In the image of its protagonists, *Palma Africana* refuses confinement to any one field or genre. Its experimental use of “animistic writing” and its more-than-human approach to capitalist natures offer valuable contributions to such disciplines as critical plant and animal studies, eco-philosophy, and posthumanist studies more generally.

Mississippian Beginnings edited by Gregory D. Wilson,

Florida Museum of Natural History: Ripley P. Bullen Series Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2017. 332 pp.

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More than twenty-five years after Bruce Smith’s (1990) *The Mississippian Emergence* presented a regional synthesis of the beginnings of hierarchy across the Southeast,

Greg Wilson has edited a volume that uses a wealth of data to address when, where, and, most importantly, why Mississippian happened. Whereas Smith’s volume examined the issue in terms of whether Mississippian culture emerged from a single source (Cahokia) or independently, this volume’s chapters are unified by a theme of variability in the way Mississippian culture was adopted and practiced.

Wilson and Sullivan begin with an overview of research in the region since 1991. They discuss the historization of Mississippian origins, a newer focus on culture contact and entanglement, and changing understandings of Mississippian religion. A major theme is a decreased emphasis on leaders and power and an increased focus on the agency of the people making up these chiefdoms. An encompassing and valuable chapter by VanDerwarker, Bardolph, and Scarry compares the role of maize across six regions. Their data show that some areas adopted maize quickly, where it replaced starchy seeds, and others more slowly. Kinship and religion appear to be more important than political complexity in maize adoption.

Anderson's summary chapter notes a more recent view on Mississippian emergence that emphasizes the role of Cahokia: that it started there and spread outward. This is most visible in chapters by Betzenhauser; Wilson, Delaney, and Millhouse; and Cook. Betzenhauser examines movements of people in and out of the American Bottom, and particularly at rural households, which she suggests were not autonomous outliers but included certain people who were tied to the larger Cahokian sphere. Wilson, Delaney, and Millhouse examine sites in the Illinois River Valley and find evidence of groups that copy Cahokian potting traditions. Variation is present based on proximity to Cahokia. Sites closer, like Audrey, are more Mississippian, while groups farther away combine Late Woodland and Mississippian aspects into a different cultural form. Cook's analysis of Fort Ancient takes a regional and data-rich approach to cogently argue that Fort Ancient is a hybrid form of Mississippian and Late Woodland.

As the distance from Cahokia increases, this tendency toward what many authors term "hybridity" increases. Regnier examines Caddo sites in the Middle Red River drainage and uses ceramic, mound-excavation, and structure data to posit that Caddo peoples selectively chose to emphasize Mississippian religious beliefs. She emphasizes that religion and politics appear to be separate spheres with little evidence for chiefly lineages. Farther east, Boudreaux reviews evidence of Mississippian emergence in central North Carolina. These data show a post-AD 1150 emergence located mostly in small, rural farmsteads; however, the civic-ceremonial center of Town Creek focused on a new social organization of household groups. In South Carolina, King, Thornock, and Stephenson examine the Hollywood site and its region, and find that religion was a conduit of Mississippian culture, but, unlike the Caddo, centralized polity leadership was present and increased over time. Du Vernay and White also present

a regional view of Fort Walton in north Florida and find evidence for the negotiation of Mississippian culture by Late Woodland groups, giving Fort Walton its "distinct regional flavor" (p. 286). In his thought-provoking summary, Anderson notes this volume's emphasis on movements and peoples, and he ends by emphasizing the variability identified by many of the authors. He views Mississippian ideas as starting at Cahokia but suggests we also need to ask "how these events were perceived, received, and transformed elsewhere and at Cahokia itself" (p. 309).

Variability has been used by many researchers (including me) as a catch-all explanation for what appears when we dig deeper into what Smith termed the nested black boxes of Mississippian emergence. Yet, variability is not an explanation but a description. This volume is valuable because it explores the variability in greater detail, allowing us to move toward explanations of that variability. New methodologies, such as isotope and biodistance measures (Cook) are presented as well as extensive use of site file data (Betzenhauser; Du Vernay and White; King, Thornock, and Stephenson; Boudreaux), CRM data, reexaminations of old collections (Regnier; Boudreaux; Du Vernay and White; Wilson, Delaney, and Millhouse; King, Thornock, and Stephenson), and widespread use of basic ceramic typology by all authors allow these details to be mined. It is clear that understanding Mississippian emergence needs to be rooted in understanding the Late Woodland period more precisely. But Anderson notes that pilgrimages and movements of people at Cahokia are not dissimilar to those seen at Poverty Point during the Archaic period and at Woodland-period Hopewell sites, suggesting we need to ask bigger questions. One weakness of the volume is that the authors do not draw on data in other chapters that would have allowed them to delve into these issues more deeply. Also, a chapter addressing trade in the Southeast since Brown et al.'s (1990) in the original volume would have been welcome. Regardless, this volume's collection of fine-grained data at a regional scale opens the black boxes to allow us to ask these questions.

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