

BOOK REVIEWS

WILFRIED VAN DAMME, *Beauty in Context: Towards an Anthropological Approach to Aesthetics*, Leiden, New York, and Köln: E. J. Brill 1996. xv, 400 pp., Index, References, Figures, Tables. £69.48.

To those contemporary scholars within the anthropology of art who perceive the entire tradition of philosophical aesthetics as irredeemably tainted by the intellectual traditions of Enlightenment rationalism, the title *'Beauty in Context'* is itself enough to constitute a multiple provocation. Deferring a consideration of any sociopolitical implications of art and its appreciation—his 'contextualism' is instead a synthesis of formalist and semanticist theories of aesthetic value—the author seeks to advance, through a theory of the perception of beauty, the elaboration of a coherent theoretical and epistemological framework within which a distinctively anthropological approach to aesthetics might be elaborated. More specifically, his search is for a cross-culturally valid cultural determinant of aesthetic preferences which accounts for observable diversity, a regularity responsible for aesthetic difference. An appropriate perspective will be 'empirical'—that is, will privilege verbalized aesthetic judgement over decontextualized formal analysis—and at the same time remain consistent both with the insights of experimental psychological aesthetics and 'prevalent characterizations' of 'aesthetic percipience' offered by the Western philosophical tradition (p. 239), though without compromising a commitment to collective and consensual evaluation. The notion of aesthetic experience as 'disinterested', for example, is accommodated by characterizing the aesthetic response as having to do with 'feelings of gratification...related to matters cultural rather than individual' (pp. 17–18).

To further these objectives, van Damme presents an ontology of the aesthetic object and an 'operational' model of its perception and evaluation. Rejecting equally the notions that aesthetic value resides exclusively in either its formal qualities or its 'content', he takes the art object to be a formal-cognitive stimulus, an 'affecting' or 'gratifying' 'visual metaphor of the prevalent sociocultural ideal' (pp. 233, 212), such metaphoricality being no mere product of analytic discourse but experientially constitutive, and universal. In the experience of this congruence of the formal and semantic, the cognitive takes precedence in aesthetic experience: it 'appraised referential meaning...[that] trigger[s] the interest of the perceiving mind' (p. 229). Through the process of 'predication'—the transfer of valuational attributes from referential meaning to form' (p. 232)—is constituted the experience of 'beauty': 'those forms or formal characteristics are experienced as aesthetically pleasing which...aptly signify [a given culture's] sociocultural values and ideals' (p. xiii). Moreover, as 'liminal'—mediating between 'the concrete level of society' and 'the ideational level of culture'—the art work permits the 'symbolic accomplishment' of what may be unattainable in reality, releasing the 'semantic tension' between fact and value, between 'ought' and 'is' (pp. 206–12).

The first seven chapters provide a thorough and valuable critical review of the literature and examine the scope for the deployment of Western philosophical notions and psychological and neurophysiological insights in non-Western contexts, while concurrently articulating and elaborating his central thesis; this is then subject to closer scrutiny through four case-studies in the final two chapters. In some of the ethnographies he examines, his perspective closely reflects that adopted by the original author; in other cases, he demonstrates how the material can be so reinterpreted. Although his critical overview exposes the inadequacy of investigations 'restricted to one sensorial domain...focus[ing] on one type of response, and...confined to only a single class of objects', he acknowledges that the present examination stands well behind the implied vanguard, considering only 'visual perception of the beauty of a material object' (p. 56). Bracketed for the time being are not only tragic, comic, rhetorical, satirical, or other genres and possibilities of the aesthetic, but also corporeal knowledge and the intentionality of human action. The dichotomy between the affective and cognitive in human perception is challenged, but other fundamental diremptions—the subjugation of the haptic to the visual, of practice to theory—endure.

But it is in the light of its specific objectives that the work must be read. Van Damme's detailed case-studies focus upon African anthropomorphic sculpture considered as visual metaphor, towards which 'the perceiving mind has to adopt a stance', a receptivity to non-discursive 'semantic succinctness and suggestiveness' partially constitutive of the aesthetic attitude...necessary for the perception of art and beauty' (p. 241).

The formal properties of these sculptures are taken to include iconic representation as well as the qualities usually understood as aesthetic under a formalist description, and while conceding that similar visual preferences in the human figure and anthropomorphic statuary can be 'rather easily related to sociocultural values', van Damme shows how a 'similar relationship between form and value' may pertain for more abstract evaluative criteria. For the Baule, moderation or the mean instantiated in visual form evokes 'culturally significant and favourably assessed meaning'—moderation in behaviour, the valuational attributes of which are predicated upon the formal quality itself (p. 232). Art and value thus stand in a familiar relationship, that of the reduction of beauty to morality, but his empirically grounded project contributes usefully to an understanding of how aesthetic community actually derives from moral community.

Deferred until the closing pages of the work, however, is a consideration of the dialectics of this emergent relation, or of art as not merely expressive but also transformative of the sociocultural domain. Some readers will find the author's theoretical meditations repetitive; perhaps the curtailment of certain sections would have permitted an adequation of his aesthetic hypotheses to more complex and dynamic understandings of sociocultural reality. (When he asks whether art 'may...play a role in the process of adjusting and reformulating values and ideals' (p. 303)—a notion that has informed aesthetics practices and ideologies from Plato to Situationism—I understand him to be asking whether his model can accommodate such a perspective.) Here his notions of the art work as symbolic accomplishment of the presently unrealizable, and of the cognitive as source of aesthetic gratification, would benefit from an engagement with theoretical positions such as Jaussian reception aesthetics, which privilege the

sensuous as the originary ground of aesthetic pleasure, and a reconsideration of the neurophysiological aspects of aesthetic experience.

The work provides a useful introduction to the field and presents provocative ideas which contribute to the ongoing re-examination of the place of aesthetics in anthropology. Van Damme challenges the traditional reluctance to confront the complexities arising from the interaction of aesthetics and anthropological perspectives—a reluctance concealed behind assumptions that we know what we're talking about when we talk of aesthetics—or the idea that all such meditations are irredeemably ethnocentric, and fruitless.

ED CARTER

EKKEHART MALOTKI (ed.), *The Bedbugs' Night Dance and Other Hopi Sexual Tales* (*Mumispi 'yyungqa Tuutuwutsi*), Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 1995. xxiv, 399 pp., Illustrations, Appendixes. £28.50.

Malotki's intention with this collection is to present stories with explicit sexual and scatological reference, features which are still characteristic of Hopi culture despite years of attempted repression by missionaries, school superintendents, and government administrators. For this purpose, he set out twenty tales derived from six sources, only two of whom were still alive at the time of publication. The stories are published in both Hopi and English translation. They include such tales as 'The Man-Crazed Woman' and 'The Long Kwasi [Penis] of Kookopölö'. Themes include sexual intercourse, sexual exposure (male and female), disembodied sex organs, defecation, urination, sexual jealousy, sexual maturity, sexual discovery, sexual frustration, sexual education, marriage counselling, marriage sociology, and hostility toward Navaho, among other matters.

The English translations read smoothly, and the stories are not exceptionally salacious when judged by the standards of modern popular literature or those of Rabelais. According to Malotki, when he began to work on Hopi oral literature there was an almost complete absence of erotic or scatological matter in the published corpus of Hopi folklore, the exceptions being found in the work of Alexander M. Stephen and Mischa Titiev. 'Purged of any so-called objectionable references to sex and bodily functions, such expurgated folklore tends to present a rather one-sided and sometimes shallow picture of Hopi culture.'

Two appendixes include a glossary (actually an alphabetical list of ethnographic notes) and a description of the Hopi alphabet. Malotki has omitted to include a bibliography or index. E. N. Genovese has provided a comparative discussion of sexual narrative in his introduction. These stories may be read for entertainment, for their ethnographic content, and for comparative purposes. The book is therefore both enjoyable and of intellectual interest.

R. H. BARNES

THOMAS K. KAVANAGH, *Comanche Political History: An Ethnohistorical Perspective 1706-1875*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 1996. xvi, 586 pp. Maps, Plates, Figures, Tables, Bibliography, Index. £42.50.

The Comanche are one branch of peoples speaking the Shoshonean language. They were apparently first mentioned in 1706, but most references to them are to individual bands in local contact with Europeans rather than to a political entity as a whole. The Comanche have been regarded as an anomaly among Plains peoples because they failed to achieve tribal integration. They appear to have been organized into a variety of bands, moving even in historical periods over vast tracts of the southern Plains, and these bands seem to have continually shifted their composition, often changing their names, as they split up or amalgamated with other bands. They were a 'rank society' in that there were fewer leadership positions than there were individuals capable of filling them, and access to economic resources was controlled, so that some were wealthier than others. An important issue was possession or lack of possession of horses. Once horses became part of the environment, soldier societies in horse-rich bands restricted participation in the buffalo hunt to those with horses, making persons lacking horses poor and dependent on others. Horse-poor bands had to pursue different subsistence strategies than horse-rich ones. Also important was trade, both with other Indians and directly with Europeans. Throughout the period covered by this book, the Spanish and French, the Republic of Texas and the United States all attempted to control their relationships with the Comanche (and other Indians), including through trade in particular. Given their economic importance, horse-raiding was a constant feature of Plains political and military history. Such raiding occurred between Indian groups and in both directions across the European and Indian divide. Mutual scalp-taking and the capture and enslavement of people were also shared activities, though the mayhem was punctuated by periods of negotiated peace. Thus, much of the evidence comes from the diplomatic record, such as it is. In the end, unlike, for example, the rather similar Cheyenne, the Comanche never developed a sense of nationhood, at least not in the period under consideration.

The structure of this book is straightforwardly chronological. After an introduction and a chapter on 'Comanche Political Culture', the subsequent chapters are on first Euroamerican contacts (1706-86), Comanche-Euroamerican relations (1786-1820), changes in Comanchería (1820-46), Comanchería at mid-century (1846-60), Comanchería during and after the Civil War (1860-75), and a concluding chapter on political history. Certainly throughout the nineteenth century, each decade brought tremendous changes in the demographic, political, and economic environment. Conflicts between Americans in Texas and Mexico and later between Texas and the United States during the Civil War affected the Comanche as well. Finally, the demographic, economic, and military power of the United States overwhelmed the Comanche and other Plains Indians. Most Comanche bands were eventually settled on a reservation in the Indian Territories (Oklahoma) by 1875. An incident not mentioned by Kavanagh shows just how rapid that change became. On 16 May 1870, an eleven-year-old German-speaking boy named Hermann Lehmann was captured on his parents' farm in Mason County, Texas, by Apaches. He then became an Apache, participating in their raids, before joining the Comanches. Finally, he and his group were persuaded by the famous Quanah Parker to

come into the reservation at Fort Sill, and by 12 May 1878 he had been restored to his family. He lived until 1932, having learned English and become familiar with radio, telephones, automobiles, and aeroplanes. His younger brother Willie, also briefly taken captive in the same incident, lived until 1951, into the nuclear age and that of television.

This book is a very thorough treatment of Comanche history and makes a considerable contribution to regional and colonial history. It reads well and is attractively and usefully illustrated.

R. H. BARNES

ROBERT HERTZ, *Sin and Expiation in Primitive Societies* (transl. Robert Parkin, Preface by W. S. F. Pickering), Oxford: British Centre for Durkheimian Studies (Occasional Papers No. 2) 1994. 136 pp. £4.00.

ROBERT PARKIN, *The Dark Side of Humanity: The Work of Robert Hertz and its Legacy*, Amsterdam: Harwood 1996. xi, 226 pp., Bibliography, Index, Plates. £36.00.

A promising career in anthropology lay in front of Robert Hertz when, at the age of 33, he was cut down at the head of his section at Marchéville on 13 April 1915 in what Marcel Mauss characterized as a 'useless and bloody attack'. His published work up to that point included several political tracts that he wrote as a committed socialist, numerous reviews of books in English, German, Dutch, and Italian (Hertz also knew Ancient Greek and Latin), and his now famous articles on the collective representation of death, the pre-eminence of the right hand, and the cult of St Besse. His essays on the myth of Athena and on legends and cults of rocks and springs were lost altogether, but a partial draft of his doctoral dissertation (supervised by Durkheim) on sin and expiation was preserved and published by Mauss in 1922.

Sin and Expiation in Primitive Societies contains the text of this uncompleted thesis in English translation accompanied by a helpful preface by W. S. F. Pickering and a comprehensive introduction by Robert Parkin. In this work, Hertz set out to ask whether sin could be identified as a cross-cultural phenomenon. Missionaries had been among the first to pose Hertz's question in their efforts to find comparable concepts in the societies where they were trying to win converts. Hertz sought to develop a viable heuristic definition of sin that could be interrogated in the widest possible range of societies. He settled on the following: 'Sin is a transgression of a moral code, which is considered to involve, by virtue of itself, disastrous consequences for its author, and which concerns the religious society exclusively' (p. 108). Shortly after this passage, the narrative of Hertz's text tapers off into notes: apparently the effort of arriving at a generalizable definition had been so exacting that the author took a break and then never managed to return to the manuscript.

Mauss's reconstruction of Hertz's notes allows us a glimpse of where Hertz was heading. He wanted to connect sin to expiation, thus rescuing it from the strictly extrinsic, objectivist definition above, and locating it instead in the perceptions of the

people involved. A sin offended against the highest religious order, and its consequences were grave unless the offence could be expiated. Sin demanded expiation—was defined by it—and this was Hertz's embryonic structuralist realization. Sin could be isolated for analytical attention on the basis of people's evident contrite feelings and ritual acts of compunction. In a passage that Mauss found scribbled on a slip of paper Hertz had written: 'There is expiation when certain actions which are in general ritualistic, are able to re-establish the state of things anterior to the transgression by annulling it and by satisfying justice, without the transgressor and those near to him being crushed thereby' (p. 113). In Mauss's view this little passage was 'worthy of becoming a classic' (ibid.).

In order to anchor his cross-cultural study of sin, Hertz used Polynesian examples where *tabu* was transgressed. In his Introduction to *Sin and Expiation*, and again in his chapter on this work in his *The Dark Side of Humanity*, Robert Parkin points out that Hertz ultimately pushed the concept of sin too far. It could not usefully distinguish purely accidental transgressions from more intentional ones, and the current balance of opinion in British anthropology tends more to the verdict that sin is not a universal category. Hertz's work on sin thus may not have been successful in attaining its global comparativist goals, but this by no means renders it a failure: contrasts and differences can be every bit as interesting as the uncovering of neat similarities in cultural practices and personal sentiments. Certainly the topic of sin impelled Hertz to make valuable contrasts between sin and crime, honour and sanctity, guilt and shame, that are still suggestive today. He also made the point that even where a word like 'sin' could not be found in a given society's vocabulary, this did not mean that the concept could not exercise implicit force. Some sixty years later Dumont made the very same argument about the absence of an Indian word for hierarchy, a concept he had identified as crucial for understanding the structure of Indian society (*Homo Aequalis*, Paris: Gallimard 1977, p. 28).

Sin and Expiation is a difficult text in French, poetic in places, terse and difficult to follow in others. We owe a debt of gratitude to Robert Parkin for rendering it into coherent English. This essay deserves to come to the attention of a wide anthropological audience, and one wonders why a major press did not undertake to publish it for the British Centre for Durkheimian Studies. Perhaps the appearance of Parkin's monograph assessing Hertz's life, his intellectual work, and his legacy in anthropology will help to raise interest in a possible re-issue.

The Dark Side of Humanity relies on close readings of all of Hertz's available writings and correspondence, including unpublished materials deposited at the Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale in Paris, and conversations with Hertz's son, Antoine. It is a scholarly and judicious work that locates Hertz's work and personal development within Durkheim's circle at the turn of the century and then proceeds to examine his political writing and his book reviews for the *Année Sociologique* before considering his major anthropological essays in successive chapters.

In the chapter on right and left, Parkin reconsiders Hertz's seminal essay on the right hand. Although a bona fide Durkheimian social constructionist, Hertz none the less felt obliged to allow that a certain natural physical bias had been blown out of proportion by society: the pre-eminence of the right hand could not be attributed solely and exclusively to social predilection. Parkin tracks subsequent scholarly debates over

right and left, symbolic classification, hierarchical encompassment, and the conscious or unconscious nature of their existence as logical ordering devices in cultural symbolism. He explains clearly the sometimes complicated positions of authors such as Needham, Dumont, and Tcherkézoff.

In a chapter on death, Parkin reviews Hertz's thesis that rituals of secondary burial reveal everything about a society's conception of the soul and the way the soul should be treated in order to secure the safe continuation of social life. Here as elsewhere Hertz situated himself in opposition to the intellectualist school of Frazer and Tylor, for whom death rituals amounted to people's confrontation with the horror of the corpse. Bloch and Parry have altered Hertz's emphasis slightly by asserting that death rituals *create* rather than just affirm the social order. Parkin shows that numerous subsequent anthropological treatments of death have also drawn upon Hertz. The only trouble here is that Hertz's approach was so foundational that any subsequent study that attends to the social dimension of mortuary practice, the treatment of the corpse, or the collective social nature of the event could be classed as Hertzian.

Hertz's study of the Italian/French alpine cult of St Besse is perhaps slightly less well-known than the preceding two essays, but Parkin's chapter here as well as recent articles by him and others indicate that this essay, first translated into English in 1983, has risen in public appraisal. St Besse was a Roman soldier and Christian martyr whose cult was focused on a rock high in the Italian Alps. Elements of the cult were apparently pre-Christian, and the juxtaposition of paganism and Christianity was but one of the tensions that Hertz identified in the worship of St Besse. There were also tensions between the mountain people and the people of the plains as to who really 'owned' the St Besse cult. Vastly differing legends of the saint's life circulated in these various communities, making Hertz's study a valuable early examination of the negotiability and the social-constructedness of history.

In entitling his study *The Dark Side of Humanity*, Parkin is borrowing a phrase from Mauss, who suggested that Hertz's apparently disparate essays shared a common focus on the anti-social: sin, death, the left hand, conflict—a range of ideas opposite and yet complementary to the usual Durkheimian focus on social solidarity. It is precisely the insistence on social coherence that has rendered Durkheimian sociology somewhat hard to use in the current moment, which is characterized by multiculturalism and internal social conflicts over the meaning of symbols and rituals. Hertz's focus on threats to solidarity connects more directly to the interests of contemporary sociology and anthropology, making these two volumes valuable and timely contributions.

CHARLES STEWART

GISLI PÁLSSON and E. PAUL DURRENBERGER (eds.), *Images of Contemporary Iceland: Everyday Lives and Global Contexts*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press 1996. viii, 274pp., Plates, Figures, Tables, Index. £28.50 / \$29.95.

In their introduction to this volume, the editors make the point that Iceland presents an image of a homogeneous island population, with a long, well-recorded history. This is

an image that the present essays challenge, emphasizing instead the flow of cultural constructs in a holistic, global world. This entity, an 'ideal subject for anthropologists looking for neat boundaries [and] self-contained cultures' (p. 1), is therefore an illusion: Iceland is no 'billiard ball'. Indeed, the concept of culture, and the 'conventional anthropological idea of cultural translation in the general mosaic of cultural islands,' is deemed to be 'no longer appropriate, if it ever was' (p. 6). The editors do not pull their punches and strongly criticize essentialist constructions, offering valuable alternatives, referring to Ingold, Hannerz, and Appadurai for guidance, and bringing in metaphors of seamless landscapes with individual perspectives determined by position. They call for attention to local detail and realist ethnography, of the sort that would depict Iceland as a vantage-point in 'ever-shifting streams of events and images' (p. 22). In this they are successful, although the reader may consider that they are fighting battles that have already been won by others, with less ammunition.

This book, based on an anthropological workshop held in 1993, follows on from an earlier project which resulted in *The Anthropology of Iceland* (1989), a collection with the same editors. The focus in this workshop was on 'Modern Iceland', and this collection reflects the interest in the 'contemporary'. Inevitably the description 'contemporary' invites scepticism—everything is contemporary when first perceived or produced, regardless of subject; furthermore, 'modern' is a problematic concept, and 'modern' ideas become untimely fashion victims. Despite these misgivings, the underlying motives of the collection are most welcome, and the contributors boldly confront the task of pushing the boundaries of anthropology in directions which confirm Europe as an innovative area of exploration.

The ten papers are divided into three sections: 'Contested Images of Nature', 'Nation and Gender', and 'Nature and Nation'. The concepts of nation, nature, gender, and identity are all deconstructed in making the effort to evaluate the thing that is Iceland. Politics, economics, and history are involved in this wide-ranging examination of a people and their experience. The papers will therefore be of especial value to students of Europe, globalization, fishing, and gender, to those interested in the invention of tradition and imagined communities, and to those seeking a strong argument against the essentializing of cultures.

More specifically, contributors in the first part deal with the production of the nation state and its use of natural images, as well as the embrace of its population against 'irrational', sentimental outsiders concerned about whaling (Brydon). This theme is continued by N. Einarsson, with a plea to consider the local (albeit ethnocentric) perception of nature—wherein whales are pests—for the sake of conservation and of co-operation. Global perspectives are impinging on local practices, and Pálsson and Helgason note the existence of such debates in Iceland over fishing management, where resource economics enjoys hegemony and quota systems reorganize rights of access, undermining the ideal egalitarian structure and producing 'quota-kings'. A plea for greater respect for the practical (local) knowledge of skippers is made, a conclusion which reverberates throughout anthropological texts concerned with development and the environment.

Issues of cultural construction and power continue to inform chapters dealing with nation and gender. Skaptadóttir sees the fisher's production as romanticized in opposition to women's invisibility. Men's jobs assume greater value, based on power differ-

ences, and this difference is one of many (gender, class, age, region) which usually go unacknowledged (muted) by idealist romanticization in official state discourse. In diametrical opposition to this, the 'Mountain Woman' is portrayed as strong and free, the keeper of Icelandic culture. This mythical counter-symbol to the Danish kings has been invoked by one female president to strengthen the 'ideal of the mother' (Bjornsdóttir)—a political figurehead manipulating natural and human images to suit her goal of maintaining the 'purity' of the 'nation, the country and the tongue' (p. 20). The hypocrisy of national rhetoric and the reality of power is further exposed by Gurdin in a chapter on domestic violence, which challenges romantic imagery and notions of the classless, crime-free society. Women are subjugated and defined as deviant by the state, which refuses to deal with abusive husbands.

The final part is especially useful for those seeking answers to the riddles and contradictions of Iceland. Durrenberger's analysis of the assumed egalitarianism and homogeneity of Iceland, with emphasis on the autonomous individual subordinating the social group, explains the excuse of personal as opposed to societal responsibility, although this is being challenged by globalization, leaving the 'skipper effect' to be sidelined by technological advances.

Political desires have promoted favoured constructions: farmers with purity, and even the story of Iceland's struggle through harsh conditions and years of misery, is seen as part of a broader, European, romantic vision (Vasey). Global communications, foreign observers, and political manipulators have all influenced Iceland, and now even the famed literary tradition is threatened with usurpation by the mass media. It may have been a 'conserving force for Icelandic culture and identity' (Sizeman and Walker, p. 194), but it is today more of a consumer's accessory, superseded by television, and prompting a redefinition of the term 'literate'.

Finally, those literate 'wandering semioticians', the tourists, are helping Icelanders redefine themselves as they interact, negotiating meanings and identities. Indeed, M. Einarsson suggests that there is a continuum between the tourist and the anthropologist (a hackneyed notion), which prompts us to consider whether we will go full circle to become armchair anthropologists again, desk-bound Internet surfers. Judging from the editors' well-supported argument and the contributors' valuable field research, probably not.

DONALD MACLEOD

CRISCA BIERWERT (ed.), *Lushootseed Texts: An Introduction to Puget Sound Narrative Aesthetics*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 1996. viii, 325pp., Illustrations, Bibliography, Index. £38.00.

In the summer of 1963, armed with a Grundig tape recorder and set on a mission to record the grammar and vocabulary of Washington State's Lushootseed language, a young graduate student named Thomas Hess knocked on the door of Martha Lamont. The results of his encounter with Lamont and a few of her friends led to Hess's many works on this little-known Coast Salish language. Fortunately also for the revitaliza-

tion that is currently underway in Lushootseed communities, Hess began to appreciate the cultural context of the linguistic texts he was eliciting. Now, after a decade of interdisciplinary collaboration with colleagues attuned to those other aspects of the narratives, the stories of a few elderly story-tellers appear in the publication of *Lushootseed Texts*, edited by anthropologist Crisca Bierwert and appearing in the University of Nebraska Press's series, *Studies in the Anthropology of North American Indians*.

The seven stories comprising the volume, told by Mrs Lamont and two other raconteurs in the Lushootseed language, provide a sampling of a much larger corpus of Lushootseed oral literature that was recorded in the past. What sets this collection apart, however, is the analysis and commentary of a team of collaborators intent upon going beyond interlinear grammatical word-for-word translation. Bierwert's editorial introduction reveals the volume's approach. First is the team's desire to reach many audiences without sacrificing academic interest or the attributes of traditional stories that link them so closely with 'the people'. Secondly, there is the resolution of the problem by changing their perspective: 'We resolved the contradictions in the questions that beset us by seeing them as related, not conflicting, demands, demands to keep alive the qualities of traditional stories that are intended to connect with people, and to protect the interpretative richness of the stories by offering multiple perspectives on them' (p. 1). *Lushootseed Texts* does just that. Vi Hilbert, a Native Lushootseed language and culture specialist whose work with Hess resulted in the translations, presents personal glimpses of the three story-tellers and of her own childhood on the Skagit River. Hilbert is well known on the Northwest Coast for being the motivating spirit behind Lushootseed research, and her heartfelt words of introduction convey the personal dedication she brings to this project. In a self-reflective essay on his early field recording sessions, Hess confesses that the texts at first interested him purely as linguistic examples of free-flowing Lushootseed, exempt from the distortions that result from speaking at dictation speed. Yet it is Hess's attention to linguistic detail, providing the foundation of accuracy for this collection, that ensures its enduring value. Particularly welcome is his section on Lushootseed grammatical analysis, which sets out for the non-specialist reader models of Lushootseed syntax drawn from the first section of one of the stories. Following a few basic structures, he maps affixes, roots, and suffixes in concentric boxes to show the enfolding pattern of this highly polysynthetic language. This annotated text stands as a welcome replacement to the often incomprehensible grammatical description that frequently accompanies Amerindian textual analysis. A section on 'The Documentation of Lushootseed Language and Literature' guides us to those other works, should we wish to pursue the comparison further.

Bierwert was naturally impressed with the linguistic excellence that the Hess-Hilbert team produced in providing the morpheme-by-morpheme translation. The concern she herself expresses with the accuracy of the English translation, including its graphic presentation on the page, convinces us that she kept up her end of the partnership. Bierwert's guide has been the position of Walter Benjamin (*Illuminations*, New York: Schocken Books 1968, p. 79) that a good translation 'may be achieved above all by a literal rendering of the syntax which proves words rather than sentences to be the primary element of the translator. For if the sentence is the wall before the language of

the original, literalness is the arcade.' Bierwert's choice, distribution, and consistency of glosses, as well as her regard for performance and presentation, leave us feeling that these seven simple stories have passed through the hands of an artisan. Endnotes and introductions provided by literary critic Toby Langen complement the task, dispensing explanations of cultural content and contributing discussion of the 'literary' qualities of each story. Even musical transcriptions of four brief stanzas appearing in Martha Lamont's tales have been included by musicologist Tara Browner.

With such academic competence as has been brought to bear by Bierwert and her colleagues on the analysis of this collection of seven stories, it is fortunate that the selected texts include particularly interesting examples of common narrative genres. In Lamont's 'Changer Story', we sense the story-teller's command of the tale, emphasizing Mink's repetitive mischievousness with her well-chosen use of specific words, patterned turns of phrasing, and simple chants. Her technique transforms 'The Seal Hunters', a story common throughout the Northwest Coast, into an enchanted journey, wooing the reader along with the travels of a cedar seal.

For those wanting to embark on a personal discovery of Northwest Coast oral literature, *Lushootseed Tales* is a good place to launch one's tour. But if you are not familiar with the lay of the land, bring your own map; the editor overlooked this one basic accessory.

DOROTHY KENNEDY

DAWN CHATTY, *Mobile Pastoralists: Development Planning and Social Change in Oman*, New York: Columbia University Press 1966. xiv, 230pp., References, Illustrations, Index. No price given.

Development work in the dry rangelands has predictably been a complex and delicate matter, so much so that a number of prominent research institutions, including one from the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, have dropped the matter from their books. Part of the reason for this is that the 'extensive pastoral' system has been commonly misunderstood by 'field specialist' and government personnel alike. At least as important in pastoral development, if not more critical, has been the role played by local politics, which has typically advocated settlement on the grounds of 'nation-building' for reasons of security or the provision of social services.

Dawn Chatty provides a lucid and studied account of the perilous journey of one such pastoral development project among the Harasiis of southern Oman. Enriched by her anthropological eye, she follows the project and its impact from conception through implementation to conclusion and 'aftermath'. The project was modest in size by most standards but was made even more so when an administrative error reduced it by a half to one year. What was achieved, however, was in marked contrast to other pastoral development projects. Although the year only allowed research on the needs of the Harasiis population, rudimentary social services were delivered and all-important channels of communication established between the local people and the central government. In some respects this is not altogether surprising. The government,

for their part, was genuinely interested in clarifying the needs of the population, and both the government and Harasiis were fortunate in the individual charged with the work, namely Chatty herself. In another respect it is a surprise that anything was achieved at all, considering the personality conflicts between the professional personnel—an aspect of development that has until now received too little attention. Here Chatty leaves little to the imagination and drives home the potentially damaging, if not fatal consequences, of adverse relationships between field specialists, national bureaucrats, and international aid officers. Each of these parties, and the Harasiis themselves, has its own priorities and own vision of the future. Reconciling these differences is the job of all those involved, although this has regularly fallen foul of institutional inertia, personality, politics, or the dogmatic allegiance of aid officials to one or other development theory. Although the Harasiis project ultimately saw off these conflicts of interest, the same cannot be said for the now infamous decline of the 'Hema' cooperative rangeland project in Syria. One of the main reasons for this must be the unwavering commitment Chatty showed to her work both during the project and for a long time afterwards.

A couple of interesting results of the ethnographic research relate to my own interest in grazing management. The first was an identified shift in competition among the pastoral groups away from water and towards grazing, signalling an important move in local property-right institutions. The other was the tacit recognition of the 'disposable population model' for pastoral tribes put forth by J. C. Wilkinson ('Traditional Concepts of Territory in South East Arabia', *Geographical Journal*, Vol. CXLIX (1983), p. 364), whereby excess and peripheral pastoral populations shift out of crowded pastures to other areas or forms of employment. Perhaps the most important outcome of the project for the Harasiis, however, was the channels established between them and the government. In this case, success here was partly due to the timing of the project—as it seems the government had additional plans to integrate this region of Oman within central government institutions—but largely due to Chatty herself. The catalyst for this contact was provided by the project: how it developed and assimilated some of the needs of the Harasiis and of the state is detailed in the final chapters of the book. The insights Chatty provides will be critical to those in pastoral and regional development, and should be recommended reading. A book can never be said to be too late, but if this book and others like it had arrived much earlier, the cynicism particular to pastoral development projects might well have been curbed.

JONATHAN RAE

NADIA ABU-ZAHRA, *The Pure And Powerful: Studies In Contemporary Muslim Society*, Reading: Ithaca Press 1997. xx, 320 pp., References, Index. £35.00.

The separate sections of this book are united by shared themes and an overall concern for the relationship between practical piety, as observed in ritual, and real or declared Islamic origins and motivation. Abu-Zahra's dual background of Islamic Cairo and Western anthropology allow her to examine both these aspects in detail and with inside

knowledge. In these studies, holy persons of the past and as yet innocent young people are used as intermediaries to obtain blessing and sustenance. Rites and rituals may vary—the studies here move from Tunisia to Cairo—but these are argued to be firmly based on Islamic belief.

The first section describes and interprets the rain rituals of a village in Tunisia. The Islamic prayers, with their Prophetic approval, are followed by a fertility rite practised by girls and women, where the figure of 'Mother Tambu' represents the thirsty earth. Despite this apparently non-Islamic element, the author considers the whole ritual to be a devout supplication to the One God for the rain which is His gift alone. This aspect is also shown by the names used for rain, which also signify mercy and assistance.

The 'Comparative Study', which, like the item described above, has been published previously, shows differences between rituals in Egypt and Tunisia, as well as the shared Islamic tradition underlying them. A knowledge of the texts is vital, says Abu-Zahra, for a true understanding of rain rituals. The core concept of *rahma* as divine mercy/rain 'explains the connection between the environment, the social order, and the spiritual order' (p. 33). For 'Islam is an integrated whole' (p. 39), and even the mortuary rituals, which are outside normal life experience, conform to the Islamic patterns of the society.

The main part of the book focuses on the shrine of Sayyida Zaynab, granddaughter of the Prophet, in Cairo, with descriptions of the rituals and celebrations there. The whole area is intensely and exclusively Muslim, with no Western elements, and thus provides 'the symbols of Cairo and Egypt set against the West and Western traditions', while al-Sayyida is 'the mother and symbol of Cairo and all Egypt' (p. 134).

The two settings, a Tunisian village and the city of Cairo, differ chiefly in the lack of permanence inherent in city life. People come and go as they please, clan and family affinities are meagre or absent, and the main link is the presence of Sayyid Zaynab and the influence exerted here on women's lives. The theory of the valid Islamic nature of this public devotion is a little undermined by the late Sheikh Shaltut's rejection of popular rituals connected with shrines (pp. 104–7). Even this rejection, however, makes concessions to people's real needs, as expressed in the traditions—which are tolerated, for they are 'integrated into the performance of Islamic rituals' at shrines (p. 107).

In her careful exploration of practices associated with the shrine, Abu-Zahra finds that, for the women themselves, an acceptable explanation can be found for anything which may appear non-Islamic. It is the author's contention that practice and theory are in harmony, that religion and everyday life are combined, that 'the performance of an Islamic ritual incorporates both Islamic and social dimensions in one whole' (p. 96), and that these must therefore be studied together. A large part of this section is given over to observations of the women who visit the shrine, the very practical nature of their piety and devotion (which often centres around the provision of food), and the problems they bring to the Sayyida and share with one another. The social contact and solidarity between these women, and their own sense of religious duty, are very strong. Also described are the festivities for the Mawlid, the main feast day, and the involvement of government authorities. Such celebrations are 'a dominant feature of indige-

nous Egyptian culture' (p. 205) and thus contain popular as well as religious elements—which indeed are seldom thought of separately in such a context.

Two short sections complete the book. 'Ramadan in Cairo' describes the month of fasting, its social implications, and modern changes. 'Spring Rites in Cairo' explains that Shamm al-Nasim, the only feast which is not Muslim nor even religious, has roots far back in history, being a welcome of spring for both Muslims and Christians.

Descriptions are detailed, the data and conclusions well presented, and Abu-Zahra makes her point about the integration of social and religious elements with some vigour and, at times, considerable emphasis. Though this reviewer has lived in Muslim societies, she is not an anthropologist. None the less, it would seem strange to her if the 'totality' of life had really been overlooked or discounted by former researchers as much as is implied here. There may be a modern tendency to sideline religious elements, but it is generally acknowledged that, in a much-used phrase, Islam is 'a complete way of life'. This is certainly made clear throughout the book. Abu-Zahra's own background and experience give her observations immediacy and colour. Through her contacts with officials and religious authorities, she demonstrates how the Ulama or scholars are not in fact separated from the common people, who do come to consult them and receive *fatawi* ('fatwas'). She is clear about the need to investigate 'people's performance of Islamic action within the context of their social conditions' (p. xii), the latter being easier to observe. She speaks of 'shared Islamic tradition...and different social conditions' (ibid.), and regrets the 'dichotomies' which are found in some writings. Abu-Zahra also explains her own personal involvement with Sayyida Zaynab and her original motivation for undertaking the study, which lay in personal loss and the traditional ways of expressing it.

The 'pure and powerful', the holy persons whose sacred space is visited for consolation, for help, for divine and human company, will surely continue to exert their influence as long as such needs exist. In Cairo, the pressures of modern life bear heavily upon traditional belief and devotion. The essential humanity and practical common sense of the Egyptians in Cairo and Tunisian villagers come through clearly in the case-studies presented here.

PENELOPE JOHNSTONE

MAŁGORZATA IREK, *Der Schmugglerzug Warschau–Berlin–Warschau: Materialien einer Feldforschung*, Berlin: Das Arabische Buch 1998. 103pp. DM 39.99.

In *Der Schmugglerzug*, Małgorzata Irek describes small-scale smuggling between Berlin and Warsaw during the late 1980s and early 1990s. In essence, Irek poses the following questions: how was the Polish economy able to make such a rapid and successful transition to 'free-market' capitalism? Where did the capital, both social and monetary, come from? Irek argues that the combination of three factors—a relatively large 'private sector', freedom of movement within the socialist bloc, and the gradual opening of Western borders—nurtured a class of smuggler *Urkapitalisten*. These incipient entrepreneurs and managers honed their market skills by smuggling and trading

goods—cigarettes, cameras, radios, sweets, etc.—and currency throughout eastern and central Europe. With the fall of socialism, the smugglers constituted a 'group of people that had accumulated sufficient experience and capital to establish themselves as completely normal operators in cross-border trade. They met the new legal regulations, and shortly after the introduction of the market economy, import-export firms shot up like mushrooms' (p. 12). Irek's analysis sheds new light on the transition to a 'post-socialist' economy in Poland. In particular, it shows how individuals were able to transfer economic strategies from the socialist to the capitalist market economy.

Irek writes simply and with humour, and the book is a pleasure to read. Using composite characters and brief vignettes, she gives us a clear sense of how some Poles responded creatively to the restrictions of the Cold War and the rapid changes that followed its end. While the book's simplicity is one of its main strengths, it is also a critical weakness: for all the stories of successful transitions from smuggling to capitalism, the author provides no indication of how we are to interpret her examples in a broader context. We never learn, for example, how many people actually smuggled, nor how many of them later went into legitimate businesses. What quantities of money were involved? How were smuggling and nascent capitalism related to post-Cold War nation-building? Irek makes no effort to link her research to any other scholarly work—there are no citations in the book, and no bibliography—and she seems unwilling to risk theoretical discussion. Thus the book is a catalogue of missed opportunities. How, wonders this reader, would she position her work in relation to existing scholarship on border studies (see, for example, Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan, *Border Identities*, Cambridge University Press 1998), criminality (Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, New York: Vintage Books 1979), socialism and post-socialism (Chris Hahn, 'After Communism', *Social Anthropology*, Vol. II, no. 3 (1994), pp. 229–49; Katherine Verdery, *What was Socialism, and What Comes Next?*, Princeton University Press 1996), or agency and resistance (James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, Yale University Press 1990)? Similarly, the work raises questions of field research technique and ethics, only to drop them. Early in the book, Irek describes her attempts to gain access to smugglers by disguising herself as a cleaning woman. Is such a strategy ethical? Irek, I am sure, could make a persuasive argument in favour of her approach. Unfortunately for all of us, she has chosen not to.

Despite these reservations, the book tells a fascinating story, and the very absence of theoretical integration would make it an excellent springboard for classroom discussion. I look forward to its release in an English translation and will be happy to adopt it in my own teaching.

STEFAN SENDERS

PENNY VAN ESTERIK, *Materializing Thailand*, Oxford: Berg 2000. 274pp., Illustration, Bibliography, Index. £42.99/£14.99.

Thailand suffers from a dual image, as the land of smiles and the land of problems. It is an exotic place, full of monks, temples, and tradition, and simultaneously a country

with some of the worst social problems in the world. Whether it is AIDS, child prostitution, uncontrolled and irresponsible tourism, pollution, drug-trafficking, or urbanization, Thailand serves as useful exemplar, even a warning, of the dangers inherent in modernization and capitalism.

Despite this enormous scope for research, Thailand has long been an unfashionable and under-researched country in anthropological terms, especially as far as British anthropologists are concerned. As Van Esterik asks, 'Why have so few works on Thailand been designated theoretical, and why has Thai ethnography not informed anthropological theory nor become part of the canon?' (p. 13). Part of the reason is that although there have been excellent books on Thai village life and the centrality of Buddhism to Thai society, Thailand is generally better known through campaigning groups who have emphasised the seedier aspects of Thailand but rarely attempted to understand its multi-faceted complexity. But although Thailand is a series of problems and a collection of issues which generate international concern, and much more rarely a site for anthropological research, the gap between these two positions could be usefully explored. Thailand is not alone in experiencing rapid modernization with its attendant industrialisation and change from a rural- to urban-based economy. So why has Thailand become symbolic of so much that is bad?

Penny Van Esterik's book attempts to answer some of these questions by focusing on the roles and representations of women in modern Thailand and on the construction of femininity. She examines how the beauty and sexuality of Thai women have always been closely tied to national pride and social cohesion, and how the importance of beauty, whether as a reflection of Buddhist merit or of appropriate Thai models of femininity, is central to understanding the contemporary concerns of Thai society. If issues such as AIDS and prostitution are to be understood from a Thai perspective, they need to be understood in the context of Buddhism and of the construction of gender in Thailand.

By stressing representations, Van Esterik cleverly avoids essentialism and simplification. She emphasizes the complexities of Buddhism and Buddhist teaching. Buddhism is not a monolithic entity, and the factions within Buddhism and its various interpretations are discussed at length. Thai Buddhism is not a scripture-based religion, and consequently there is an enormous variety of interpretation of Buddhist texts and teaching on gender. Relying solely on the monasteries as the face of authentic Thai Buddhism is clearly problematic. Yet Buddhism informs and explains women's roles in Thailand, and the complexity of the links between them are explored at length. Unlike other authors, who have either blamed Buddhism for prostitution in Thailand or denied any link at all, the author examines the interplay between Buddhism, the state, and the construction of gender, and she argues convincingly for the need to understand Buddhism in its many manifestations as an influence on how Thai women see themselves and how they are perceived by the state and society.

Van Esterik pays particular attention to surfaces and to the importance of what might be interpreted elsewhere as superficial aspects. The gap between the actual and the ideal may be great, but this book rightly makes no claim that one of these is any more authentic or real than the other. Indeed, this work is premised on the importance of appearances, of 'keeping face' and appropriateness. This is shown most clearly when looking at representations and constructions of gender, as it is Thai women who

bear the brunt of this social pressure. During the Second World War, therefore, when Thailand was trying to position itself as being closer to the West than to Japan, Thai women were ordered to wear hats and Western clothing and to kiss their husbands goodbye as they set off to work ('Wear a hat for your country; hats will lead Thailand to greatness', quoted p. 103). More recently, the emphasis has been on wearing 'traditional' Thai outfits, especially in tourist brochures promoting 'exotic', and to tourists presumably authentic, Thailand under the tourist authority's new slogan of 'Amazing Thailand'. Thai nationalism has become mapped on to women's bodies and displayed through their dress and their behaviour. Given this, it is not surprising that the government has done little to end sex tourism, and has actually encouraged it for the tourist dollars it brings in and the revenue it earns the country. It is only when an international outcry was raised over child prostitution that the government made any attempt to end the use of women's bodies to boost its GNP.

Prostitution is an important aspect of this book, but it is one of Van Esterik's great strengths that she does not see prostitution as a straightforward reflection of the role of women in Thai society. As she points out, 'an analysis of Thai prostitution has often substituted for analysis of gender relations in Thailand, as if explaining Thai prostitution were adequate for understanding the position and condition of Thai women. There is a great danger in using prostitution as a proxy measure of women's status in Thailand. There is an even greater danger in separating out prostitution as a social problem or a health problem, and isolating it from other gender issues' (p. 85). Prostitution may well be one of the most visible roles that Thai women play, especially in the international tourist market, but it cannot be seen independently from their roles as daughters, wives, mothers, citizens, and Buddhists. This book is an impressive examination of gender in contemporary Thailand which skilfully avoids either idealizing or pathologizing it.

HEATHER MONTGOMERY

MUKULIKA BANERJEE, *The Pathan Unarmed: Opposition and Memory in the North-West Frontier*, Oxford: James Currey 2000. x, 238pp., Bibliography, Plates, Index. £40.00/£16.95.

The Pathan Unarmed is an important book for scholars of Pathan culture. It is not, by any means, a replacement for previous ethnographies, since Banerjee focuses on what is apparently a cultural anomaly. It is interesting precisely because it describes a situation in which a group of people seemingly violated their own cultural codes. For this reason, Banerjee's work can only truly be appreciated within the context of earlier studies of Pathan culture. South Asian scholars whose research is focused elsewhere in the sub-continent would also be well advised to read this book. Much attention has been paid to the leaders of the nationalist movement, such as Gandhi, Nehru, or Jinnah, but Banerjee shows how one successful leader employed pre-existing popular values and concepts to serve new purposes. These new purposes, and the values which supported them, were not incompatible with wider nationalist movements in other parts of

India. This book will hopefully cause South Asianists to reconsider critically certain implied divisions between so-called tribal and peasant groups. The values held by culture groups must be treated with considerable care. Banerjee provides an elegant demonstration of how cultural values may be adapted to a wider variety of expression than social analysts might predict.

Banerjee addresses a particularly intriguing puzzle in South Asian history. How did a group of notoriously aggressive Pathans (or Pukhtuns) create and sustain a non-violent nationalist movement? Using a combination of oral histories and archival data, Banerjee has reconstructed a highly readable account of the leadership and following of the Khudai Khidmatgar (the 'Servants of God') movement, which lasted from 1930 to 1947. The KK, or Red Shirt movement as the British referred to it, has been discussed in some South Asian literature, though up to now the focus has always been on the founder and leader of the movement, Abdul Gaffar Khan, more popularly known as Badshah Khan. He has been called the Frontier Gandhi because of his close friendship with Gandhi and his non-violent nationalist beliefs. Treatment of the KK leader has invariably centred on his close relationship with Mahatma Gandhi and neglected his independent conversion to non-violence, which Banerjee tells us occurred well before he became aware of Gandhi's movement. *The Pathan Unarmed* examines not only Badshah Khan's role as a charismatic leader but also the reasons why Pathans were prepared to redefine longstanding traditional values. Banerjee shows how Badshah Khan was able to adapt *pukhtunwali*, the moral code of Pathan culture, to render non-violent protest an indigenously approved course of action.

The strength of Banerjee's account is in her use of oral histories collected from former members of the KK movement. She cites seventy separate interviews with KK members ranging in age from seventy to 120–130. These oral accounts are treated critically and are supported for the most part by relevant archival information from colonial records. Through these stories, Banerjee builds a picture of Badshah Khan as a man as well as a leader of a nationalist political movement. Many KK members, for example, distinctly recall Badshah Khan's speeches and their own feelings about them. They explain how Badshah Khan taught them that highly prized social institutions like the blood feud had to be abandoned. Their collective energies had to be redirected to a different kind of *jihad*, or holy war, which was to be fought on the more demanding spiritual level. It would, of course, have been wholly inadequate simply to reproduce Badshah Khan's speeches or sections of his autobiography. It is the sense that his followers gave to these ideas that offers an understanding of the ways in which a people may be persuaded to alter radically how they express their own cultural values.

Banerjee builds on the ethnographies of Barth, Ahmed, and Lindholm to show how violence need not always be considered an integral aspect of *pukhtunwali*. Contemporary stereotypes of Pathans in Pakistan continue to reinforce the idea that Pathans are quick to resort to violence and bloodshed. Pathan masculinity is commonly thought to demand that a man be prepared to fight. Banerjee, following Lindholm, shows instead that the willingness to suffer extreme consequences was an indigenously approved expression of honour and masculinity. Going to jail became a sign of a brave and honourable person. KK members adopted the idea that one could express greater courage by facing one's enemy unarmed because it increased the risk of personal injury to oneself. The KK movement managed to incorporate indigenous values and

show how non-violence was not only a more effective protest, but a more courageous and noble expression of these values. That the movement endured for seventeen years suggests that it had indeed tapped into a set of indigenously approved cultural norms.

The one disappointment was Banerjee's brief treatment of the expression of colonialism through homoerotic sexuality. Unfortunately, she relies on Nandy's critique of colonialism and expands on notions of the effemination of the 'native'. This seems to rely far too much on giving primacy to an interpreted set of meta-messages behind what people actually said and did. Even if Nandy and Banerjee are correct that British men secretly desired Indian men, then I still fail to see the utility of this line of analysis. No one has effectively demonstrated that homoerotic desire was a primary motivating factor for British behaviour in India, but perhaps I hold a minority view on this issue. Happily for me, Banerjee does not dwell on the sexuality of colonialism, and the rest of the book is an unproblematic pleasure to read.

Methodologically, Banerjee provides a valuable discussion of the ways anthropologists may effectively employ oral histories. Mainstream historians, she tells us, are sceptical of personal memories, as they are often highly contextualised in contemporary situations. Memories are not only about the past but may be reconstructed to suit the needs of the present. The passages in which she justifies her heavy reliance on informants' memories and her explanation of the ways she was able to cross-check her data provide a useful reference for anyone intent on investigating recent historical events. There are limitations to what may be done with material of this sort, though as Banerjee's book demonstrates, what one may do is sufficiently worthwhile to justify the effort.

STEVEN LYON

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