

BOOK REVIEWS

FIONA BOWIE, DEBORAH KIRKWOOD and SHIRLEY ARDENER (eds.), *Women and Missions, Past and Present: Anthropological and Historical Perceptions*, Oxford and Providence: Berg Publishers 1993. xx, 279 pp., Indexes, Plates, Maps. £34.95/£14.95.

This book admirably achieves what it sets out to do, namely bring to light and analyse certain social aspects of 'women's work' in overseas Christian missions from the early nineteenth century onwards. The subject has not been explored before, at least in Britain. Its dozen or so contributions are divided between two complementary and equal sections, on the attitudes and achievements of women to and within the host culture, and on the effects of their labours on women in the host culture itself. Inevitably the contributions have to be historical and anthropological, though the former tend to be more numerous. There is also a bias towards Protestant churches and missions, and only three chapters are specifically concerned with the Roman Catholic Church. Such a bias is hard to correct in the light of the wealth of material readily available to researchers in Britain.

Not surprisingly, the role of women in the missionary field was and still is very different in the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. The most obvious difference lies in the fact that Protestant churches allow their ministers to marry. In the beginning, this caused severe problems in respect of the illnesses and often early deaths of husbands and wives and the education of their children. Further, there was the problem of whether or not the wife should help in the task of mission work and be as dedicated to it as her husband. Most missionary societies began to see the importance of converting and educating women as part of their overall work of Christianization. The Protestants were caught in a difficult trap. For the missionary society, there was the problem of finding greater amounts of money to support the missionary and his family, and the difficulty of ensuring that the wife would live up to certain requirements. On the other hand, there was the fear that if the male Protestant missionary was to go abroad unmarried, he might resort to illicit ways of satisfying his sexual desires—a fear not generally aired in Catholic circles. Strangely enough, this sort of issue was not seen to apply to single women going abroad in the name of a Protestant church. Thanks to the pioneering work of Hudson Taylor of the China Inland Mission, it soon became apparent, despite early opposition, that the single woman could make a great contribution to mission work in various ways, not only in preaching the Gospel, but also in education, both domestic and intellectual. The upsurge in unmarried women missionaries began in the late nineteenth century, and in more recent times, as many women, if not more, have undertaken missionary work than men. This has also occurred in the Roman Catholic Church, where missionary orders for women mushroomed in the nineteenth century, and where today, with the shortage of entrants into

the celibate priesthood, lay women and women in religious orders undertake parochial duties formerly performed only by priests.

Women in Protestant churches were faced with policies which did not face them in the Roman Catholic Church. Protestants were much more concerned with implanting their own social and 'civilizing' practices in the host culture, with the abolition of female nudity, polygamy, bridewealth, the kraal, native dress and so on. Great conflicts and miseries followed in the wake of such policies. In some places, by contrast, Roman Catholics showed a greater concern to try and wed their own theological doctrine and liturgical practice to the host religion and its cultural practices. Of course, other issues have to be faced. In cultures where marriage for women is *de rigueur*, the Church has attempted to show how the sexual status of religious sisters can be seen as acceptable. However, the common meeting-point with Protestants was and remains the problem of polygamy.

Although missionary societies met with a great deal of opposition from local men in the early days, when pressing for the education of women in the host culture, the policy has received general support, and despite some failures, schools and colleges for girls and women have continued to multiply. In India today, the role of women in the general affairs of society is now prominent, and for some it is seen as the hope of the future. The tap-root of this is acknowledged to be the early endeavours of women missionaries in the field of education.

It is to be regretted that nowhere in this book is the reader given any personal details of the contributors, two of whom are men and ten women—at least one assumes so, from the sometimes obscure first names. Perhaps this is a ploy on the part of the editors to maintain the anonymity of the authors, the best known of whom is probably Adrian Hastings.

Eight of the contributions which are specific to a country relate to Africa and one each to Peru, India and China. It is hoped that in the light of this limited sample, other volumes, as well produced as this one, will appear, covering more denominations, countries and types of activity. Should not medical work in its various forms be given more space?

All the chapters are of a high standard, and the editors must be congratulated on ensuring that, as the eye moves from one chapter to the next, the transition is smooth, which is remarkable for a set of essays such as this.

W. S. F. PICKERING

RUTH M. SOLIE (ed.), *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, Berkeley etc.: University of California Press 1993. 348 pp., Illustrations, Index.

'Is castration, after all, so bad?', wonders Carolyn Abbate (p. 233), in her essay on Strauss's *Salome*. The memoirs of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Italian *castrati* (men doctored in youth to preserve their high voices) suggest lives full of wit,

energy and lasting sexual relationships, the operation itself being 'just a nick'. As a metaphor of multi-gendered creativity imbued with an energetic though ambiguous sexuality, the search for the *castrato* is a key figure in Abbate's essay, and indeed in every essay in this stimulating collection. For all their diversity and internal argumentation, the basic critical stance implied or explicated in all of these essays follows what will be, to most readers, a familiar post-structuralist tack. Musical practices are structured by, and in turn structure, gender relations and connected forms of sexuality—the basic currency of difference and power. But for the post-structuralist there is a problem, or rather two related problems. The first is that like all the stories which, for many reasons, we tell ourselves to obscure an unpleasantly coercive reality, the stories told about gender and sexuality are not particularly persuasive or coherent—in fact, a slight shift in angle can show the critical historian or ethnographer just how incoherent they are. The second problem relates to the specificity of music as a form of performance: John Shepherd's chapter puts the point in a characteristically systematic way. As forms of industrial capitalism peculiar to the modern Western world increasingly valorize vision as the privileged mode of knowledge (and manipulation of that knowledge), forms of knowledge mediated through that vague and inherently relational medium, sound, move, by contrast, into an oppositional space, easily conflated with femininity. The publicly sanctioned expression of sound thus becomes a battleground, organizationally and intellectually co-opted by those who invest in patriarchy, but subverted (sometimes flamboyantly, like Kramer's Schumann in this volume, sometimes surreptitiously, like Brett's Britten) by those who do not.

The key axis in this volume runs between those who feel that the task is essentially ethnographic (identifying marginalized groups or individuals and hearing what they have to say) and those who feel that it is essentially semiotic (worrying away at texts to identify the cracks and inconsistencies, the points at which texts are no longer able to bear the meanings that their creators wish to invest in them). Although the two necessarily connect in various ways, the chapters by Morris, Brett, Wood, Reich and Cusick on, respectively, opera queens, Britten, Smyth, Clara Schumann and Caccini fall into the former category, while Tick's study of Ives, McClarey's analysis of Brahms's Third Symphony and Abbate's discussion of Strauss's *Salome* fall into the latter. From any point of view, the working notion of ethnography explicitly evoked in Morris's article (p. 186 n. 6) is weak, his ethnography drawing almost entirely on newspaper articles, novels and cartoons. The irony revealed here is that post-structuralists find themselves ever more dependent on texts and their meanings the more they try to escape them. If we are to understand the social and cultural mechanisms which invest the messy art of music with its power and consequence, an ethnographic approach which connects meaning and practice, ideas and actions, with social and cultural form through the observation of people, places and technologies seems vital. The contributions of the two ethnomusicologists, Robertson on Argentina and Hawaii and Koskoff on Hasidic Jews in New York, are exemplary in this regard, and it is a pity that less attention is paid to them by the other contributors, who otherwise copiously cite and argue with each other.

This volume constitutes a kind of *Writing Culture* for a new and self-aware generation of musicologists. The impact of cultural studies, psychoanalysis, gender and gay studies and Geertzian anthropology is evident throughout in an intellectual field

which has historically denied its social connectedness. The book as a whole conveys a tone of buoyancy and excitement, communicating (to this reviewer, at least) a strong sense of purpose and direction, tempered by careful consideration of the limitations that these new techniques themselves impose. One must agree with the editor that musicologists can actually 'profit from their customary methodological behindhandedness' (p. 3).

Anthropologists interested in music should definitely read this book. It reminds us that we can no longer afford to ignore those we still often refer to as 'traditional musicologists'—they have long since abandoned the kind of textual positivism we used to associate with them. For anyone who still believes that performance (musical or otherwise) simply reproduces the common-sense categories of dominant cultural experience, this book provides fifteen eloquent counter-examples. And for those whose anthropological interest in other musics began with disenchantment with 'our own', it reminds us that the anthropology of music excludes the Western art-music tradition at its peril.

MARTIN STOKES

JOY HENDRY, *Wrapping Culture: Politeness, Presentation, and Power in Japan in other Societies*, Oxford: Clarendon Press (Oxford Studies in the Anthropology of Cultural Forms) 1993. xv, 180 pp., Bibliography, Index, Figures, Plates. £30.00.

The 1990 book *Unwrapping Japan* (which took its title from Joy Hendry's contribution to it) raised the issue of the place of Japan in the discipline of anthropology: why did the work of ethnographers specializing in Japan never seem to make it into mainstream theory? Was part of the problem that these regional specialists had somehow become too parochial? Should they not incorporate more current theory into their work? In looking back at that volume, and in considering Hendry's career as an anthropologist of Japan, I now wonder whether the wrong questions were being asked. Perhaps Japanese anthropology was marginalized for so long simply because it was somewhat ahead of its time. In this postmodern world, when ethnographers have to grapple with issues of accountability, orientalism and holism, specialists on Japan can actually say, 'Welcome to the club!'

Since the first Western study of Japan was carried out in the 1930s by John Embree, anthropologists of this modernizing (and finally modern, if not postmodern) society have had to take note of the fact that, as well as doing anthropology themselves, Japanese scholars read, criticize and review Westerners' work. As a result, writers such as Smith, Plath, Cornell and Befu (to name the North Americans) and Ronald Dore (to name a British forerunner) have relied on empirical description and a clear style of presentation. This lack of theorizing jargon may have led outsiders to disdain Japanese ethnographers at the very time they should have been looking to them for clues on how to cope with the almost paralysing issues raised by postmodernism in anthropology.

The work of Joy Hendry is a case in point. With her first book, *Marriage in Changing Japan* (1981), Hendry became an important voice in European studies of Japan. Her following books, *Becoming Japanese* (1986) and *Understanding Japanese Society* (1987), continued her contribution to the discipline. Hendry's style is deceptively simple: her theory is never overbearing, nor just tacked on, but instead is to be found in her very manner of presentation. Thus although all of Hendry's books have been shaped by her Oxford structural-functionalist background, this theoretical bent does not mean that the non-specialist reader has been excluded. Her books have long had a strong following among non-anthropologists as well as her fellow specialists: there is always something to be learned from them, and different readers will profit accordingly.

Wrapping Culture illustrates this point very well indeed. The theme of the book is that various forms of presentation or wrapping cannot be ignored, and, I would add, Hendry's style of presentation should not be taken for granted either. From the outset, the book invites readers in: its tone is warm, and the subject-matter is made clear. And in the following chapters, we are led through a maze of information that many other ethnographers would have made it impossible to follow. Thus gift-wrapping, polite language, clothing, the structuring of space, the relationships of people and the ordering of time are all laid out for us in an extremely accessible manner. The comparisons with various societies make it impossible for the reader to think that Japan is in any way unusual. Then, in her last three pages, Hendry makes a few simple points whose implications range far and wide outside the scope of this book. In one key paragraph (p. 172), she points us to the heart of the labyrinth: 'Wrapping in Japan is a veritable "cultural template", or perhaps we could add another metaphor and call it a "cultural design". It makes possible the marking of the whole range of life stages and statuses, thus representing, and recreating, the hierarchical order which, in turn, gives rise to the locus of power relationships. Different manifestations of this organizing principle reflect and reinforce one another...and they thus also offer almost unlimited possibilities of communication, verbal and non-verbal, and for the exercise of power.' There are links here with other theorists, such as Bourdieu and his concept of 'habitus'; and it is obvious that Hendry's strength lies in her grasp of wider anthropological theory, her deep knowledge of Japan, and her ability to communicate both in comprehensible language.

Thus in one monograph, Hendry provides various signposts along the path from Japanese ethnography to general anthropological theory. If there is a complaint to be made about the book, it is that she errs on the side of caution. But perhaps Hendry is right to be restrained, stopping before the leap is made into grandiose speculation: it is enough that a start has been made.

D. P. MARTINEZ

GEOFFREY SAMUEL, *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies*, Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press 1993. x, 725 pp., Tables, Appendix, References, Indexes. £51.50/\$79.25.

Tibetan Buddhism is a highly complex, technical and esoteric subject, and many anthropologists of Tibetan societies have understandably shied away from tackling it head-on. For the outsider, the task of making sense of it is even more forbidding. As a guide to its history, personalities, institutions and doctrines, Geoffrey Samuel's massive survey is therefore extremely welcome. For once, the blurb the publisher has placed on the dust-jacket is entirely justified: 'The greatest strength of this book is its encyclopedic character. This is an authoritative book that should prove useful to specialists and non-specialists alike' (R. A. Paul). Samuel has indeed synthesized a vast amount of material, some of it published in very obscure places, some of it previously unpublished.

More than this, however, *Civilized Shamans* puts historical developments within Tibetan Buddhism into a comprehensible geographical, political and sociological framework. Anyone who has struggled with the dense technicalities and rationalist biases of Snellgrove's *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism* (Serindia 1987) will be especially glad of Samuel's even-handed historical and anthropological approach. Although occasionally, and perhaps inevitably, repetitious, both the text and the overall structure are always admirably clear. No short review can do justice to all the ideas and interpretations Samuel advances.

Samuel's main explanatory tool is a distinction between clerical and shamanic Buddhism. Clerical Buddhism emphasizes control, rationality, book-learning, hierarchy, morality and the gradual path to enlightenment. Shamanic Buddhism rejects all of these and makes use of altered states of consciousness which are available to the many without the mediation of a clerical hierarchy and without long monastic training, in the name of instant, or at least more immediate, enlightenment. In the Theravada Buddhist countries of Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka, strong states succeeded in establishing a highly clerical form of Buddhism as orthodoxy. This made any shamanic tendencies within Theravada Buddhism distinctly peripheral, mostly pushing shamanism into low-status, non-Buddhist contexts. In Tibet, by contrast, the state was always relatively weak, so that although the centres of power in Lhasa and Shigatse attempted to establish more clerical forms of Buddhism, they were never powerful enough to impose them throughout the country.

Thus a major theme of Samuel's book is the tension between state-backed clerical Buddhism, of which the Gelukpa order founded by Tsongk'apa and led by the Dalai Lama is the prime example, and other, less centralized orders and freelance lamas. Tantric forms of Buddhism are identified with the shamanic pole. Samuel argues: 'An effectively centralized state in Tibet would never have tolerated the kind of free-ranging and autonomous power that Tantric lamas and *gompa* exercised over the centuries' (p. 142).

Samuel is at his most convincing when showing how these different emphases within Tibetan Buddhism correlate with different degrees of centralization. (It is interesting that it is precisely on this point, and nowhere else, that he allows himself a sustained and powerful critique of other Tibetologies for their propagation of a

'Lhasa-centric' view.) The Gelukpas insist on a long and strict monastic training before starting on Tantra, a stage to which only an elite minority gains access. The Gelukpas were not just backed by the state in central Tibet: they *were* the state. In reaction to the strength of the Gelukpas, there arose a countermovement called Rimed, the 'eclectic' or 'unlimited' movement which in recent times has provided, according to Samuel, the intellectual background for most non-Gelukpa lamas. Rimed was more ecumenical, favoured the study of the original Indian texts over the scholastic manuals of the Gelukpas, and gave a prominent position to non-celibate practitioners and to elements of folk religion. Samuel repeatedly emphasizes that the rise and growth of the Rimed movement having occurred in eastern Tibet, a long way from the control of the Gelukpa movement in Lhasa, was no coincidence.

At the same time, the clerical and shamanic wings of Tibetan Buddhism shared a great deal. The non-Gelukpa orders most associated with the 'shamanic' polarity, the Nying-ma and the quasi-Buddhist Bön, have celibate monastic institutions and leaders. Conversely, the Gelukpa itself gives a place to the 'shamanic' practice of abandoning academic study in order to live as a hermit and practise Tantric meditation.

When Samuel moves beyond Tibet and uses the same framework to make sense of Indian religious history, and beyond that of all religious history, readers may begin to have doubts about whether the clerical–shamanic dichotomy is adequate to the task. He sees Buddhism and yoga as shamanic in origin. While in his theory some parts of Tibetan Buddhism are more shamanic than others, it is clear that he thinks that, in so far as the clerical tendency is anti-shamanic, it is a deviation from the Buddha's original insight. This part of Samuel's framework, stressing origins and continuities and essentializing shamanism, or so it seems, has a somewhat old-fashioned feel to it (for all that he cites Deleuze and Gattari on 'nomadic science' in his conclusion). But where evolutionist writers of the past might have denigrated shamanism, Samuel celebrates it as egalitarianism and individualist.

One consequence of the close connection Samuel sees between shamanism and Buddhism is that all shamanism is viewed through Buddhist spectacles. At one point he writes, 'dying to ordinary life is perhaps a prerequisite of shamanic power in any society' (p. 557). This would, I think, be news to many lowland Amazonian shamans. Nor, at least in this book, does Samuel face the problem that much shamanism is intimately involved with blood sacrifice, and that in so far as it supports a morality at all, it is very different from the Buddhist one. Thus, although his framework is very useful in elucidating contrasts *within* Tibetan Buddhism, it would seem to muddy the waters when comparing Tibetan Buddhist specialists with those non-Buddhist mediums and ritual specialists more conventionally known as shamans. *Stan Mumford's Himalayan Dialogue: Tibetan Lamas and Gurung Shamans in Nepal* (University of Wisconsin Press 1987) and David Holmberg's *Order in Paradox: Myth, Ritual, and Exchange among Nepal's Tamang* (Cornell University Press 1989) are better at giving ethnographically grounded pictures of the competitive contrasts between lamas and shamans.

Part of the problem here is that it looks as if the present book was once even longer, and that it was shortened by separating the theoretical argument and publishing it as *Mind, Body, and Culture: Anthropology and the Biological Interface* (Cambridge University Press 1990). It is there, as we are frequently told in *Civilized Shamans*, that

the full case is made for seeing the shamanic as a universal mode of apprehending reality. Traces of the original manuscript are still to be seen in sentences such as the following: 'Within the shamanic framework, the establishment of proper practices of behaviour, as prescribed by Buddhism, would lead to the prosperity of society through the attainment of balance between the modal states making up the overall cultural pattern' (p. 451).

It would be wrong to leave the impression that the rest of the book is as obscure. I would guess that the majority of those interested in the subject-matter of *Civilized Shamans* will be relatively indifferent to the global argument concerning shamanism and modal states and will discard the references to them (though some, myself included, will want to pursue the argument set out in *Mind, Body, and Culture*). What they will be left with is still a superb, richly illustrated overview of a fascinating but forbiddingly complex region. Because of the rationalist and anti-shamanic (in Samuel's terms) biases of all previous attempts, it has had until now no adequate guide. All future anthropological work on Tibetan Buddhism will have to take *Civilized Shamans* as a major point of reference.

DAVID N. GELLNER

SIMERAN M. S. GELL, *The Ghotul in Muria Society*, Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers 1992. x, 259 pp., Bibliography, Index, Plates, Figures, Maps. £28.00.

The Muria are a Gondi-speaking tribal group of Bastar District, Madhya Pradesh, an area usually considered one of India's tribal heartlands, though Hindu castes are also present. Gell's book offers rich ethnography, to which theoretical concerns are generally subordinated, although a comparative perspective is adopted where appropriate. One of her main tasks is to revise some of Verrier Elwin's previous work on the Muria, namely his lengthy *The Muria and their Ghotul* (Bombay: Oxford University Press 1947), widely regarded as his *magnum opus*.

The *ghotul* is a village dormitory for young people, often found in tribal India, though under different names, and with differing social and ritual implications. It is clearly central to Muria life, though Gell regards Elwin's picture of it as an idyllic, care-free 'kingdom of the young' (to cite the French translation of his book) as romanticized, inaccurate, and divorced from its social context in most respects, producing anxieties and tensions quite as much as life outside it. Although an essential part of any village, she regards it as structurally opposed to the village as a community, and she draws an analogy between the village giving its young to the *ghotul* and its women to other villages (through a system of symmetric spouse exchange through father's sister's daughter's marriage). However, at another level inter-gender relations within the *ghotul* are opposed to those of marriage in being between children, being initiated by the girl, not leading to betrothal or being between the betrothed, and excluding sex. The idiom of 'sleeping together', used in the *ghotul*, has an ideally platonic reference,

and although pregnancies do occur, they lead to the girl's permanent exclusion from the *ghotul* and early marriage. Elwin's association of the *ghotul* with unambiguous sexual liberation is therefore also found to be wrong. Moreover, there seems to be a preference for *ghotul* relationships or *jor* to be between persons not regarded as marriageable, although Gell's statements are not entirely clear on this point. However, there is obviously a degree of interference between *ghotul* ideals and the alliance structure. *Jor* relationships quite often lead to elopement, and although such liaisons are often broken up by the *siyan* or elders, some may be allowed to endure. This is because it is felt that they may prove to be more stable than the typical marriage, which is generally characterized early on by the wife's frequent returns home (these can be seen as a consequence of the sudden disruption of *ghotul* relationships, which are shaped by sentiment, for the sake of a marriage to an often unfamiliar person). Gell ends her book by assimilating *ghotul* relationships to the practice of pre-puberty marriages which is common for girls in India, though it often takes place to an object or token husband rather than to one's lifelong partner. For Gell, it is Hindu influence that explains why the Muria should send their girls to the *ghotul*, while the remoter Hill Maria should not. Another detail on the *ghotul* worth recording is that boys' successes in respect of their relationships with girls are expressed not in terms of the number of relationships they manage to have, but of the number of refusals they have returned to girls' attempted initiatives.

In the earlier part of the book, Gell discusses other aspects of Muria society, including the categorization of space in the village and its surrounding territory, with which Muria, like certain other tribes (Juang, Bonda), identify closely. This is important for her thesis that the difference between tribe and caste in India is that tribes are territorial and non-hierarchical, and therefore unlike castes in both respects. The affinal alliance system is also described in some detail. The main problem here is Gell's attempt to see the opposed terms *dadabhai* (agnatic) and *saga* (marriageable) as denoting sociocentric moieties after the Australian fashion. Actually, they appear to be not groups, but categories applied differentially by different descent groups in such a way that third-party relationships cannot be read off the nature of the relationship between any two groups (as would be the case in a true moiety system). What is a little confusing is that each clan is linked with a prototypical affinal clan in another village, though it tends not to have a monopoly of alliances with it in practice. The preference for FZD marriage is reinforced by a ban on direct sister exchange, failing which this system might be one of straightforward bilateral cross-cousin marriage.

Like many ethnographers, Gell attempts at times to see her group as unique, though in fact they have a lot in common with other Indian tribes. However, there are some untypical features, such as the absence of *ghar-jawai* marriages (son-in-law adoption) and of even a token brideprice (feasting is the only important prestation connected with marriage, which is also where *ghotul* boys perform a service for the village in doing the cooking). Other interesting details are the assimilation of children to gods (a child is the main priest), the absence of verbal promises (food-sharing cements agreements), and the difference in life-cycles for men and women, which lead progressively to marked female dominance in old age. In general, the book concentrates on social structure and the politics of the *ghotul* and affinal alliance systems, and less on ritual etc., though there are accounts of birth and naming rites, and of Muria

views of conception. According to the latter, children are inherently *in* the womb rather than being placed there through intercourse or in some other way. Pregnancy goes along with the married state and is opposed to the menstruation of unmarried girls, another reason for the confusion of categories that *ghotul* pregnancy entails.

The quality of writing and analysis in the book is consistently high, with careful attention to detail and sensitive handling of its implications. It is an important addition to the literature on this area.

ROBERT PARKIN

BIKRAM NARAYAN NANDA, *Contours of Continuity and Change: The Story of the Bonda Highlanders*, New Delhi: Sage Publications 1994. 228 pp., Bibliography, Index, Tables. £30.00.

This title is ostensibly a book about the Bonda, a Munda-speaking group of southern Orissa, India, and their engagement with modernity in the shape of Indian government development institutions. However, the author eschews the monographic format, preferring to regard his work as a collection of essays. As a result, the Bonda appear largely as a peg on which to hang a series of critical disquisitions of a theoretical nature on such diverse subjects as subsistence and capitalism, education, corruption and time, drawing inspiration variously not only from the Bonda, but also from Bourdieu, Meillassoux and Foucault.

Nanda wishes to get away from old tribal categories and the anyway problematic distinction between caste and tribe in India, but he sees this shift less in terms of the inherent ambiguity of boundaries than of a historical process of cultural convergence, in which both castes and tribes are becoming similar under modern conditions. These changes are often encouraged by local officials and may be distrusted by Bonda. They include a shift from subsistence to irrigated agriculture, the disappearance of hunting as an economic activity, the introduction of education and health services, and the extension of state authority to the highlands through local police and other officials. Many of the formerly collective aspects of life have thus been 'privatized', in Nanda's phrase, and the introduction of money has not only led to agricultural wage labour but also to a view of time as something which can be both saved and wasted. Change, Nanda points out, has thus taken the form of a reconfiguration of relationships rather than physical intrusion in the form of new roads and buildings.

Nanda is good on the limited reception these changes have been accorded by Bonda. On the one hand, plough cultivation has increased male dominance, after a period in which the decline of hunting had deprived men of activity, which resulted in the myth of the laziness of the tribal male in the British period. On the other hand, although money may have allowed certain Bonda to avoid having to sell their land to stay out of debt, the wage and welfare economy is not developed enough for subsistence agriculture to be given up entirely. Further, local moneylenders—normally a byword for rapacity—are actually preferred by Bonda to officials as a source of help

because of their greater flexibility as regards repayment (is the old view of time at work here?). Finally, education is held in suspicion by the older generation, since it deprives them of the help of their children at times when agricultural work is heavy, and to them it seems to have more to do with giving the teachers a wage than with tribal 'uplift'.

There are some doubtful moments in the account. Nanda's depiction of how things were before—the greater adventurousness of the children, the greater willingness to help others, etc.—is impregnated with romanticism. His assumption of the continuity of a related group, the Gadaba, back to the eleventh century seems ill-founded, as does his account of the communal Sumegelirak ritual purely in terms of history: surely both must be at least partly mythologized. In fact, Nanda's obvious historicism pervades the book, even though, for example, it is clearly only the purely ritualized hunting of today that gives the Bonda identity in terms of their past. More concrete may prove to be Nanda's discussion of the entry of aspects of tribal religion into the Hindu tradition. He also gives an account of the Tamman Dora millenarian movement against the British around the turn of the century, one account in which he *is* able to incorporate 'real' history.

Unusual in its approach to tribal India, there is much to be derived from this book, provided one can stomach the sometimes self-indulgent theoretical discussion. Its main strengths are perhaps its analysis of corruption—still a rarely treated topic in anthropology—and its demonstration of the piecemeal success and acceptance of development by those who are its object.

ROBERT PARKIN

PAT CAPLAN (ed.), *Understanding Disputes: The Politics of Argument*, Oxford: Berg 1995. 248 pp., Bibliography, Index. £29.95/£12.95.

This volume is a collection of papers in honour of P. H. Gulliver, written by his students and colleagues. The theme has been chosen to reflect one of his major concerns, but the contributors also seek 'to bring the study of dispute back to the centre of anthropology' (p. 1). The editor sees this as leading 'straight to the key issues in anthropology—norms and ideology, power, rhetoric and oratory, personhood and agency, morality, meaning and interpretation' (p. 1)—and she laments the relegation of such work to a marginalized position as a subdiscipline known as the anthropology of law.

Most of the papers set out to follow Gulliver's emphasis on ethnography, gathered through the minute study of personal relations, and several bring the reader into the most intimate situations. The range of disputes discussed is quite large, however, and the papers move from national disputes over access to water sources, through 'gentlemanly values' in two sets of political circles and an emerging middle class in another, to family wrangles over failed marriages, intra-family strife over death and funerals, and concepts of passion and compassion. The contexts considered are also extremely

various, and the reader is introduced to discrepant values in locations as far apart as nineteenth- and twentieth-century Ireland, rural Nepal, London, Lagos, and more specific African locations in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

The first two papers, however, adopt a theoretical approach. One compares the ideology of Habermas with Gulliver's empiricism, the latter in the context of the work of Gluckman and Bohannen (Falk Moore). The other considers the move from judicial institutions to negotiation as a more 'civilized' means of dispute resolution (Nadel). Nadel demonstrates, by examining a series of water disputes, that both systems favour the more powerful nations, despite their ostensible efforts to incorporate an approach that was previously more characteristic of the weaker peoples. Nadel thus illustrates Caplan's appeal in the introduction to the book not to neglect the power relations involved in a dispute.

This is an issue which recurs in many of the papers, of course, but there are also examples of resistance. In her chapter on an Irish town in the nineteenth century, Silverman discerns the emergence of a middle class out of a dispute between a landowner and the town's inhabitants, whose determination to resist the overbearing exercise of the former's superior position allows her to follow Gulliver's lead and describe 'how individual actions give rise to a collectivity' (p. 133). In the other Irish context, of differences between the leaders and members of a youth club, Gaetz's excellent paper cites examples of resistance working and failing, but his most powerful point is about the different sets of experience and values which each group draws upon through their differing class backgrounds.

That disputes between these two groups will certainly continue Gaetz is in no doubt, but he has identified important aspects of the disputing process, and this is the conclusion of another paper, by Elisabeth Colson, about the Gwembe Valley in Zambia. She criticizes some anthropologists for treating dispute resolution as a kind of ritual aimed at the maintenance of harmony, and seeks rather to suggest that the disputing process may be more significant than any resolution. Here too, there has been a shift between negotiation and adjudication, this time from the former to the latter, unlike the American move in the opposite direction. Lionel Caplan's paper, about the minority Limbu people of East Nepal, illustrates all these points about process, negotiation and the inequality of power, and explicitly follows Gulliver's emphasis on understanding the political and historical context of any dispute and the 'categories of meaning by which the participants themselves comprehend their experience' (p. 156).

Sometimes the parties to a dispute do not share these categories of meaning, and each seeks to manipulate the situation to suit their own understanding. Johnson's study of gentlemanly values in London and Lagos demonstrates how the same categories may be interpreted differently for different claims on the same code of public morality. She investigates why in London, bankers accused of using inside knowledge for their own private benefit were deemed to have conducted themselves with honesty and propriety, while in Lagos, when the President was accused of putting public funds in a bank in which his family had interests, he was found guilty of improper conduct.

Pat Caplan's paper about marital disputes on Mafia Island, Tanzania, brings out clearly the way different sets of norms may be invoked by the same people under different circumstances. Here, the three bodies of Islamic law, Tanzanian law and local custom are available to make possible a continual negotiation of rules and behaviour,

allowing a situation of contested norms to be counterposed to relations of unequal power. In her detailed discussion of a specific long-term dispute, she clearly illustrates her original claim that the study of dispute opens up an understanding of key areas of anthropology, and she also brings the whole subject into a mainstream discussion of contested metaphors.

This is a book worth reading, and quite appropriate for undergraduate courses. It gives the flavour of recent ethnography in bite-sized, digestible chunks and illustrates theoretical ideas not only about disputes, but also, as Caplan points out, about more fundamental aspects of social life. Gulliver, like his namesake, has left a good legacy, it seems.

JOY HENDRY

VICTORIA HEYER YOUNG, *Becoming West Indian: Culture, Self and Nation in St Vincent*, Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press 1993. 229 pp., Maps, Tables, References, Index. £38.25.

Much has been made in recent West Indian ethnographies of a creole dualism of values, involving those associated with higher status and lighter skins (the legacy of the British colonial administration) and the flexible and informal popular responses to them, intolerant of pretension or claims to moral superiority. Following Peter Wilson's (Providencian) terminology, these values are generally called *respectability* and *reputation* (elsewhere *no behaviour* and *worthlessness*). Wilson and others (notably Abrahams, Austin, Besson and Reisman) have shown how this opposition is engendered less in abstract moral values than in the individual's negotiation and strategic play in dyadic relationships, through which family ties, formal marriage, education and employment allow variable and uncertain access to material resources. In this book, Young shows how, in the Windward Island of St Vincent, first self-government and later independence have reasserted creole values in order to provide the 'national culture'. Ever since plantation slaves sided with the planters against Black Carib (Maroon/Amerindian) revolts in the eighteenth century, Vincentian identity has been ironically double-voiced, enthusiastically acknowledging the British cultural tradition, its language, sensibility and political institutions, but also countering these in the oppositional stance of a highly individualistic yeomanry jealous of local autonomy and tolerant of idiosyncrasy and popular justice. Young favours a complementary rather than a simply antagonistic opposition of *respectability* and *reputation*, arguing that the acquisition of education and wealth by the poor has not necessarily led to a reaction against demotic local values. Since independence, a buoyant local affirmation of carnival, calypso, satire and *rudeness* has achieved a national identity without nationalism: even the St Vincent police force now has its official steel band.

ROLAND LITTLEWOOD

STEPHANIE C. KANE, *The Phantom Gringo Boat: Shamanic Discourse and Development in Panama*, Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press 1994. xxv, 241 pp., Drawings, Photographs, Map, Endnotes, Glossary, Bibliography, Index. \$59.00 (cloth), \$19.95 (paper).

The title of this book, *The Phantom Gringo Boat*, is, according to the author, an Emberá shaman's interpretation of the demise of his people through outside intrusion. It is an enchanting metaphor and a reminder of so many other encroachments from the outside world upon countless indigenous groups in South America and elsewhere. The promise of some Conradian journey taken by an anthropologist to discover the devastating effects of a transformed people is a very enticing theme indeed. It is unfortunate Kane's book cannot embody what the title seems to offer. The author does not appear to be much interested in how the social institutions of the Emberá Indians (a Chocó group) of Panama have changed. Nor does Kane bother to relate how the Emberá form shared cultural ideas with other related groups, such as the Noanamá, Catio, and Chami, who are all considered to be part of the Chocó Indian complex. It is clear from other Chocó studies like Donald Tayler's excellent ethnography of the Noanamá (*Embarkations: Ethnography and Shamanism of the Chocó Indians of Colombia*, Oxford: Pitt Rivers Museum 1996, Monograph No. 6) that such indigenous groups had a very different social past.

Perhaps the most perplexing aspect of Kane's work is its total lack of analysis of Emberá social organization. The only semblance of kinship connections among the Emberá mentioned by the author are stilted passages quoted from fieldwork notes of so-and-so being the mother's brother, the wife, or the father of so-and-so. This is simply aimless meandering. There are no figures clarifying for the reader such consanguineous relationships among the Emberá groups that Kane studied. Similarly, it is curious that Kane should choose to enrich her text with strings of postmodernist phrases. Such superficial jargon is so prevalent throughout the book that one can only guess at the author's intentions. She fills pages in a florid and ribald manner by writing of 'the magical real into the politics of the everyday', with 'contours of social space...focused frantically, romantically on the Indian', while 'enhancing the kindred's ring of mutual transformation through synchronous eating', though 'through desire and deceit, action can be taken on the real' (pp. 18, 20, 31, 51). After reading several similar bedazzling passages throughout the book, one might expect a more in-depth examination of *Finnegan's Wake* to become possible from the profits of such an endeavour.

It is a shame for the Emberá Indians that their cosmological world and their social ideas are not presented with more care. As anthropologists well know, some of their own writings can become the last records of disappearing languages, peoples and worlds. Kane's translations of her field recordings do provide the reader with some interesting insight into Emberá mythology. Yet she does not contextualize these recordings with a more profound insight as to what they might signify for Emberá cosmology. Nor does she explain the history of Christian influences upon the Emberá through missionary teachings. It might be important to know how the Emberá have adapted to such shifts and what they thought about them. Kane's analytic descriptions do not do the Emberá justice either, since they are awkward and threadbare. One

typical passage from her transcribed notes of shamanic chants is the following: 'Whisked out of reality without so much as a splash, a man taking his sick uncle to another river for a cure disappears. Only his hat remained: a sign of impossible denotation, dangling, nagging for placement' (p. 95). Is it challenging to picture this hat without its owner's head, beckoning in a provocative 'dangling' manner and providing yet another possibility for 'nagging' the reader? It is obvious that the author has been 'whisked out of reality'. It takes demanding effort to find a page with one or two solid explanatory statements about the essence of Emberá mythology, ritual or social thought.

Some of the most interesting transcriptions are those which convey the impression that Emberá shamans unify Christian mythology with their own cosmological views. Emberá concepts of evil are intriguing. It is difficult to grasp why the author does not interpret such syncretic beliefs or put forth some original ideas concerning syncretism. The anthropological literature is replete with sources of social groups like the Emberá who combine Christian ideas with their own cosmological concepts. It is ironic that Kane chooses to ignore the vast literature on South American syncretic practices. By neglecting the analysis of the disparate elements inherent in the Emberá belief system, the author has left out vital information which might have been the most fascinating aspect of Kane's book. There would have been no need to filter the text through a superficial lens by constructing all sorts of postmodern jargon.

If the reader is supposed to gather from the title that Emberá shamanism and change will be explained in a coherent fashion, they are sadly mistaken. Kane's book does not develop any thoughtful understanding of Emberá religious practices nor of how this Indian group has been affected by the outside Panamanian world. What she hopes to accomplish leaves much to the imagination. The reason for making such speculations is that Kane simply refuses objectivity. She moves constantly toward reflexive and subjective opinions about her Emberá subjects and about herself. The dilemma for the reader is to discern how to get at the social facts in her material. Her role as interpreter of Emberá shamanic practices is lost in remarks like, 'I became positioned as a discursive subject within a web of shamanic allegation' (p. 102). Kane continues in a revealing stream-of-consciousness style which is supposed to express some absurd existential crisis during her fieldwork among the Emberá. She mentions pulling out a mirror afterwards to bring herself into a sense of 'rationality' (whatever that means) and fixing her senses on the 'real' to avoid the shaman's curse. She describes her crisis experience (fears of shamanic practices?) as being caught in 'paranoid strands of shamanic retribution' (p. 102). Such passages are examples of what Kane apparently thinks is good ethnography. In fact, she has managed to create for herself a tower of Babel of the first order with such choice words and semantic constructions. Unable to make a purposeful ethnography, she defies all comparison with other works on South American Indians.

It is equally curious why the author has chosen to use terms like 'sentient beings' or to describe the Emberá as the 'most fully human of sentient beings' (p. 105). It would be more useful if Kane had asked the Emberá if they felt themselves to be 'sentient'. The problematic issue throughout this work is why the author has chosen terms that have no or little value for good research and scholarship. It is unclear whether Kane's intentions are to lambast South American ethnography or to have her

work taken seriously. The confusion lies with her flippant use of the English language and her reliance on vernacular phrases. Hence there is much to suggest that the book will not be remembered as a significant contribution to the social anthropology of South America. What may be remembered are some translated passages from Emberá shamans and storytellers. Perhaps future generations of Emberá will read Kane's work and wonder what motivated her to depict them in such a way.

Emberá may also wonder why such effervescent language was used in writing this book. To know the extent of this truth, it is far better for the reader to judge Kane's words for themselves as a parting comment on the work as a whole. 'Communion with people whose features you transcode as strange, acknowledged unfamiliarity sparks ambiguity and taboo. Telltale signs of the inscrutable, potentially horror-provoking seduction rise in the clear, cool current of the river, diffracting and distracting the air on blazing rockstone beaches (or submerged), edging dark green purple brown hush of bush. Once you are face to face, the devil's subtle weirdness must be broached head on, but they are damn hard to discern. (They are always in another, never in you except as illness introjected.) Dizzying murk, chains of signifiers like cobwebs in a vampire's abandoned lair, sparks firing off so nervously they take on a spin, jumping impulses form strong-featured monsters lustrously guarding culture's boundaries. Would you be so bold as to risk becoming myth-making fodder just for temptation's sake?' (p. 138).

JOHN P. LINSTROTH

MARSHALL SAHLINS, *How 'Natives' Think: About Captain Cook, For Example*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1995. 328 pp. Index, Bibliography, Figures, Maps. £19.95/\$18.75.

After two years in print, Marshall Sahlins' response to Obeyesekere's critique of the apotheosis of Captain Cook by the Hawaiian islanders in the eighteenth century remains a centre of heated debate among anthropologists. The issues raised by Obeyesekere and Sahlins' response involve much more than the specific events leading up to and following the death of Cook on 14 February 1779. They hinge upon the validity of post-modern critiques of ethnography and ethnohistory, and the reliability of evidence filtered through agents of colonialism.

Sahlins begins his work with an introduction to Obeyesekere's critique of his interpretation of the events surrounding the death of Captain Cook. Since the 1970s, Sahlins has supported the view that Cook was taken to be the Hawaiian god Lono, in an effort to establish his ideas about structural transformation in a historical context. Obeyesekere takes issue with this interpretation, accusing Sahlins of participating in the imperial myth of 'native' thought, which portrayed the islanders as incapable of distinguishing between a British sea captain and one of their own gods. Sahlins proceeds to argue convincingly against Obeyesekere's critique, demonstrating where Obeyesekere misused material, misquoted sources, and pieced together a generally

unconvincing defence of his position. Sahlins' handling of the historical evidence is impeccable in its thoroughness, and his critique of Obeyesekere's methods leaves his argument in tatters. Sahlins' scholarship leaves the reader thoroughly convinced that the Hawaiians did indeed perceive Cook as the god Lono, before and after his death, and that Cook/Lono's unexpected return outside the ritual schedule prompted a structural crisis which motivated his murder.

After establishing the evidential basis for his position, Sahlins explores some of Obeyesekere's motives for his initial critique. Sahlins offers some insightful ideas about the construction of knowledge which undermine what Obeyesekere views as a participation in colonial hegemony. Sahlins argues against Obeyesekere's use of practical rationality as a universal claim to rational thought which would preclude Hawaiians from interpreting the arrival of Cook as anything other than the arrival of a British sea captain. Sahlins also criticizes Obeyesekere's claim that as a Sri Lankan he somehow has greater access to Hawaiian thought.

What Sahlins fails to dwell upon enough is Obeyesekere's political motivations. The intensity of Sahlins' refutation of Obeyesekere's critique, buoyed up by extensive appendixes which answer specific issues in minute detail, belies Sahlins' preoccupation with a true and accurate portrayal of events. It seems apparent that Obeyesekere is more concerned with the ambiguity of events and the lack of any one 'true' portrayal. It is in this aspect that Sahlins and Obeyesekere seem to be speaking past each other. Sahlins points out that Obeyesekere's argument as to whether Cook was considered Lono before or after his death is largely a matter of semantics, and that Obeyesekere often disproves his own position in his mishandling of the evidence. It seems that what is more at stake here is the politics of authorship and the place of evidence in anthropological thought. Sahlins may have done better to focus as much attention on this aspect of Obeyesekere's critique as he does on defending his own interpretation of historical events.

Another aspect of Sahlins' work which requires criticism is the obviously personal nature of his unavoidably one-sided argument against Obeyesekere. The language used throughout the book smacks of personal attack, which at times distracts the reader from Sahlins' reliance on the evidence to speak for itself. Though he would no doubt rationalize this tactic as a response to the personal tone used by Obeyesekere, perpetuating the name-calling does not serve his argument.

Although Obeyesekere sought only to use the historical case of Captain Cook and the Hawaiians as a post-modern critique of textual authority and the validity of ethno-history, his handling of the evidence undermines what could have been an insightful and valid argument. Sahlins' work stands as a testament to the authority of evidence in the construction of social theory. He makes it clear that if the facts do not bear the argument, however noble and empowering, the argument cannot be maintained. This position seems to have become as unpopular as it is crucial to the work of anthropology, and it is to Sahlins' credit that he has produced so thoroughly convincing a defence of this position in *How 'Natives' Think*.

RUSSELL LEIGH SHARMAN

LAWRENCE J. TAYLOR, *Occasions of Faith: An Anthropology of Irish Catholics*, Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1995. xv, 248 pp. Plates, Maps, Bibliography, Index. £15.00.

Lauded as the first book-length study of Irish Catholicism, Taylor offers up an intriguing journey through the intricacies of Ireland's particular brand of Catholic faith. Set mainly in the south-west of County Donegal, *Occasions of Faith* weaves twenty-five years of ethnographic research into a broad fabric of oral and recorded history to document not only the development of Irish Catholicism, but also the spiritual development of Irish Catholics themselves.

The book begins with a bus ride to a Charismatic Catholic Healing Mass near Derry in Donegal, a rather incongruous event, in light of the traditional, orthodox Catholicism so often associated with rural Ireland. Taylor intends this initial incongruity to prepare the reader for an examination of Irish Catholicism as a 'personal and social construction of experience', that often seems at odds with the stereotype of empty religiosity. Taylor then establishes his own journey as a researcher into the realm of religious experience among the Irish of Donegal. He insists that his work will not follow the time-honoured description of 'life-cycles' in the ethnography of religion but rather focus on the contingent, processual aspects of what he views as the construction of religious experience among Irish Catholics.

The first stop on Taylor's journey through Catholicism is the holy wells which dot the landscape. In many ways this proves to be the starting-point for a chronological tour of Irish Catholicism. The wells, though situated in the landscape through the organizational power of legends and stories, are themselves timeless. Often their origins lie in tears shed by saints or at least the long-ago presence of saints. Here the reader is introduced to the construction of religious experience among Irish Catholics, especially as it intersects with the cultural appropriation of the landscape through ritual and story-telling.

Taylor then takes us further into this notion of the appropriation of the landscape in the context of religious experience with an analysis of a nineteenth-century Donegal travelogue written by a local author named McGinley. Taylor develops the idea of an Irish national identity forged through an attachment to the land that was marked by Catholic religious experience. Nationalism and Catholicism intersect on the landscape throughout Irish history from the violent oppression of the faith in the early years of the English occupation through to the aftermath of the famine when McGinley wrote his piece on Donegal.

The next two chapters deal with the role of priests as we move from the late nineteenth century into the twentieth. The first examines a public power struggle between a local priest and a Belfast landlord. The case is used to demonstrate the power of priests in the region and, by implication, in the country. Taylor emphasizes the priest's use of nationalist and pastoral rhetoric in the public debate with the landlord and demonstrates the process of myth creation through an intriguing comparison between historically documented and folk versions of the event. The next chapter deals with the tradition of the drunken, or otherwise discredited, priest as a possessor of miraculous power. It is believed that those priests who have been removed from the pulpit must have some power the Church wants silenced. This proves a twist on the perception of power held by priests and hints at a construction of religious experience

outside the confines of the Church and therefore on a more personal level. Taylor examines some of the origins of the tradition as well as some contemporary examples.

Building on this examination of priests as both representatives of the Church and independent power brokers, Taylor examines the rise in 'missions' among Catholic dioceses in Ireland. The missions are in many ways festivals, with all the trappings of large inter-village social gatherings, but they also contain a serious and potent religious aspect. Started mainly by the Redemptorists and still led by that group today, the missions serve as a revival meeting where the parish priest hands over the congregation to an itinerant priest. Long viewed as a useful yet potentially schismatic practice, the missions offer an opportunity for a powerful conversion experience at the hands of the stranger/wanderer priest.

The context of missions provides an entrée into the topic of religious pilgrimages, which, like the missions, offer a religious experience under the auspices of the Church, but in a more emotionally charged atmosphere than that experienced in the weekly Mass. Taylor follows pilgrims to an island shrine in Ireland, to Lourdes in France, and finally to Medjugorje in present-day Bosnia. The first sight, Lough Derg, exemplifies the most orthodox and traditional of the pilgrimages. Lourdes represents what Taylor describes as an institutionalized charismatic event where Marian worship truly began in its fervency, though still contained by the Church. Medjugorje, the sight of an ongoing visitation by Mary to some local youth, represents the charismatic event in its early development. Not yet recognized or sanctioned by the Church, Medjugorje is for many the place where religious experience is at its most dynamic and personal.

Taylor leads from the charismatic experience of Medjugorje into the charismatic prayer meetings that sprang up in Donegal after a recent pilgrimage to the site. In his final chapter—and before making any conclusions—Taylor, in his treatment of charismatic prayer meetings, leaves the reader at once completely removed from the opening context of the holy wells in all of their orthodox timelessness and at the same time confronted with a similarity in the construction of religious experience that is so integral to Irish Catholicism.

Taylor has produced an admirable work on the complexity of religious experience among Irish Catholics and, by implication, the devout of any faith. Along with this insightful treatment of religious experience, Taylor manages to include so much of Irish aesthetics, which are intimately bound up in the landscape and story-telling, as well as an in-depth historical analysis and literary criticism, that his work easily spills out of the category of religious ethnography and into the arena of general academic interest.

RUSSELL LEIGH SHARMAN

PETER VAN DER VEER (ed.), *Nation and Migration: The Politics of Space in the South Asian Diaspora*, London and Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1995. vii, 257 pp., Plates, References, Index. £31.50/£14.95.

What is the relationship between the South Asian diaspora—that is, the fact that some eight million people of South Asian descent are dispersed across the world—and South

Asian nationalism? Peter van der Veer links the nine chapters in this volume to produce evidence that migration strengthens and even produces South Asian nationalism. His introduction gives some historical background to the idea of a territorially bounded national community in South Asia, an idea fuelled in the late nineteenth century at least in part by the colonial migration process, which promoted the migration of workers for railway construction, army service, the bureaucracy and education. Moving away from one's geographical, linguistic and ethnic origin, says van der Veer (quoting from Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* on the emergence of the Bengali bureaucracy), was part of 'that subtle, half-concealed transformation...of the colonial state into the national state'. He also suggests that South Asian migrants' experiences abroad—for example, as indentured labourers in Africa—were important 'in the formulation of a nationalist discourse' in India. The treatment of female labourers under the indenture system, 'constructed by the nationalists as an insult to the nations' honour' provided 'symbolic capital' for the nationalist cause.

The nine contributions to this book supposedly illustrate the far from straightforward connections between South Asian migration and nationalism in various historical and contemporary settings, though it is often not the idea of nation that is illustrated so much as ethnic or religious identity. The term 'space' is used in an attempt to unite the contributions, though I do not understand the sub-title. Mostly, 'space' is a synonym for 'territory'. Van der Veer writes: 'nationalism is a discourse that depends on notions of space, of territory'. However, 'space' sometimes refers to social categories and stereotypes and sometimes to a place within national politics. But if a term needs constant translation, why bother with it? I would have thought the editor's job would be to clarify the writing, without dressing up the discourse with jargon.

In the first chapter, Verné Dusenbery explores the links between Sikh identity in Vancouver and in India, where the demand for a separate state of Khalistan contradicts 'the boundaryless world of Sikh sacred space'. Unhappy at being classified as South Asians, Canadian Sikhs are interested in the idea of Khalistan as a spiritual homeland not because they wish to return to India but because it gains them respect in Canada, where 'multiculturalism' recognizes national cultures connected to an independent state.

Four chapters deal with aspects of the South Asian presence in the Caribbean, Fiji, Trinidad and Guyana. Steven Vertovec's chapter contrasts the development and construction of 'Hinduism' in Trinidad and Britain. 'Hinduism' in Trinidad spans nearly 150 years, beginning with the importation of Indians of diverse cultural and religious traditions as indentured labourers for the colonial plantation economy. By the 1950s, the organization of Hinduism (primarily in reaction to the proselytizing of the Arya Samaj) had united the entire Trinidad Hindu population. During decolonization and independence, Hindu religious organization came to have an overtly public political function. In the 1970s, Trinidad was transformed by an oil boom, the effects of which filtered through to the Hindu working classes, who poured their new wealth into elaborate forms of religious ritual. 'A self-proclaimed Hindu renaissance was underway in Trinidad, bankrolled by the oil boom', says Vertovec, and by the 1980s communal Hindu ideology was a force to be reckoned with in 'public space', that is, in national politics. In contrast, South Asian migration to Britain spans just fifty years. The picture of Hinduism in Britain is 'rather fragmented', with no single umbrella organization effectively co-ordinating Hindu activities. Vertovec argues that the dominant British public policy of multiculturalism of the 1970s and 1980s, which replaced the

assimilationist policies of the 1960s, served to maintain the diversity of regional, linguistic, cultural and sectarian origins which characterizes British Hindus. 'Large-scale mobilization as Hindus has not been given cause or opportunity to take place in a society-wide public space'. Whether Hinduism in Britain will ever have the unifying political significance it has in Trinidad will depend on the political environment.

In Fiji, John Kelly shows, the violent conflict over territory between the 'indigenous' and 'immigrant' communities is played out in terms of religious opposition. Christian missions play a major role in constructing native Fijians' national identity, just as Hindu missions to Fiji have played a similar role in constructing an 'Indian nation' among former indentured labourers.

Madhavi Kale argues that nineteenth-century debates about the introduction of Indian indentured labourers to Trinidad and British Guiana are central to understanding the present-day continuities of Indian culture in the Caribbean. Aisha Khan shows that in Trinidad, competition between the Muslim descendants of Indian indentured labourers and the Muslim descendants of African slaves over the authenticity of their religious practice and belief is central to defining their identity and is rooted in the competitive relationship between the two groups that was fostered by colonial policy.

Two chapters deal with South Asians in New York. Madhilika Khandewal discusses patterns of Indian migration and settlement in the city, as well as competing perceptions and uses of urban 'ethnic' space. Susan Slymovics combines a vivid description of the Muslim World Day parade of 1991 with an analysis of the ritual's functions and meanings. New York City is notable for its parades: in 1991 there were about 760, displaying the city's ethnic diversity. Slymovics argues that the Muslim World Day Parade is a ritual replication of an American institution which as such displays an acceptance of American pluralism. It is also a vehicle through which some New York Muslims claim a respectable niche in American society. The participants are ethnically diverse, but the event organizers are South Asian, and Afro-American Muslims are excluded. The parade thus symbolizes South Asian Muslims' efforts to enter mainstream politics as white, ethnic New Americans, 'reconfiguring religion into ethnicity in order to gain political and economic power'. Slymovics also suggests that through some of its specifically Muslim elements—the communal prayer and the communal feast, the Sufi ecstatic dances and the 'takbir' cry, which must be controlled to avoid threatening the respectable image—the ritual constitutes a potential challenge to the status quo.

Finally, two chapters consider some British South Asians. Sallie Westwood explores South Asian and Afro-Caribbean masculine identities in a discussion of the politics surrounding a predominantly South Asian youth project in Leicester and of life on inner-city streets and soccer fields. Parminder Bhachu discusses how middle-class British-born and -educated Sikh women participate in the British economy and act as 'cultural entrepreneurs' within their own communities.

Thus if you are a Muslim, Hindu or Sikh in, say, New York, your life will turn out differently from your counterparts in, say, Trinidad or Britain, because of the historical and contemporary differences in social and political environments.

ALISON SHAW

WILLIAM R. CHRISTIAN, *Visionaries: The Spanish Republic and the Reign of Christ*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1996. xxii, 544 pp., Illustrations, Maps, Bibliography. £32.00.

Bill Christian is the leading anthropologist of Spanish Catholicism. This marvellous, massive ethnography confirms and deepens his reputation. It is one of the most impressive and humane ethnographies to have been written within the modern anthropology of Europe.

Christian's central topic is the series of visions of the Virgin Mary experienced by Basques during the Second Republic (1930–36). Some of these visions turned into mass events attracting the largest crowds ever known in the Basqueland. Yet they are very, very rarely spoken of today, and their history has been totally neglected. Christian unearths these forgotten events and sets them carefully in their various contexts in a painstaking and thorough manner.

The first half of the book details meticulously the sequence of events: who saw what when, who promoted the seers, how Church and State reacted. In the second, more analytical half, Christian examines various themes: the number and type of religious professionals in the area at the time; the kinds of seer; the visions as a rare opportunity for inter-class interaction; the vision states themselves, their reported nature, how others saw them; the models that guided seers, and the ways their experience evolved; what parts of the landscape were considered sites for visions; relations between the living and the dead in Basqueland; apocalyptic traditions at the time of the visions; and what sorts of Basques took these prophecies seriously.

What emerges from this book is an understanding of what being a member of a devout community entails. Individuals are meeting directly with the supernatural on a near-quotidian basis. Visions of the divine occur in an almost everyday fashion. But people will only tell others of their wondrous experiences if they feel their listeners will be receptive and sympathetic. Those they do tell—especially if they are important figures (priests, doctors, etc.)—will mould the visionary account into what they consider a satisfactory form before transmitting news of it more widely. Finally, whether or not the visions are acceptable to the higher echelons of the ecclesiastical hierarchy will depend on a different set of criteria, for priests and their superiors are often suspicious and wary when dealing with visions, which they tend to regard as a form of direct communion with God bypassing the usual hieratic channels. To this extent, the famous miracles most of us know about (Lourdes, Fatima, etc.) must be regarded as products of politics as much as of piety.

Christian's book is beautifully written, unpretentious in style, and splendid in scope and scholarship. Finely balancing interest in the individuals involved with concern for the wider issues entailed, *Visionaries* is one of the very few ethnographies I have actually enjoyed reading, and it sets a standard which most anthropologists of religion in Europe today will find very difficult to equal.

JEREMY MACCLANCY

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