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## Reviews

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**Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-Century World, by J. R. McNeill (2001), New York: Norton, xxvi, 421 pp.**

**Reviewed by Michael Bess, History Department, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN**

At some level, most educated people today probably have a sense, a general impression, of what this book tells us: that humankind is transforming the planet faster and faster, with a depth and scope and variety of impacts that are unprecedented in history and truly alarming in their implications for the future. We know this already, at an intuitive level (those of us, at least, who are not blinded by political ideology or by tenderheartedness for our portfolio of Exxon stock).

What makes this book both important and extraordinary is that it succeeds in turning a vague impression, a nagging accumulation of specialized studies and anecdotal news items, into a cogent synthetic vision. McNeill's study is global in scale and genuinely multidisciplinary in approach: he weaves together, in a highly readable narrative, the whole tapestry of changes that have marked the human transformation of nature in the twentieth century. Lithosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere "every aspect of the planet comes under scrutiny, linked again and again to the pullulating agency of humans and the awesome shifts that agency has wrought."

This is not the first time, of course, that such works of scholarly synthesis have been attempted. George Perkins Marsh produced his landmark work, *Man and Nature: Or, Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action*, in 1864 "but in 1864 the transformative genie of industrial modernity had barely begun (relatively speaking) to poke its nose out of the bottle." Another synthesis came in 1955: William Thomas's *Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth*; followed in 1990 by yet another immense tome, B.L. Turner's *The Earth as Transformed by Human Action: Global and Regional Changes in the Biosphere over the Past 300 Years*. But both these more recent books "while immensely useful in themselves" were edited volumes, offering the reader a compendium of specialized essays by a small army of scientists and other researchers, each reporting the bad news from his or her own corner of the planet's mind-boggling complexity.

McNeill's main achievement lies precisely in this: he succeeds in rendering that complexity comprehensible to a non-specialist reader, soaring over the continents with analytical clarity and narrative vigor, placing within our grasp the full sweep of global changes. The result is that we come away from reading this book with an extraordinarily clear sense of how our species has affected the planet over the past 100 years, and an equally clear sense of where we stand today. We may, at the outset of our reading, have possessed a vague, somewhat scrambled intuition of all this: McNeill puts it right there, in front of your nose. We humans have now become one of the most salient factors in the equation of planetary change.

Another great strength of McNeill's approach lies in the fact that he does not regard "interdisciplinarity" in the way some authors unfortunately tend to do: as the mere juxtaposition of analytically distinct narratives: geology, biology, demography, politics, sociology, economics, cultural shifts. Instead, he starts from the premise that socioeconomic and biospheric changes are deeply and inextricably bound up with each other, in complex causal loops that require integral and bi-directional examination. The growth of cities, for example, is presented by McNeill as often having its genesis in certain geographical "givens," such as the location of a river, or of mineral deposits; but then the dynamic of social and economic forces comes increasingly into play, shaping the city over time, and shaping in turn the surrounding land; this reshaping of the land, in return, reverberates back on the city itself, modifying its culture and economy in important ways. Again and again, McNeill returns to these kinds of complex feedback loops, showing how human history and natural history, in the uniquely dynamic context of the twentieth century, are truly interwoven, and cannot be adequately understood in separation from each other. "History and

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ecology," he writes in his conclusion, at least in modern times, must take one another properly into account. Modern history written as if the life-support systems of the planet were stable, present only in the background of human affairs, is not only incomplete but is misleading. Ecology that neglects the complexity of social forces and dynamics of historical change is equally limited. Both history and ecology are, as fields of knowledge go, supremely integrative. They merely need to integrate with one another.

McNeill's synthesis, therefore, is actually twofold: it is a synthesis of scale and scope, taking in the whole of the biosphere; and it is a synthesis of analytical methods, bringing together repeatedly and systematically the very different types of questions asked by scientists, sociologists, economists, or cultural historians.

On top of these two remarkable achievements, the book has yet another surprise in store for us: it is fun to read. Again and again, we find ourselves marveling at some piquant anecdote or particularly juicy factoid, deftly woven into the broader narrative as McNeill takes us on our global journey. Thus, for example, we find out that Thomas Midgley, the man who invented Freon in 1931, can be with good reason described as having "had more impact on the atmosphere than any other single organism in earth history." Quite an epitaph. Or, in a chapter on demographic trends, the intriguing thought that human bodies, by the 1990s, account for about five percent of the earth's animal biomass, "ranking with cattle and far outstripping any other mammal." (Ants, however, still have the edge: the diminutive bugs still outweigh us four-to-one.) Or, in a chapter on urban growth, an arresting image: Mexico City, which today slurps water at a rate 30 to 35 times greater than in 1900, is draining its aquifer so rapidly that the ground under the city is collapsing" in some places as much as seven meters over four decades. McNeill's comment: "Children amused themselves by marking their height on well casings to see whether the ground was sinking faster than they were growing."

The only weak spot in McNeill's masterful narrative arguably lies in his treatment of the dawning of environmental awareness in the industrialized world. He acknowledges that the rising popularity of ecological ideas constitutes an important development: "Between 1960 and 1990 a remarkable and potentially earth-shattering (earth-healing?) shift took place." But his treatment of this shift only occupies him for eight very sketchy and cursory pages, touching briefly on such figures as Rachel Carson and Wangari Maathai, or such events as Earth Day or the creation of UNEP, the United Nations Environment Programme. This amounts to perplexingly short shrift, in a lengthy and otherwise comprehensive book that so rigorously seeks to integrate cultural factors into our understanding of the planet's twentieth-century transformation. Perhaps the reason for this lies in McNeill's belief that environmentalism has so far merely offered tantalizing possibilities, rather than real, concrete changes in the way we shape the material world. "By far the most important political forces for environmental change," he writes, "were inadvertent and unwitting ones. Explicit, conscious environmental politics, while growing in impact after 1970, still operated in the shadow cast by conventional politics. This was true on both the international and national scales."

This may prove, in the end, to be a rather important blind spot in McNeill's analysis. The transformation of societies, laws, economies, and mentalities brought about between 1960 and 2000 by the "rise of ecology" actually constituted far more than a mere glimmer of future potentials. One can make a good case that those four decades saw widespread changes in consumption patterns, production methods, political priorities, lifestyles, and values that already added up to a highly significant shift by the end of the century. Though it is easy to become demoralized by the cretinous persistence of gas-guzzling SUVs on our roads and by the recalcitrance of many of our fellow citizens when it comes to making sacrifices in the name of ecological restraint, the full picture is more complicated than this. On the one hand, McNeill is surely right when he concludes that contemporary society remains far indeed from achieving (or even envisioning) a state of sustainable development. On the other hand, it would be an equally important mistake to underestimate the variety, sweep, and (in some cases) depth of the changes that have already taken place. Most industrial democracies, by the year 2000, have begun to take important (albeit uneven) steps in the direction of sustainability" and to discount this fact is just as misleading as to overestimate it. True, we have a very, very long way to go: from modes of agriculture to patterns of travel, from consumerism to waste, from global poverty to global population, the challenges ahead remain daunting indeed. But to deny that we have already started to move, in important ways, during the last few decades of the twentieth century, is both inaccurate and needlessly depressing. Not all the changes triggered by the rise of environmentalism have been superficial ones.

None of this, however, diminishes in the slightest the fact that McNeill's book offers an extremely valuable tool for all those who take an interest in matters of ecology. As a wake-up call to some readers, as a powerful source of synthesis and clarification for others, as a reference tool for still others, it takes us an important step closer to comprehending the state of our global environment and where our priorities should lie. It offers a model of judicious, sophisticated scholarship in the field of environmental history: an extremely ambitious, and impressively successful, intellectual journey.

**Between Mecca and Beijing: Modernization and Consumption among Urban Chinese Muslims, by Maris Boyd Gillette. (2000), Stanford: Stanford University Press, xxi, 279 pp.**

**Reviewed by Li Zhang, Department of Anthropology, University of California at Davis**

This is a well researched, clearly written, and detailed ethnography of the micro cultural politics of everyday consumption practices among urban Chinese Muslims (also called Hui in China) in the post-Mao reform era. It is based on 18 months of fieldwork conducted during the mid-1990s in a large Muslim neighborhood in the northwestern city of Xi'an. The book examines the shifting relationship between material consumption and modernization as Chinese society turns to commercialization and global capitalism. It also explores some of the implications for understanding the changing dynamics between the Chinese state, local communities, and citizens.

Based on fresh and solid ethnographic materials, the study demonstrates that even though the majority of Xi'an Hui desire and embrace the modernization paradigm promoted by the Chinese party-state, the specific vision of modernization and meaning of being modern differ greatly from the officially sanctioned ideology. In other words, this group of people may have adopted the goals and language of modernization and consumerism offered by the state, but they frequently draw inspiration and social imagination from a quite different source "Arabized Islamic modernity" as their index of civilization and an alternative vision of modernization. This tendency is most clearly manifest in the Arabization of the architectural style of recently built mosques in the community. Because this alternative way of defining and pursuing modernization is located outside the state's purview and direct control, it often invokes anxieties and creates tensions between this Muslim community and local government (largely dominated by Han Chinese). The author shows nicely both the continued salience of state power and its limits in an increasingly marketized consumer society. On the one hand, the Chinese party-state is able to instill a meta-narrative of progress among its citizens, and presents itself as the sole legitimate director of state-guided modernization. On the other hand, there have emerged a number of unintended consequences in everyday practices of modernization that go beyond state control. With increased wealth, consumption power, and access to translocal and transnational flows of material goods, Xi'an Hui as well as other Chinese citizens have gained more personal freedom and space in their consumption choices and private life. Yet, often caught between the practical consideration of economic gain and the concern for social control, local government's response to these new consumption practices is largely ambivalent.

Consumption is the focal point of investigation in this book and there are two layers of consumption explored. First, the author devotes a substantive portion of the ethnography to a close examination of several key aspects of material consumption such as food, the architectural design of local mosques, and clothing (especially the emerging fashion of Western-style wedding gowns highly desired by young Hui women). She argues that these seemingly mundane practices are not simply choices of consumer goods and physical conditions; rather they are essential ways in which the Muslims in Xi'an seek to articulate a sense of self and their socioeconomic status, while demonstrating their ability to modernize themselves. These daily consumption acts thus constitute important arenas in which cultural contestation takes place. In particular, the book offers insights in the symbolic importance and the political economy of food and eating for Muslim Chinese. The detailed ethnographic account explains how and why, for Hui residents in Xi'an, food preparation and eating constitute a vital component in the formation of their cultural and religious identity and a sense of superiority in relation to Han Chinese. Focusing on the concept of qingzhen (literally meaning "pure and true"), the author analyzes two strikingly different ways that Hui and government officials define and understand qingzhen: For Hui it is most importantly linked to the notion of cleanliness and purity from the Islamic perspective; but for the state it is a racial matter measured by Hui ethnic membership of the cook and employees of a business. Yet, despite this difference, Hui residents make use of and capitalize on the state-advocated notion of itraditional Hui cuisine for their own economic gain. The commodification of Hui tradition (through food industry and tourism) is, however, a double-edged sword. Although it brings profits to Hui family-based restaurant businesses, it at the same time reaffirms their inferior social status as a less civilized, unchangeable, and backward people outside the modern world. Equally interesting is the author's discussion of how the recent flooding of mass-produced, machine-made factory food has quickly led to Hui's redefinition of qingzhen, allowing

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them to participate in what they conceive of as a progressive, modern way of life without losing their Hui identity.

The second level of consumption the author analyzes is how Hui people actively consume the dominant discourse of modernization and civilization in a way unintended by the state. Rather than rejecting state-initiated categories such as "Hui ethnic minority," "Hui tradition," "modernization," and "civilized society," they adopt such language but endow them with different meanings with reference to an Arabized Islamic cultural paradigm in order to use them to serve their own ends. In so doing, they are able to subvert the official evolutionary model of racial hierarchy that designates them as inferior to Han Chinese while asserting their moral purity and superiority.

Several questions remain to be addressed more fully. Why do urban Muslim Chinese today so aspire for the general blueprint of modernization even though they manage to manipulate its specific content and trajectory? What important differences exist among them in terms of generational, educational, economic, and gender backgrounds? To what extent are their counterhegemonic voices heard by the larger urban Chinese society? How can we link the study of consumption to that of production more effectively without privileging one or the other?

The rich ethnography presented in the book can easily speak to some central analytical issues pertinent to the field of anthropology at large. For example, throughout the book the author focuses on "modernization" and uses it as a key analytical category, but many of Hui's social and cultural struggles examined are not just about modernization, which tends to be related to relatively rigid economic and technological changes in the existing literature. Instead, what is fascinating in the author's account is the highly fluid, contested, and socially constructed meanings and understandings of what "the modern" or living a modern way of life is about for different people. In recent years, there has been a heated debate on the question of modernity and there has emerged a large body of literature on multiple or alternative modernities. This study would be more powerful if it engaged in this debate more fully. Nevertheless, as a whole this is a highly readable book with refreshing ethnographic materials on contemporary urban Chinese society. It should appeal to not only China scholars but also those interested in ethnicity, consumption, and social change brought by late socialism and globalization.

### **The Bakairí Indians of Brazil: Politics, Ecology, and Change, by Debra Picchi. Prospects Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press (2000), xx, 217 pp.**

#### **Reviewed by Lourdes Giordani, Anthropology SUNY-New Paltz.**

Debra Picchi wrote this highly readable ethnography with an undergraduate audience in mind. However, it is also well suited for beginning graduate students and anyone interested in an introduction to political ecology or contemporary Amazonian Indians. The work is based on several field trips among a small group of Brazilian Indians, the Bakairí of the state of Mato Grosso. It is divided into eight chapters that cover a wide range of topics, among them, entry into the field and relations with field hosts, the evolving history of the group, mortality and fertility, subsistence strategies, ritual, leadership, and ethnicity. In addition, it includes an appendix—intended as a study guide—with key concepts and terms, discussion questions, and suggested readings for every chapter. Commentary on the suggested readings, some of general interest and others more theoretical, is also included.

Weaving together ecological analysis and political economy, Picchi situates her work within the theoretical framework of political ecology. She considers demographic data, observations about how the Bakairí and their neighbors have used their environment over time, and the impact of the Brazilian State on the land and its inhabitants. Moreover, she combines quantitative and qualitative methods in order to establish how micro and macro level decisions have affected the Bakairí. Readers will find the equations and various tables throughout the text particularly useful since they shed light on basic calculations employed by demographers and ecological anthropologists. To her credit, variables are clearly defined and the weaknesses of various techniques are taken into account (e.g., problems coding activities for time allocation studies) (p. 102). This book, then, is not your typical descriptive ethnography for it combines topics associated with a field account, a research methods guide, and a holistic ethnography. Picchi is able to integrate these topics and produce a coherent text that never loses sight of its main subject, the Bakairí.

In Chapter 1 Picchi focuses primarily on fieldwork and provides a useful checklist for fieldwork preparations which instructors and students can expand or modify. Her discussion on the use of qualitative research to produce verifiable accounts will help some readers move beyond the simplistic pro-science and anti-humanism polarity.

This chapter also contains a brief discussion on postmodernism, a perspective that Picchi believes has forced

many fieldworkers to examine how they represent and interact with their informants (the “others”). While the impact of postmodernism in current anthropology cannot be denied, I believe critical readers will raise some caveats. A few would no doubt argue that anthropologists had been rethinking their relations with informants before postmodernism gained prominence in anthropology, because, as former colonies gained independence, and various nationalistic and pro-human right movements emerged at home and abroad, business could not be conducted “as usual.” In addition, the expansion of global capitalism and the communications revolution allowed some informants to read and see—and thus comment on and react to—the ethnographic products of anthropologists (e.g., texts, musical recordings, and films). Thus, it may be good for us to consider Donhan’s (2000:182-184) recent comment, namely, that postmodernism may not be the cause of changes in recent anthropological practices; postmodernism itself may be the result of the global political economy and a market-driven mentality that has impacted academic life.

A historical overview of the Bakairí and their territory is presented in Chapter 2. Picchi opens this discussion with a popular warning: indigenous peoples are not and should not be treated as primitive isolates. Napoleon Chagnon’s early work on warfare among the Yanomamö is presented as an example of ahistorical analysis. Picchi contrasts it with the historical approach to warfare espoused by Ferguson and Whitehead (1992), and Chagnon’s (1992) later work. While not denying the merits of Ferguson’s and Whitehead’s historical analysis, I believe readers need to be aware of the fact that some scholars question their interpretations. Why? Some critics argue that these authors give too much weight to the impact of contact with non-indigenous outsiders and downplay the power of native symbols and worldviews and the social dynamics they can set in motion (e.g., C. Fausto 1999:933-934). In truth, discussions about the extent to which Yanomamö warfare pre-dates or post-dates European contact (and how it has changed over time) will remain on shaky ground until more archaeological work is done in the Upper Orinoco and we can better ascertain the nature (and causes) of population movements and displacements in that area.

I also take issue with Picchi’s account of the peopling of the New World for it fails to consider significant recent findings (e.g., the work of Tom Dillehay and his colleagues in Monte Verde, Chile). She presents the traditional model, which dates the peopling of the Americas to about 12,000 years ago and gives emphasis to the Bering Land Bridge (p. 29). All the current fascinating debates about multiple points of entry into the Americas, the strong likelihood of a much earlier date of entry, and the possibility of entry by different groups of people (not just Asians), are never addressed. In contrast, her brief discussion of pre-contact Amazonian environments and cultural complexity is current. She also does a good job at condensing the events that lead to Bakairí demographic decreases and displacements during the colonial and postcolonial periods (e.g., gold mining, cattle ranching, and attacks by neighboring groups such as the Kayabí). At one point the Bakairí split, and depending on their location, assimilated various cultural traits from their neighbors. Western Bakairí were promptly incorporated into the cattle ranching economy of that area and rapidly learned the national language, Portuguese. Eastern Bakairí, on the other hand, were influenced by the tribes of the Xingu area. By the 1930s the Indian Protective Service (SPI) tried to organize them into one large settlement near the Indian post. A decade later, their population had declined significantly. Two decades later, as more Brazilians encroached on their area, the Bakairí were suffering numerous social problems such as alcoholism. Picchi’s account of the efforts made by the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), which replaced the SPI, to halt the Bakairí’s social disintegration is fair and nuanced. From her discussion of the impact of two FUNAI agents, we learn that when assessing the work of agencies like FUNAI it is imperative to consider the visions of key employees and the internal discrepancies that often emerge because of diverging views. Even when an agent has the best of intentions in mind, his efforts may backfire because they are neither welcomed nor understood by the Indians.

Basic concepts for the study of fertility, mortality, and households are presented in Chapter 3, the most relevant chapter for those interested in anthropological demography. Without the use of confusing jargon, Picchi defines her variables and explains how to calculate them (e.g., age-specific fertility rate). The importance of these calculations and the data presented in the tables will be clear to any student since Picchi ties them to her description of Bakairí sexuality, menstruation seclusion, post-partum sex taboos, causes of death, and changes in house construction.

Changes in Bakairí subsistence practices and the ecology of their reservation, which is mostly cerrado, are highlighted in Chapter 4. Under FUNAI’s guidance mechanized agriculture (mainly for growing rice) was introduced in the 1980s. Thus, today the Bakairí use hybrid technologies to grow crops and they engage in both horticulture and agriculture. But in contrast to horticulture, few actually practice agriculture and those few are men. Furthermore, agriculture is basically done in the cerrado, an area previously devoted to cattle grazing and hunting. Needless to say, the introduction of agricultural production was not smooth; it led to tensions within the reservation and to the fissioning of Pakuera village between 1983-85.

Hunting and fishing also take place within the reservation; so does cattle ranching. After FUNAI transferred

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control over the herds to the Bakairí, some individuals—recognizing private ownership of resources—built private herds of cattle. This privatization, in turn, has amplified tensions within households and between villages. Here Picchi raises an important question about culture change; that is, why did not customary rules of ownership and redistribution prevent this? She hypothesizes that customary rules will only manage resources that historically have been central to the Indians' way of life. It would be worthwhile to explore whether a new cognitive schema is created to deal with these new resources.

Chapter 5 is devoted to gender, marriage, and kinship. Polygyny is no longer practiced because outsiders chastised them for this. They, as other Cariban Indians, still have a functioning bifurcate-merging (Iroquois) system of kinship terminology; prefer local endogamous marriages, with some Bakairí marrying their cross-cousins; perform bride service, though not rigorously; and practice matrilineal post-marital residence. But in contrast to most other contemporary Cariban Indians, the Bakairí symbolically elaborate separation between the sexes and have a men's house from which women are excluded. Likewise, ear-piercing ceremonies for boys lead to the existence of lax ritual age-sets. From what we know from contemporary Cariban ethnography, the existence of sodalities or associations such as age-sets is not a typical Cariban trait. Picchi, however, does not delve into the Bakairí's Cariban ancestry and how they diverge from other groups in this cultural-linguistic family. It is not until page 172 that we get to read that they speak a Cariban language. This may disappoint Cariban specialists.

In Chapter 6 the symbolism and social functions of Bakairí mask dancing are discussed, for in spite of all the changes, they still perform these dances. The masks, which mostly represent fish, are strongly associated with native subsistence activities. Men use and store the masks, but women are considered their real owners. Yet, women cannot enter the men's house to see the masks or attend some of the rituals in which they are used; to ensure compliance, men invoke the threat of rape. Hence, the dances also highlight sexual complementarity and segregation. But that is not all. The dances can be seen as social dramas in which two personality types and age groups (old versus young) are contrasted and given expression: the dignified and mature/serene individual (associated with Yakwigado masks) and the playful joker/trickster (Kwamba masks). The masks, in addition, are employed in the maintenance of social order and group identity. Mask wearers, for instance, will comment on contemporary village affairs and criticize "bad" behaviors (e.g., sexual intercourse with Brazilians and stinginess). Mask dancing seems to be the "key" ritual activity which articulates the essence of Bakairí culture. Perhaps this, and the fact that they will incorporate some novel features (like serving peanut butter on manioc bread during these feasts), is why it survived even though it was stopped during the 1950s. Yet, I must confess that I still feel that I need to know more about how this custom managed to survive since there are numerous examples of "ritual loss" among larger groups than the Bakairí, who today number a little over 500 individuals.

Leadership and how it has been impacted by demographic and technological changes is the subject of Chapter 7. Today it is not enough for a man to inherit the headman role from his father. Today leaders must work in two different, yet connected, spheres: the village and the nation-state. They must be able to deal with government bureaucrats, the media, banks, medical personnel, environmentalists, and much more. Although some leaders have taken advantage of their greater access to wealth and persons of influence, Picchi warns us that leadership is also fraught with difficulties as followers are making increasing demands and often resent the new ways of their leaders (e.g., their travels). From this chapter, we are led to an examination of the Bakairí as both Indians and a Brazilian ethnic minority (Chapter 8). She begins by describing some of the changes she observed during her 1999 trip to the Bakairí reservation, twenty years after her initial visit. She learned that in the late 1990s more than twenty Bakairí men had traveled to Europe in a trip sponsored by UNESCO. Others, including some women, had participated in international indigenous conferences. In other words, she encountered more cosmopolitan informants who made very explicit for her the impact of globalization. Yet, the strength of this last chapter is Picchi's comparison of "peasants à la Eric Wolf," small farmers, and the Bakairí as Indians. Which category best describes her subjects? We learn that the Bakairí's hybrid subsistence strategies make them share attributes with all 3 categories. For instance, the Bakairí—like peasants—still consume most of what they harvest. But unlike peasants and small farmers, they do not claim private ownership over the land they farm; nor do they employ fertilizers or pesticides in their horticultural plots. Her very lucid discussion, which owes much to Michael Kearney's "Reconceptualizing the Peasantry," will make readers re-evaluate the peasant concept and the strict division that is often made (particularly in introductory textbooks) between horticulture and agriculture.

Picchi also cautions us to be careful with the terms "Indian" and "indigenous peoples" since she feels that they do not adequately depict the Bakairí and other native peoples who have undergone extensive change (e.g., the Tukano and Kikrin Kayapó). Change has been profound, to the point that the so-called "typical" institutions of these groups (often employed to define them as Indians) are functioning in new and unforeseen ways (e.g., native leadership). Yet today the Bakairí, who have become increasingly politicized, are consciously working to produce an indigenous rather than a Brazilian identity.

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To conclude, let me emphasize that Picchi's book reminds us of the value of long-term fieldwork and theoretically informed ethnographies. Though I have highlighted some minor limitations in the text, I still consider it very rich and useful as it will introduce its readers to key debates in contemporary anthropology.

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## **Climates and Constitutions: Health, Race, Environment and British Imperialism in India, 1600-1850 by Mark Harrison, New Delhi: Oxford University Press (1999), xiv, 263 pp.**

### **Reviewed by Warwick Anderson, University of California – San Francisco and Berkeley**

Well into the nineteenth century, colonial physicians speculated on the impact of changed circumstances on European bodily constitutions. Would re-location to an environment so different from the race's proper place cause degeneration in type? What was the most healthy way of living – the most sustaining diet, clothing and work pattern – for European emissaries in trying tropical conditions? Drawing principally on European medical texts and government archives, Mark Harrison explains how colonial physicians understood the relations of race and environment in India, and the means by which they hoped to ensure British acclimatization, or seasoning. He follows the story to the middle of the nineteenth century, the point at which his earlier book, *Public Health in British India*, takes over. One of the leading historians of colonial medicine in India, Harrison has given us a clear, well-written account of European theories of race, environment and disease in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the most extensive study of colonial "constitutional medicine" yet undertaken.

Initially, the Indian climate did not seem especially perilous. Guarded optimism about the British capacity to adjust – without in the process losing British distinctiveness in physique and character – seemed to prevail until the early nineteenth century. To a surprising degree, physicians enjoined displaced Britons to take up many of the customs and habits of the already adjusted local inhabitants, to follow their style of diet and clothing. Medical advisers also tended to disaggregate geographical conditions, to describe variations in the salubrity of India, and to suggest that white sojourners stick to the safer, more benign, locales. But in the 1830s, fears of European degeneration in a generally depleting foreign climate began to dominate. Certainly, some parts of India, especially the hills, still seemed more supportive of the European bodily constitution than others, but on the whole the outcome looked grim for anyone long resident on the sub-continent. Indianization was still expected, but now it was to be dreaded, not welcomed. Rather than exemplars, Indians increasingly were represented as object lessons, degenerate, diseased, and disease-dealing. Opposition came to replace analogy. Acclimatization, if it were possible, would imply

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pigmentation and degeneration. There would be little hope for European settlement now.

Harrison makes a strong claim for the substitution of social causes of disease for environmental etiologies in the 1830s, suggesting a parallel with the sanitary reform movement in Britain. Cholera, and other emerging diseases, seemed more a product of filth and overcrowding than of any atmospheric disorder. The customs and habits of Indians, once extolled in medical texts, now appeared the root causes of the diseases that threatened Europeans. Although few thought at the time that Indians were themselves carriers of disease agents, their fixed insanitary ways were allegedly generating and distributing filth and other noxious conditions that would give rise to epidemics. But even as Harrison provides extensive support for his arguments, I came to wonder if his emphasis on the understanding of epidemics, more than endemic disease, perhaps distorts the picture here. I suspect that one might, in connection with more routine diseases, find that climate and geography still appeared to exert considerable influence: indeed, in the conclusion, Harrison mentions that into the 1870s, Indian physicians were derided in Britain for their persistent environmental preoccupations. It is not surprising that by this time the ordinary British climate was not thought especially pathogenic for the British, but the extraordinary Indian climate would surely have continued to excite medical concern until the end of the century, or later. Erwin Ackerknecht once remarked that even the microbial “tropical medicine” that developed in the 1890s still implied a notional geography of disease, and it would be interesting to explore more carefully the persistence in the colonial world of environmental pathologies, long after their disappearance in Europe.

In the conclusion, Harrison tells us that this book is about “the ‘making’ of race and the growing alienation of Europeans from the Indian environment” (p. 215). It is odd how few historians of colonial medicine have paid much attention to the construction of race and environment in medical texts before now. Harrison’s focus on race is perhaps the most novel aspect of this excellent study, and those interested in the framing of human difference in colonialism will have to engage with his rather provocative thesis. Anyone who has tried to understand nineteenth-century racial thought knows just how complex and slippery it was, and how easy it is to give a partial or distorted account. There are too many different opinions – sometimes held by the same person – and too much context for them. But racial thought must not be ignored, or passed over. Harrison argues that in the eighteenth century, physicians assumed that human types were dynamic and plastic, responding rapidly to environmental changes, and therefore readily acclimatized. Accordingly, it seems to him “inappropriate to project the concept of race back onto the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries” (p. 12). He describes, however, a “hardening of racial boundaries” (p. 19, and see p. 104) in the early nineteenth centuries, a “new hereditarian bias in theories of human difference” (p. 106). The supposed hardening of physical properties underlay the increasing pessimism toward acclimatization during this period (p. 136). But Harrison seems here to amplify the influence of Cuvier, Owen and Knox, all of them opposed to theories of human transmutation, and to mute the continuing appeal of Lamarck and his argument for the inheritance of characteristics acquired during the life of one’s parents.

There is an alternative, and I think more plausible, explanation of shifts in the understanding of race and environment in the nineteenth century. Most colonial physicians still believed in the dynamism of racial type, still expected acclimatization, through the remainder of the century, but their increasing pessimism derived in fact from their lower valuation of the outcome, not from any doubt about its feasibility. Acclimatization came to mean not so much a minor adjustment as degeneration. As Nancy Stepan and others have shown, it is not really until the end of the nineteenth century that scientists and medicos generally come to agree on the fixity, or at least the greater robustness, of racial categories. Harrison’s grasp of nineteenth century racial thought thus seems particularly weak. He invokes a definition of race that would make sense only at the end of the century, failing to see that the distinction he makes between “innate” and “acquired,” between “heredity” and “environment,” is anachronistic at its beginning. This strange effort to project early twentieth-century views of the fixity of race, its alienation from circumstances, onto the early nineteenth century greatly damages what is otherwise an illuminating study of colonial medical theory.

Given his narrow and anachronistic conception of race, no wonder Harrison finds it “exceedingly difficult to unravel” (p. 220) the relationship between “racialistic” and “reformist” impulses in colonial India. But his pioneering work will no doubt inspire others, who may be less hampered by a mismatched conceptual framework, to do so.

**Being Human: Ethics, Environment, and Our Place in the World, by Anna L. Peterson.  
Berkeley: University of California Press (2001), x, 289 pp.**

**Reviewed by Susan J. Armstrong, Department of Philosophy, Humboldt State University,  
Arcata, Ca. 95521**

Anna Peterson suggests that we should view environmental ethics as “lived ethics,” the primary models for which are religious. What is distinctive about this book is the author’s focus on “the internal dynamics that make religion such a potent force” in our ethical ideas and practices. She is interested in finding out what makes religious ethics powerful and “how they might need to change in response to environmental crisis” (p. 11).

Peterson identifies several elements that contribute to the power of religious ethics. One such element is narrative. What distinguishes religious narrative is the presence of the sacred: forces, ideas and events with meaning beyond the human. Peterson is interested in narratives that are not only lived but “also have the potential to challenge, rather than reinforce, dominant worldviews” (p. 20). Future visions, “ideal-setting,” is essential if a narrative is to lead to significant social change (p. 22).

Peterson provides chapters on human nature in the Western tradition, the relational self of Buddhism and Taoism, person and nature in Native American world-views, feminist ethics, the social construction of nature and human nature, and recent studies of animal behavior. The book concludes with two chapters which examine the “potential for revision in mainstream ethics” (p. 26). Each chapter is prefaced with a summary of its contents.

In her discussion of the Western tradition, Peterson points out that while Protestantism has often seen human life on earth as radically separated from the spiritual realm, Catholicism has perceived greater continuity between the human and the divine. But both forms of Christianity have generally stressed human superiority and the view that the only internal relationship for “rational man” is with God or universal reason.

Social constructionism asserts that there is no original or universal self: “a subject can have meaning only in and through particular cultural, social, or linguistic conditions” (p. 54). While social constructionism offers a “welcome humility about our own ways of seeing and being in the world” (p. 76), it also harbors a number of harmful assumptions. For example, while all forms of social constructionism deny that there is a single way of being human, most social constructionists affirm a “generic humanness,” which is radically superior to the non-human in that human signification creates the world (p. 58). Extreme social constructionism thus actually denies nature’s independent existence. In addition, since according to constructionism ideas and interpretation are all we have, this approach does not seriously consider alternative worldviews as sources of actual knowledge about the world. Further, extreme constructionism can undermine arguments for protection of nonhuman species or wilderness areas on the grounds that it is all about ideas anyway. Peterson affirms Kate Soper’s and Katherine Hayles’s calls for a “productive tension between realism and construction” (p. 74), a position that combines the constructionist insight that we can have no unmediated apprehension of nature with the realist claim that the world consists of more than human mediations.

Peterson begins her chapter on Asian perspectives with a sophisticated discussion of the risks in comparative ethics. Peterson admits that we may be wrong about what ideas mean to different groups, and that comparative ethics does risk “overestimating the causal importance of ideas” (p. 97). But she does not agree that comparative ethics is an immoral venture in cultural imperialism. She affirms that while comparative ethics is “an inherently messy and risky project,” it is worth examining other ethical traditions for the light shed on our own as contingent and perhaps in need of revision.

The outcome of her venture in comparative ethics is her assertion that certain world-views have a greater “affinity” for environmental care or harm than others. Despite the difficulties in ascertaining the “effective histories” of Buddhism and Taoism, a task “complicated by post-Buddhist and post-Taoist innovations,” she does believe that the ideas of the relational self in Buddhism and Taoism do provide a basis for “greater awareness of human dependence on the natural world” and concomitant behavior (p. 99).

Peterson approaches the question of Native American world-views with an admirable awareness of the diversity of Amerindian traditions of thought as well as the long history of oppression and genocide by colonial and post-colonial governments in the Americas. In acknowledgment of the distinctiveness of each group, she discusses only two traditions: those of the Koyukon of interior Alaska and the Navajo. She adopts the approach of identifying common themes which contrasted with the beliefs of the European invaders. One such theme is a view of a world peopled with other-than-human persons, which are not only persons but kin. In addition, Amerindians viewed their

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world as relational. Restraint, humility, and respect toward the natural world result from such relationships.

Peterson introduces her discussion of feminist ethics by noting that critiques coming from within a culture may be more likely to generate changes in attitudes and behavior. Internal challenges also “underline the fact that not all members of a group are equally responsible for dominant attitudes and institutions” (p. 128). Peterson discusses feminist critiques as “perhaps the most powerful internal challenges” to dominant Western ideas (p. 126). Feminist world-views, like religious ones, “seek and often achieve a link between ethical ideas and real life” (p. 129). Peterson wants to be clear that she does not think that feminism is itself a religion, but that it offers a “fuller vision of the role of moral ideas” than do many other philosophies. Feminism emphasizes relationality between persons, feelings, embodiment, and context. In contrast to many Asian traditions, moreover, feminism usually attributes a degree of individual autonomy and stability to selves. Peterson goes on to discuss ecofeminism as not simply a hybrid but as a distinctive approach, offering a new conceptual framework. Ecofeminism expands moral relationships to encompass those with nonhuman animals, natural objects, landscapes, and nature in general.

Peterson then turns to Western science, a “challenge from within the heart of reason itself” (p. 153). She focuses on evolutionary theory and in particular on studies of animal behavior. Peterson marshals evidence indicating that “the emergence of distinctively human qualities was gradual, nonlinear, and certainly not inevitable” (p. 160). She accepts the core thesis of sociobiology: that “many human behaviors have evolutionary, thus biological, roots” (p. 168). Peterson cites ethological studies to illustrate that animals have thoughts, purposes, beliefs, and desires. Thus, for Peterson, the human/nonhuman difference is a “continuum with fuzzy boundaries and innumerable areas of overlap” (p. 171).

A number of environmental philosophers argue that ecology has specific implications for models of human nature, some emphasizing the internal relatedness of all organisms in a way that makes the individual only a part of the system. Human social life, however, is usually exempted from this analysis. She finds this exemption unsatisfactory and rejects attempts, such as found in the writings of Holmes Rolston, to split culture from nature. She also rejects Callicott’s urging that we extend holistic naturalism to the human sphere by accepting life “as it is [biologically] given” (p. 182).

Peterson’s chapter “In and Of the World” provides what she terms “chastened constructionist anthropology” as the best answer to the question of the relationship of human beings to the natural world. In developing this approach, Peterson relies on E.O. Wilson’s notion of “gene-culture coevolution”, operating by means of “epigenetic rules”: regularities of sensory perception and mental development which “channel” how culture is acquired (p. 189). Human beings are both natural and cultural, just as other species are both biological and environmental. Both human beings and other animals shape their environments, though human beings do this to a greater extent than other animals (p. 196).

Peterson emphasizes that we need to take such differences between human beings and nature seriously, without using those differences to justify domination. Following Plumwood, Thompson rejects the “expanded self” of deep ecology as inadequate and commends the Buddhist idea of the importance of practices such as meditation and vegetarianism as productive of relational visions of the self. She discusses forms of Christian eco-theology that are not based on claims of human superiority, such as Philip Hefner’s notion of “God’s created cocreators” and affirms Sallie McFague’s conception of the earth as the body of God, a God who is incarnated in all matter. According to this perspective, as Sallie McFague asserts, human beings should be “recentered as God’s partners in helping creation to grow and prosper in our tiny part of God’s body” (p. 216).

While some Christian environmentalists reject the stewardship ethic as anthropocentric, Peterson argues that such models have the merit of addressing the human-nature relationship directly and in addition acknowledge human weakness and ambivalence (p. 218). According to the stewardship ethic, God is the ground of intrinsic value, preventing the triumph of human instrumental values as the last word in our dealings with the natural world. Peterson rejects J. Baird Callicott’s effort to eliminate God from stewardship ethics on the grounds that such a revised ethic will not function the same in providing motivation. She maintains that religious ethics are not simply “literal elements” which can and should be discarded from philosophy: religious ethics are “integrated into a complex cultural whole” (p. 220).

Nevertheless stewardship ethics are not fully adequate to the task. We need new, powerful stories in order to generate different ideas and different ways of living in the world. One very compelling story is that of evolution. However, Peterson notes that the evolutionary story lacks a vision of the future. While she is fully aware of the dangers of utopian dreams, she defends religious ideals as having ethical and political force. Thus the question becomes one of finding narratives that incorporate future visions as well as make sense in the context of contemporary Western cultures. Peterson finds hints of a new “moralscape” in both bioregionalism and in Rolston’s concept of “storied residence.” Understanding community as based on contiguity as well as similarity broadens community to include nonhuman residents of a place. While such ecological awareness is painful due to the human-

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inflicted damage to the world, Peterson concludes by assuring the reader that we are not alone because we are connected to the nonhuman world and to the many people who also love that world.

Now, as is traditional at the end of a book review, for the critique. Overall the book is a well-written, comprehensive review of the literature rather than a presentation of a distinctive position. The comprehensiveness is at times superficial, in that Peterson mentions a number of ideas which are not developed: e.g., we are urged several times to take indigenous constructions of nonhuman nature seriously, but we are given no suggestions as to how to go about doing so. The book is somewhat repetitious and would have benefited from editorial pruning.

Peterson's emphasis on Protestant and Roman Catholic thought could usefully be complemented by an examination of the rather different assumptions concerning the human/nature relationship found in Eastern Christianity, as well as in the rich history of Celtic Christianity in the British Isles. Her characterization of William Cronon's views concerning wilderness as one in which "anything goes" is inaccurate (p. 65), since in the same essay from which she draws her criticism, Cronin stresses that our tasks are to make sense of the inscrutable autonomy of the natural world and of our obligations to that world. Her discussion of holism in environmental philosophy would benefit from Don Marrietta's analysis of types of deontic and ontological holism (p. "Ethical Holism and Individuals" in *For People and the Planet* (Temple, 1995)). And finally, Peterson makes no mention of the highly germane process theology tradition and the several applications of process philosophy to environmental ethics which have been published in the last twenty years.

Despite these weaknesses and omissions, *Being Human* is an admirable achievement which by its thoughtful assessment of disparate ideas and traditions furthers our understanding of our relationship to ourselves and to the nonhuman world.

### **Geographical Identities of Ethnic America: Race, Space and Place, Kate Berry & Martha Henderson (editors). Reno: University of Nevada Press (2002), 311 pp..**

#### **Reviewed by Mary E. Valmont, Valmont Consulting, Brooklyn, New York.**

*Geographical Identities of Ethnic America: Race, Space and Place* is an edited volume that explores and strives to understand the complex relationships between ethnic identity and place. How is geography relevant to understanding ethnicity and race? The editors, Berry and Henderson, respond that it is because such identities are not only created by the labels but also by the spaces and places in which they exist. This collection presents 13 analytical essays that explore the interactions of ethnic identities and the recreation of space and place in the United States and Canada. In addition to providing rich and engaging historical and geographical descriptions, the articles contribute an array of ethnographic and statistical methodologies for conducting such analysis.

In their introduction, Berry and Henderson put forth several assumptions, which resonate with varying success, throughout the essays: place matters in the experience and processes that shape racial and ethnic identity; and such identities are socially constructed. Although the editors note that physical scientific evidence does not support the concept of autonomous races, the foundation of this book is the reality that ethnic and racial identities have social implications for the classification, representation and power differentials that exist among different racial/ethnic groups. They define race as a "condition of individual and collective identity...as a flexible element of social structure...subject to continual reinterpretation" (p. 4). As an example of the fluidity of ethnic and racial identities, Berry and Henderson report that the U.S. Census 2000 increased the number of racial categories from five to fifteen.

Berry and Henderson organized the chapters around three scales: macro, meso and micro. As defined by Berry and Henderson, the essays examine race and ethnicity in North America from either the macro level (e.g., broad national or international perspective) or, the meso level (e.g., connections between broader processes and events and particular places) or, the micro level (e.g., specific places and landscaping).

The first three essays fall within the classification as macro – examining race and ethnicity from a broad perspective. These essays include a demographic comparison of Hispanic and Asian groups during the 1980s (Roseman), changes in residential segregation patterns between Black and white Americans between 1970 and 1990 (Deskins and Bettinger) and charting the immigrant experience of Asian Indians in Canada (Fernandez).

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Roseman uses U.S. Census data to chart the spatial dimensions of ethnic population changes in the United States between 1980 and 1990, focusing on ten rapidly growing Hispanic and Asian ethnic identity groups, which collectively accounted for almost half of the population increase in the country during that period. Roseman identifies three major components of ethnic population change: migration, both international and internal; natural population change due to birth and death rates; and identity change as measured by the census (e.g., undercounting certain ethnic groups). Deskins and Bettinger demonstrate the connections between residency, economic place and identity by looking at segregation patterns by using decennial census data from 1970 and 1990 to calculate segregation indices for the 20 largest SMSAs in 1990. Their analysis reveals different patterns of racial and economic integration for Whites, Black professionals and the Black poor. Fernandez describes the migration patterns of Asian Indians, one of the fastest growing ethnic populations in Canada, from the late 1890s to the present. Since the 1970s, Canada's ethnic groups have pushed for recognition of the racial and ethnic diversity of its cultures. In this relatively new climate of multi-culturalism, many Asian Indians continue to retain many of their cultures and traditions while also adapting to Canadian society.

The essays that take a meso perspective to studying race, ethnicity and place describe the distribution patterns and maintenance of social networks of Greek Americans (Constantinou), an historical examination of how the Oglala Lakota (also known as Sioux) used spatial relationships to resist the U.S. government's domination in the 1870s (Hannah), spatial connections of Samoans (Koletty), and an exploration of Alaskan natives conflict with wildlife management systems over hunting and fishing rights (Behnke).

Constantinou explores Greek immigration to America using data from the 1990 census and other sources. This essay documents the diversity of the immigrants on a variety of factors such as education, income, and employment skills and discusses their spatial distribution in America. It also describes the ways in which the immigrants retained ties to their homeland through cultural connections such as the Greek Orthodox Church and the creation of numerous Greek American organizations. Hannah details the Oglala Lakota resistance to the government's attempts to make them permanent settlers in the late 1800s. Their spatial mobility as resistance of control included "scattering" which occurred when groups of families would move from place to place within and outside the reservation without the permission of the government agents. The United States government completed the transformation of the Oglalas' relationship to their land, from a highly mobile population to a permanently fixed one, by administrative procedures such as the taking of census and distributing food rations. Koletty's essay on Samoans movement between the Samoa Islands and urban cities in the United States details how their mobility supports the continuation of Samoan culture among its migrants. The link with the homeland has never been severed because Samoans constantly travel back and forth not only for business and vacation but also to participate in rituals and celebrations. Behnke examines the 20-year conflict between the Native Alaskans and the federal government because of restrictions placed on the natives' access to their traditional hunting and fishing resources. Behnke provides an interesting analysis of the various representations of "landscapes" and notes that different groups of people with unique histories and purposes will interpret and affect the landscape for their own purposes. Alaskan landscape interpretations include the land as the "last great wilderness" versus a view of it as the "last frontier."

The remaining essays investigate race, ethnicity and place from a micro level, examining specific places and experiences. These essays discuss Spanish settlers' landscapes altered by later Anglo settlement (Smith), geographic isolation as a barrier to health care for Native Americans (Dillinger), Vietnamese resettlement in Louisiana (Airriess) and Russian acculturation in California (Hardwick).

Smith's essay uses three "landscape variables" – settlement shape and design, the distribution of the meeting house, and the distribution of the social/worker support houses – to describe how the migration of "Anglos" from the late 1840s through the 1950s altered the cultural traditions of the Spanish people of the region. Smith concludes that many of the Spanish communities changed spatially to accommodate the Anglos. Dillinger's essay on the geographic isolation of the Round Valley Indian Reservation describes how this segregation acts as a barrier to the access and provisions of health care. Residents must travel great distances to receive basic medical services provided at the hospital. This situation has also made it difficult to recruit and retain physicians who fear the professional and social isolation. Airriess explores how a Vietnamese refugee community in New Orleans has used their ethnic landscape signatures of vegetable gardens, churches and retail shops to recreate a sense of place. Airriess contends that refugees may feel this need more than other immigrant groups because they have been forced to migrate, often for political or religious reasons. Hardwick's essay relates the adaptation experiences of Russian Baptist and Pentecostal refugees in Sacramento during the mid- to late 1990s. Hardwick highlights the roles that changes in residential patterns, economic transition and language acquisitions occupy in the transformation of ethnic identity and place. Hardwick also notes the important distinction between adaptation and integration.

The concluding essay is an epilogue by Shresta and Smith. It reflects upon relations among race, racism and place and presents some current trends in the construction of race including multiculturalism.

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Many of the essays told compelling stories of the histories and challenges of adjusting to changes to place and space for different ethnic groups. Airriess' imagery of the Vietnamese refugee community in New Orleans vividly showed how their churches, retail shops and vegetable gardens serve as cultural reminders of the traditional practices and values that were left behind when they fled Vietnam and aid their adaptation to a foreign social and physical environment. Hannah's descriptions of how the Oglala used their mobility and the terrain of the western planes to resist dominance and oppression was compelling, but ultimately, mobility did not equal freedom for the Oglala Lakota. The macro level essays, especially Roseman's ethnic mapping and Deskins and Bettinger's description of Black and White residential and economic segregation provide interesting glimpsing into the future of America – it may becoming more multi-racial and ethnic and separate.

In other essays, the links between race and place were not always well defined. In Koletty's description of Samoan immigrants, the author never acknowledges that many of the methods of continuing ties to a homeland is typical of most migrants - not unique to Samoans as an ethnic group. Smith's ironic investigation of how the migration of "Anglos" altered the cultural traditions of the Spanish people of the region fails to mention of how this Spanish settlement may have disrupted the Native Americans and Mexicans indigenous to the area. In addition, the vagueness of the editors' definitions of the macro, meso and micro scale made it difficult to categorize the essays within this framework. It was assumed that the essays were arranged in that sequence.

Overall, this volume provides well written essays that used the main themes to relate how very different ethnic or racial populations attempt to maintain or recreate their identities in terrains that are changing, or are changed because of relocation. The essays describe a variety of interactions between race, space and place within the social-spatial topics of immigration, landscapes, housing and social connections. These interactions illustrate the complexity of examining relationships to place. I recommend this volume to all social scientists who strive to understand such complexities.

### **After Revolution: Mapping Gender and Cultural Politics in Neoliberal Nicaragua , by Florence E. Babb. (2000), Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001.**

#### **Reviewed by Lorraine Bayard de Volo, University of Kansas**

International attention to Nicaragua has waned considerably since the Contra War ended and the Sandinistas lost the elections in 1990. Yet in demonstrating how the long struggle for democracy and economic justice is being waged after the revolution, Babb demonstrates why this country deserves our continued attention. Through narratives that supply multiple windows into the lives of Nicaragua's urban poor and working class, we witness both the despair wrought by neoliberalism and political corruption and the seeds of hope that continue to be sown through an emerging civil society and network of social movements.

Four facets of this book give us valuable insights into both the political economy and cultural politics of contemporary urban Nicaragua: gender, cooperatives, urban studies (Managua), and post-revolutionary capitalist culture. By following the lives of women and men in a Managua barrio and in several cooperatives during her fieldwork in Nicaragua between 1989 and 2000, Babb noted a connection that she had not initially expected: the relation between changes in the political economy and developments in social activism (especially feminist groups) (26). The post-1990 expansion of social movements, she argues, is not simply the result of democratization or a continuation of FSLN politics, though these play a role. Specifically, she contends that expanding social activism is due to challenges to hierarchical Sandinista party politics, opposition to neoliberalism, and the continued cultural politics of activism under regimes that tolerate a degree of dissent (27, 173).

Much to her credit, Babb frames her research in terms of urban studies. Unlike some commentators on Nicaraguan culture and politics, she purposefully centers her research in Managua rather than doing her research primarily in Managua and yet making claims that broadly encompass Nicaragua as a whole. More specifically, she embraces the city itself as a central subject of her research, discussing "how neoliberalism has altered the urban landscape in ways that are inflected by gender" (49).

Throughout the book, Babb "maps" gender, asking, for example, "What has neoliberalism meant for Managua, and how are gender and class differences manifest in the present urban context?" (57). She notes that with

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the post-1990 budget cuts, along with a reinvigorated conservative political culture, women were pressured to leave formal sector jobs to return home, even when they still somehow had to provide for their families (57). “Erasures of women’s spaces in the city were increasingly common as opportunities to participate in the wider economy began to shrink” (58). In the meantime, “their presence in informal trades (often hidden from view) and even begging (in public) was greater” (58). Particularly disturbing is women’s and girls’ increased involvement in prostitution since 1990.

Although she examines women’s household and unpaid work, she also insists that women’s paid and unpaid work are interconnected in important ways (108). Thus, while the research done on women’s unpaid labor has advanced our thinking about economic development, such research should not come at the expense of our understanding of women’s experiences of neoliberalism in terms of their paid work. Much of her ethnographic research, accordingly, was devoted to producing in-depth, micro-level studies of working women and how their experiences changed over time in relation to changes in the political economy (117). In particular, Babb charts women’s work in urban cooperatives, noting also the neoliberal conversion of many cooperatives into microenterprises. She provides four rich case studies that reveal both the variety of women’s experiences in cooperatives as well as the crushing affect of economic crisis. As production and sales have slowed, women generally increased their efforts, working longer hours in search of less expensive materials, acquiring new skills, and finding new markets for their products (148). Yet the strain produced by economic crisis, increased competition, and the disappearance of state supports has driven many cooperatives and small businesses out of business and has also seriously impacted women’s abilities to carry out family responsibilities. Since roughly half of urban Nicaraguan households are headed by women and women make up 44 percent of the economically active population, economic policies which do not take gender into account will have particularly dire effects on these women and their children (148-9). In this gloomy scenario, Babb offers a ray of hope. Nicaragua’s most vulnerable social groups, according to Babb, are uniquely qualified to confront neoliberalism due to the Sandinista emphasis on social mobilization in the prior decade: “The decade of broad participation left a legacy of expectations that has been challenged but not eliminated since 1990” (148).

Still, many cooperatives have disbanded since 1990. In other cases, family pressures (child care problems and husband’s attitudes) as well as NGO encouragement for cooperatives to refashion themselves as microenterprises have promoted individualism in place of a Sandinista model of cooperation (162, 165). This transition from cooperatives to microenterprises is a rich site of study that can mined more deeply by future research. Babb’s work is unique, and thus the literature has just scratched the surface of this transition.

There is also an interesting chapter comparing narratives of development, in which Babb explores the discourse of neo-liberal and Sandinista policymakers. In addition to the common tropes of neoliberals, she also found a disturbing conservative sub-theme regarding women—for example, the notion that female state employees leaving public sector jobs as a result of structural adjustment were mainly “housewives” who now could return to their families (185). Interestingly, despite certain differences, the neoliberal and Sandinista discourses agree that the economic solution requires some measure of structural adjustment and that “the workers themselves embody the potential of the nation to forge ahead and ‘develop’” (187). Elite critics of neoliberalism in Nicaragua have not proposed alternatives so much as proposed more gradual measures. A starker contrast to neoliberal discourse is to be found in the urban workers interviewed by Babb. Through these interactions, Babb noted a persistent appeal to the body and personhood with regards to economic shifts, revealing a resistant and potentially revolutionary consciousness (190-1). Babb eloquently sums up these contrasting discourses: “What appears to be notably different is the elite’s notion of the harsh medicine that is needed to heal the nation and working-class and poor people’s imagery of the bodily consequences of both the economic crisis and the medicine that is being administered to deal with it” (196-7).

Also impressive is the manner in which Babb has developed new footholds for our understanding of the sometimes frightening pace of capitalist development in Managua and its visible cultural markers. She does this with great attention to detail, including treatments of such “events” as the building of the new cathedral, the opening of a new McDonalds, and the “mallification” of Managua (complete with food courts and escalators!), framing many of these changes in terms of the emerging national identity centered on consumption (243). Through these examples, we come to see how “As Managua is remade, it is increasingly the space of an elite” (67).

Babb concludes that women’s strategies in confronting the economic crisis may not be sufficient to withstand the impact of structural adjustment, suggesting that “more thorough-going structural transformation may be needed once again in Nicaragua” (108). But the tone of this book is ultimately hopeful. Babb documents the grim results of neoliberal economic policies, but she also highlights the new autonomous forms of activism that challenge both this neoliberalism and the undemocratic trends within Sandinismo. Never denying the policy mistakes, undemocratic tendencies, and instances of corruption of the Sandinista revolution, she insists that it also “made social subjects of

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those who before had little voice or political influence” (210). Fortunately, Babb carried out her research despite the ebbing international interest and was able to note sites of resistance not only in relation to economic policy but also to gender power relations, lesbian and gay issues, and peace.

After Revolution is essential reading for those interested in women and work, the local effects of neoliberalism, urban studies in lesser developed countries, Latin American cultural politics, and collective action. For those unfamiliar with post-1990 Nicaragua, this book will provide an excellent overview of the vast, rapid changes the country has gone through while also making important connections to the Sandinista past. For those studying women’s work, Babb makes an important case for the interconnectedness of women’s paid and unpaid work. For those interested in economic policy, this book shares insights into poor urban women’s local-level experiences of large economic shifts—insights that can only be originally derived from the long-term, careful ethnographic work of a committed scholar.

**Marx and the Postmodernism Debates: An Agenda for Critical Theory by Lorraine Y. Landry. London: Praeger Publishers (2000), xiii+232pp.**

**Reviewed by Douglas J. Cremer, Department of Natural and Social Sciences, Woodbury University, Burbank, CA.**

Lorraine Landry has confidently entered a field that has drawn much attention among philosophers: the debate between Jürgen Habermas on the one hand and Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Jean-François Lyotard on the other. Rather than seeing this intersection as one between a rationalist modernism and an irrationalist postmodernism, Landry seeks to create what she calls a “fruitful tension” between these two warring camps by reconceptualizing the debate through the work of Karl Marx. The connection between Marx and Habermas is clear. Habermas, as the heir to Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, is recognized as the latest German philosopher to build off of Marx’ work. That a rapprochement between these two positions might be accomplished through the work of Marx has also been hinted at in Derrida’s later works as well as in the widely know early Marxian roots of Lyotard and Foucault. Landry makes profitable use of a wide variety of well-known commentators on the debates, among them Seyla Benhabib, Matei Calinescu, Mike Featherstone, Douglas Kellner, Andreas Huyssen, Alex Callinicos, Christopher Norris, Thomas McCarthy, Peter Dews, and David Rasmussen. Due to the wide range of material covered and the clarity of writing, *Marx and the Postmodernism Debates* is a welcome addition to this highly developed, intellectually rich and philosophically challenging literature, doing an admirable job of summarizing the major issues and developing a new approach that keeps the book from being another rehash of a now lengthy debate.

By explicitly reintroducing Marx to the debates, Landry hopes to show the relevancy of postmodern thought for social change and contemporary politics, making it part of the tradition of ideology critiques begun by Marx. Yet before undertaking this project, Landry goes back to the work of Immanuel Kant, who is as important as Marx in her overall analysis. It is in Kant’s work that Landry sees the fully developed form of modernity: individualist, instrumental, mechanical, methodological, and manipulative. Yet this modernity, she argues, was from its origins tied to and complicated by the earlier existing organic conception of the world as well as the emerging romantic view. Landry makes the argument that there are thus as many modernisms as there are postmodernisms, as many different forms of Enlightenment rationalism as there are postmodern critiques. Her analysis of aesthetic modernism, as a variant within modern thought that was intensely critical of the rationalist strain of modernism, is well argued. It is one of the cornerstones of her effort to show how the paradoxes and complexities of postmodernity were embedded in the paradoxes and complexities of modernity. One of the strengths of this book is the clear way Landry lays out these important issues.

The apparent conflict between modernity and postmodernity is repositioned by Landry as a “fruitful tension,” a phrase she admits is a bit trite. Her stated methodology is to take the positions of Habermas, Derrida, Foucault and Lyotard each on its own terms and as empathetically as possible, referring to similarities and differences, avoiding easy syntheses and polemics, and seeking a viable theory and politics from each. She initially addresses Habermas’

critique of postmodernism where he argues that postmodernism is neo-conservative, irrational and potentially fascist. Detailing Habermas' rejection of the aesthetic modernism at the root of postmodernism, Landry discusses Habermas' associated dismissal of the outsider view taken by the tradition from Friedrich Nietzsche through Martin Heidegger to Derrida and Foucault. She offers that Habermas was mistaken to take aesthetic postmodernism as a natural ally to political conservatism. It is precisely in the fact that both critical theory and postmodernism seek a critique of late twentieth century modernity, and that both have taken reified, and thus amendable, views of the complexities of modernity, that Landry sees the possibility of rapprochement, of creating a fruitful tension.

The chapters on Derrida and Foucault are clear and concise summations of their positions and of their defenses against the attacks launched by Habermas. If there is a fault here, it is that Landry's voice is often lost amid all the commentators and philosophers, to the point that it is sometimes unclear exactly who is speaking in any one part of the text. Landry's goal is to emphasize the rootedness of postmodernism in modernist aesthetics, especially in Kant's third critique, the Critique of Judgement. It is this Kantian connection that is key to Landry's effort to rehabilitate postmodernism in the light of its confrontation with critical theory. In a Kantian light, Landry sees deconstruction as a form of ideology critique converging with the tradition of Adorno and Habermas. Foucault's genealogy is also placed within a Kantian framework, recasting Foucault's essay on the Enlightenment as a defense of the spirit of inquiry against deadening principles and the promotion of an aesthetic of existence. For Landry, Foucault's practical ethics, along with Derrida's deconstruction, recognizes the inescapability of reason but does not accept its absoluteness.

If there is one unreachable postmodernist in this group for Landry, it is Lyotard. His aesthetic postmodernism, which rejects the connection between political theory and practical politics, is less likely to produce anything of value in fruitful tension with critical theory, according to Landry. Although Lyotard is the central catalyst in the fractious discussion between Habermas and postmodernism, he tends to drop out of the discussion after Landry's critique in the fifth chapter. This is a weakness in the work, for Lyotard, along with other French theorists such as Jean Baudrillard, appear to be among the most intractable of the postmodernists as far as critical theory is concerned. By effectively limiting the discussion of postmodernism to its poststructuralist adherents in Derrida and Foucault, Landry makes her efforts easier, but also less significant. The tensions within postmodernism between the intense critiques of consumer society and of the oppression of institutionalized knowledge on the one hand and the celebration of image, virtual reality, and computerized data banks on the other, are obscured by the perspective Landry chooses.

The result is an emphasis on the postmodernism debates as a twentieth century extension of the differences between the Kant of the first two critiques, refracted through G. W. F. Hegel and Marx, and the Kant of the third critique, developed by the work of Nietzsche and Heidegger. Landry wants to remind us again of the complexity of modern thought, of an Enlightenment tradition that embraces rational, moral, and aesthetic critiques. She rightly desires to keep us away from the simplicity of the so-called "Enlightenment Project" with its tendencies towards intellectual repression and political terror. She effectively takes us away from the stale dichotomy between transcendental rationalism and nihilistic relativism towards sustaining the tension between the Nietzsche-Heidegger tradition and the Hegel-Marx tradition. Finally, Landry tries to preserve the postmodern awareness of the multiplicity of otherness and to emancipate modernism from the domineering universality of the subject by using Kant as the touchstone.

Much more critical of Habermas than of Derrida or Foucault, Landry accuses the German philosopher of failing to see that his theory of communicative action does not hew to either a correspondence notion of truth nor to a purely realist epistemology. For Landry, a nonfoundationalist, antirealist philosophy can establish the ground for the intended reconciliation of postmodernism and critical theory and for a progressive political theory, including Habermas' goals of completing modernity and avoiding the political linkage between postmodernism and neo-conservatism. Habermas, according to Landry, misses the importance of language in Marx' writing, making Marx bound to the philosophy of the subject than to ideology critique and the analysis of class conflict. Similarly, postmodernism's misinterpretation of Marx as focused on production, wedded to materialist thought and realist philosophy, is also taken to task, but Landry's fire is directed mostly at Habermas. The detailed critique of Habermas' position is not matched by an equally thorough critique of poststructuralist or postmodernist concerns.

After outlining and debunking the Habermasian and postmodernist critiques of Marx, Landry finally makes her case for the rehabilitation of Marxian critical theory in a postmodern context. Landry's Marx is an advocate for situated knowledge, much like the postmodernists, a still important voice for critical theory and radical politics. Furthermore, Marx is seen, as are all the others, through a Kantian lens, emphasizing the critique of language and ideology. Landry wants to move beyond the negative evaluations of Marx towards a positive reception of Marx' refusal to be caught between the poles of universal reason and relativist skepticism. The rejection of simple bipolar dichotomies, a common denominator among postmodernists, is characteristic of Landry's thought as well,

illustrating once again her closer affinity to Derrida and Foucault than to Habermas in the postmodernism debates.

Ultimately, Landry wants to argue that a limited, pragmatic transcendence can be sustained by deconstructing textual play, that a marriage of critical theory and postmodernism can be made. She opens the door wide for a consideration of this as a possibility, but does not firmly make the case that it can be accomplished. For a book that perhaps could have been alternately titled "Kant, Critical Theory, and Poststructuralism," Landry does a fine job in establishing the conditions for the possibility of a rapprochement between critical theory and certain forms of postmodernism. Rather than using Marx to reinterpret the postmodernism debates, as the actual title might imply, Landry has shown how postmodernist concerns over difference, the Other, and the uses of language can possibly rehabilitate Marx, and through him, critical theory.

**Ethnic Economies by Ivan Light and Steven Gold, Academic Press (2000), xiii+302pp.**

**Reviewed by Mohsen M. Mobasher, Department of Social Sciences, University of Houston/ Downtown, Houston, TX.**

The revival of small business in advanced societies of Europe and the United States has led to a revitalization of scholarly interest in the ethnic economy in recent years. These studies suggest that contrary to what was once predicted, small business self-employment in almost all sectors of the economy has not only persisted, but also continues to attract ethnic minority groups. In fact one general conclusion that can be drawn from the large body of recent research on ethnic entrepreneurship is that immigrant groups are heavily overrepresented in the self-employed business population. Ethnic Economies by Light and Gold is an attempt to provide some insight into the ways in which ethnic groups utilize ethnic, class, gender, and family resources in their entrepreneurial activities.

The authors' starting point is the observation that although ethnic economies increase competition within and between ethnic groups, they also expand the job supply of the host society and contribute to the general welfare of co-ethnics economically, socially, culturally, and politically. According to Light and Gold, ethnic economies help co-ethnics to "maintain neighborhoods, support communal institutions, assist the indigent, train the recent arrivals, educate and protect children, build political power, and maintain cultural integrity" (p. X).

Light contributes to six of the book's nine chapters, starting with the first chapter that deals with the conceptual analysis of ethnic economy and its theoretical roots in historical sociology - Marx Weber, and Sombart; African American economic thinkers, notably Booker T. Washington, and the Middleman Minorities literature. Light's other chapters deal with the size of ethnic economies (Chapter 2); the economic advantages and rewards of ethnic economies such as wealth, income, employment opportunities, and accelerated economic mobility for participants (Chapter 3); utilization of cultural and material endowments of class resources by ethnic entrepreneurs in ethnic economies (Chapter 4); forms of disadvantage and their impact on ethnic entrepreneurship (Chapter 8); and credit issues in the ethnic ownership economy (Chapter 9). Gold provides the other 3 chapters, starting with the examination of ethnic resources and their role in shaping ethnic economies (Chapter 5). He then goes on to examine the vital roles of gender and family arrangements in ethnic economies (Chapter 6) and the broader relationship between the ethnic economies and ethnic communities (Chapter 7).

The introductory chapter is elucidating in that it identifies three related concepts of ethnic ownership economy, ethnic enclave economy, and ethnic-controlled economy. Although these three concepts are related and are derived from the core literature, but they reflect different aspects of the ethnic economy. Following Bonacich and Modell, the authors define ethnic economy as "any ethnic or immigrant group's self-employed, its employers, their co-ethnic employees, and their unpaid family workers" (p.9). Although Light and Gold retain the content of Bonacich and Modell's definition of ethnic economy, they change the concept's name to "ethnic ownership economy" to distinguish between an ethnic economy that is based on property right and ownership and an "ethnic economy whose basis is de facto control based on numbers, clustering, and organization, the ethnic-controlled economy" (p.23). Whereas ethnic ownership economy consists of small and medium size businesses owned by ethnic or immigrant entrepreneurs and their co-ethnic helpers and workers, ethnic control economy Ethnic-controlled economy refers to industries, occupations, and organization of the general labor market in which co-

ethnic employees (not owners) exert appreciable and persistent economic power. This power usually results from their numerical clustering, their numerical preponderance, their organization, government mandates, or all four. “Ethnic- controlled” economy is completely independent of the “ethnic ownership” economy. The participants of ethnic controlled economy exert control not ownership authority. Light and Gold believe that the ethnic-controlled economy permits co-ethnics to secure more and better jobs in the mainstream, reduce unemployment, and improve working conditions. Whereas the distinction between ethnic ownership economy and ethnic controlled economy is based on property right, the major distinction between ethnic ownership economy and ethnic enclave economy is spatial clustering of ethnic firms. Unlike the ethnic owned economy which might be evenly distributed among neighborhoods and industries, ethnic enclave economy is clustered around a territorial core. In addition to a locational clustering of firms, an ethnic enclave economy requires economic interdependency and co-ethnic workers, whereas ethnic owned economy requires none of these.

Common to all three of these concepts is the ethnic-based collectivism and its repercussions. Unlike those who argue that ethnicity is economically neutral and never confers economic advantage, Light and Gold assert that ethnicity is advantageous and “ethnic-based collectivism makes a difference to the economic status of immigrants and minority groups in the United States” (p.131). Their identification of three ethnic economies and their advantages for immigrants and minority groups not only diminishes the conceptual clutter in the ethnic economy literature, it also challenges the prevailing assimilation model’s economic theory that always assumed enhanced economic welfare for immigrants who were incorporated into the mainstream economy. The assimilation theory, Light and Gold claim, is too simplistic and ignores “all three ethnic economies in the interest of a homogeneous econospace within which uniform assimilation occurs at a constant speed, a Fordist image that has outlived its usefulness” (p.25). Light and Gold’s argument that ethnicity is economically advantageous is not new to sociology. However, the time is now right, given the widespread recognition of ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship, for a full appreciation of contribution of ethnic resources to this trend.

Immigrants and ethnic minorities often rely on class and ethnic resources to establish an enterprise. Therefore, Chapters 4 and 5 of the book are devoted to the examination of class and ethnic resource utilization by ethno-racial and immigrant entrepreneurs. A main virtue of these two chapters is the emphasis on the mixture of both class and ethnic resources by ethno-racial and immigrant entrepreneurs in ethnic economies. Light and Gold point out that, although ethnic-only or class-only resource endowments are theoretical possibilities, there are no examples of class-only or ethnic-only resource-mobilizing entrepreneurial immigrant groups in the North American literature. The authors challenge the conventional Marxist view regarding class as the only factor that determines economic relationships and claim that “ethnic resources importantly contribute to entrepreneurship independent of class” (p.102). Light and Gold conclude that all ethnic economies in contemporary American and Canadian society “depend upon mixed class and ethnic resources” (p.105). The authors define class resources as “the vocationally relevant cultural and material endowment of bourgeoisies” (p. 84). Whereas the material side of class resources consists of such tangible components as property and wealth, the cultural elements of class resources include such intangible endowments as values, skills, attitudes, and knowledge that are transmitted in the course of socialization. A bourgeoisie usually has access to both cultural and material resources, but in some instances they are separated. For example, the pre-Mariel Cuban refugees who settled in Miami were from wealthy families in Cuba with a bourgeois cultural background. However, they arrived in Miami with impoverished material class resources.

Unlike class resources that lack ethnic or cultural character, ethnic resources are ethno-cultural in origin and are based on national and/or ethnic identity and affinity of a group. In chapter five which is jewel of the book, Light and Gold explore the contributions of ethnic resources to economic survival of ethno-racial and immigrants groups. Ethnic resources include shared values, skills, orientations, information, social ties, social relations, institutions, organizational techniques, Kinship and marital systems, trust, social capital, cultural assumptions, religion, language, rotating credit associations, entrepreneurial values and attitudes, reactive solidarities, acculturation lag, sojourning orientation, social networks, ethnic solidarity ideology, a middleman heritage, and underemployed and disadvantaged co-ethnic workers and other socio-cultural features of the whole a group that co-ethnics utilize to facilitate their building ethnic ownership economies. As elucidated in this definition, ethnic resources are characteristics of the whole group not just its bourgeois class or individual members. Unlike class resources that are available only to bourgeoisie, ethnic resources are shared collectively and have an influence upon behavior. Ethnic resources are utilized in all aspects of ethnic economies from raising capital, to recruiting labor, to dealing with customers and clients. Ethnic connections not only reduce the costs of doing business, they also provide investment capital, advice, raw materials, training, and access to clients. Moreover, ethnic networks provide job referrals and training for unskilled workers. In addition to providing capital, employment opportunities, and training, ethnic networks combined with ethnic notions of trust, cooperation, and shared fate, provide a basis for political activity among group members. In turn, through political activism ethnic groups “can win concessions from the government

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agencies and establish a common standpoint for addressing conflicts with opposing groups and interests” (p. 128). While a large part of Chapter 5 is devoted to the examination of the economic benefits of ethnicity, the latter section of the chapter presents an excellent discussion of the significant costs of ethnic resources for ethnic entrepreneurs and their co-ethnic employees.

Offering special favors and free or cheaper service to co-ethnics, hiring co-ethnics rather than workers from the general labor market who possess needed skills because of communal obligations, being ripped off by co-ethnics through fraudulent deals, and antagonistic competition with other co-ethnic entrepreneurs who rely on the same market for supplies, capital, labor, and consumers can limit business success for business owners within the ethnic ownership economy. Co-ethnic workers also encounter limitations and difficulties in ethnic economies, including low wages, long hours, and poor working conditions.

The study of ethnic economies and patterns of class and ethnic resource mobilization has focused primarily upon the activities of immigrant men. Only in recent years have the role of immigrant women and gender relations in the ethnic economies been studied systematically. In Chapter 6 Light and Gold look at the vital role of “gender and families in ethnic economies”. As the title of the chapter aptly indicates, family and gender factors determine patterns of economic integration of ethnic groups. As indicated by the authors, family and gender relations much like ethnicity are based on loyalty, intimacy, and shared destiny. Therefore, as collective entities with unique traditions and common goals, ethnic families, blur “the distinction between production and consumption, employer and worker, exploitation and self-interest, and public and private that underlie contemporary models of economic life” (p.131). Because ethnic families reject individualist, cost-benefit economic behavior, family workers bear the burden of difficult, sometimes exploitative, economic conditions that would not be tolerated by unrelated employees. Given the impact of gender and family on various aspects of ethnic economies, Light and Gold organize this chapter by utilizing three different levels of analysis. The first level is the macro or structural and focuses on the impact of such demographic factors as sex and age ratio; rates of marriage, divorce, and fertility; and household size on economic needs and outcomes of an ethnic group. Other macro factor that determines an ethnic groups’ economic standing, Light and Gold note, is the legal status of foreign-born persons. Through a series of wide-ranging statistics collected by other researchers and government agencies, the authors explain, how the increase in labor force participation of ethnic and immigrant women, both documented and undocumented, has been a vital aspect for economic survival of ethnic groups.

At the second, or middle range, level factors that have an impact on an ethnic group’s economic standing include rates of entrepreneurship, job seeking and resource pooling strategies, inheritance patterns, cultural innovations and skills, and generational relations. Light and Gold’s analysis of the collective strategies for economic survival made by families or households and its interplay with the cultural norms regarding economic priorities and gender role; and transnational political, economic, cultural, and familial networks and links, forms one of the highlights of this chapter. Another highlight of this chapter is the examination of the economic contributions of women and other family members to the economic survival of family-based or home-based enterprises wherein women and children provide considerable unpaid labor. The last level of analysis, “micro dimensions,” looks at the growing body of scholarship on conflict, negotiation, exploitation, and frequent realignment within families and between gender groups. Central to the role of families and gender relations in ethnic economies at micro level of analysis is the notion that immigrant women have different opportunities and concerns, and deploy different resources to adapt, negotiate, and realign within both families and ethnic communities.

The ethnic economy literature has been relatively insensitive to the link between the ethnic economy and the ethnic community. Yet, ethnic economies provide ethnic communities with such benefits as job creation and assignment, loan funds, burial benefits, legal advice, allocation of social welfare, education, establishment of ethnic institutions and neighborhood, and communal leadership and advocacy. In return, the collective outlook, ethnic solidarity, ethnic inclusiveness, and mutual ethnic and moral obligations found in ethnic communities contribute to the creation of ethnic economies. Moreover, ethnic communities provide ethnic economies with labor, loan funds, and consumers. A major outcome of the symbiotic relationship between ethnic economies and ethnic communities that is explored in chapter seven is support for what Light and Gold call “ethnic self-help” activities and organizations. Ethnic self-help organizations or communal activities, the authors assert, have normally been supported by shop owners, doctors, artisans and other co-ethnic elite for the purpose of maintaining cultural traditions and practices and reducing dependency on external entities. The symbiotic relationship between ethnic economies and ethnic communities is not always positive. Ethnic communities can limit social, political, and economic options for their members and ethnic elites frequently manipulate co-ethnics for their own benefits. Nevertheless, benefits of ethnic economies to their communities are of great importance.

The explanations for creation of ethnic economies and higher rates of self-employment among some ethno-

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racial groups are explored in chapter eight. The premise of this chapter is that entrepreneurship in the ethnic ownership economies is the outcome of disadvantages in the labor market plus class and ethno-cultural resources such as social capital. Light and Gold distinguish between simple disadvantage and “resource-constraint variant” theory of entrepreneurship. Simple disadvantage theory argues that disadvantages in the labor market encourage ethno-racial groups to turn to self-employment without invoking resource disparities among groups. The resource-constraint version maintains, in contrast, that market disadvantage alone is insufficient to create entrepreneurship. Labor force disadvantages promote entrepreneurship among those groups with ethno-cultural and class resources than among those lacking them. “The resources provide the means, and the labor force disadvantage the motive. In the simple disadvantage theory, the disadvantaged have ample motive for self-employment, but they often lack the means, material and cultural” (p.210). This does not mean, however, that there are no entrepreneurial activities among those with no resources. As indicated by Light, those with no resources turn to self-employment in the informal economy and are excluded from mainstream self-employment. This is simply because of fewer demands for resources in the informal economy than the mainstream economy.

The book’s final chapter examines the “credit issues in the ethnic ownership economy”. Here, Light and Gold argue that the American financial institutions have failed to provide financial services to immigrants, to the poor, and to women, causing their ethnic economies to grow more slowly and preventing them from generating jobs that would otherwise be possible. This neglect, Light and Gold argue, is minimally related to social discrimination of the banking industry against immigrants, nonwhites, women, and inner city residents. “The main contributor is the high cost banks face when servicing these problem markets” (p. 225). Lacking access to the mainstream savings and credit, however, does not totally undermine ethnic economies. Immigrants, ethno-racial groups, and women, rely on two informal nonbank financial institutions for credit and loan to start a business; microcredit and rotating savings and credit associations (ROSACs). ROSACs are founded by a group of friends or members of an organization who pool their money together and give it to members to start a business or purchase consumer items. When all members have received the joint fund, the club is terminated, and a new one formed. ROSACs are found in Latin America, Central America, Africa, Asia, and the United States. Based on social scientists’ ethnographic evidence, Light and Gold claim that all contemporary immigrant groups in America that originated in the Third World have used ROSACs for financial needs. Microcredit agencies in the United States “provide credit to those who, lacking access to bank credit, are nonetheless capable of developing and maintaining their business with minimal support. The agency provides that minimal support and seeks to recoup the cost from user fees” (p.222). The key for both Grameen-style microcredit and ROSAC non-banking financial institutions to accomplish and enforce this feat is social capital. Whereas banks do not accept social capital as loan collateral, both microcredit and informal credit agencies “orient their entire strategy around social capital” (p.226). Given the major role of informal credit and microcredit agencies and their scarcity, relative to banks, Light and Gold conclude the chapter by indicating the need for a structural reform in American financial system which expands the role of informal credit and microcredit agencies and better serves the needs of the poor, of women, and of small business.

Together, these nine chapters paint a detailed picture of the economic adaptation of immigrants and ethnic minorities in America. The book enriches our understanding of the economic adaptation of immigrants and ethnic minorities in America. *Ethnic Economies* provides a compelling argument about the economic benefits of ethnicity and ethnic-based collectivism. With *Ethnic Economies*, Light and Gold provide a valuable addition to the growing literature on ethnic entrepreneurship. The only area that leaves one asking for more involves the overview of major theories and arguments that social scientists have developed to explain the entrance of ethnic minorities and immigrants into ethnic enterprise. The authors only discuss the resource-constraint variant of disadvantage theory for creation of ethnic economies. A review of other major theoretical perspectives that discuss transformations of Western economies and their impact on ethnic entrepreneurship (Light and Bonacich 1988; Waldinger et al. 1990, and Ward and Jenkins 1984,) and “interactive” perspective that focuses on the interaction between the opportunity structures of the host society and ethnic groups (Waldinger et al. 1990) would have enhanced the usefulness of this volume.

In sum, this book presents a vivid and exciting account of ethnic economies in American society, and its use would prove beneficial to scholars, educators, and policy makers alike. I strongly recommend this book to anyone with interest in immigration studies, race/ethnic relations, social inequality, and economic sociology. It contains an impressive array of descriptions and explanations of various immigrant populations and ethnic groups in America. *Ethnic Economies* is an outstanding work. It will undoubtedly add new dimensions and insights to our understanding of economic adaptation of ethno-racial groups in America. I look forward to using it in my classes.

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**Democracy at Work: A Comparative Sociology of Environmental Regulation in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and the United States, by Richard Münch with Christian Lahusen, Markus Kurth, Cornelia Borgards, Carsten Stark, and Claudia Jau\_ Westport, CT: Praeger (2001), xii, 262 pp.**

**Reviewed by Miranda A. Schreurs, Department of Government and Politics, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742**

The comparative study of environmental regulations is enjoying something of a revival because of the dramatic environmental regulatory developments both at the national and international level in the 1990s. This volume contributes a unique perspective to the growing body of literature in comparative environmental studies with its focus on the role of environmental expertise in policy formulation. The authors are interested in explaining why differences in national regulatory styles in the environmental realm persist across the advanced industrialized states. They pick four major countries with democratic, albeit distinct policy making systems for their comparison: the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and the United States. Their comparison focuses on the development of policies to address tropospheric air pollution (as opposed to global warming or stratospheric ozone depletion).

The main argument of the book is that the differences in the environmental regulatory styles of these states can be explained to a considerable degree by the different training of their environmental policy makers, the access of different groups to the policy making process, and the broader policy making culture. Thus, we learn in Markus Kurth's chapter that in the United Kingdom policy making is characterized by a concentration of power in a state that is subject to far fewer restrictions than is found either on the continent or in the United States. Power is regulated not so much by a system of checks and balances as by a culture that values pragmatic compromise and negotiated consensus although differences in policy style were quite strong between the eras of Margaret Thatcher and John Major. This is true in the environmental realm as well where expertise is determined not so much by training as by experience.

Cornelia Borgards argues that in France programs are formulated by a small circle of elites that is dominated by industrial interests but also include the weaker voices of environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Environment Ministry. Much policy formulation occurs in informal settings that excludes the public. The "technical professions" are heavily represented in this process and as a result industrial perspectives have the upper hand. Culturally, in France where agricultural interests are strong, nature is viewed as subordinate to humans and it is there for humans to shape. As a result of this constellation of actors, interests, and culture environmental policy is weaker in France relative to other policy areas than in the other three countries examined in this book.

Carsten Stark contends that in Germany air pollution policies tend to be technocratic, legalistic, and focused on the source. Emissions standards are determined by negotiation. Under the law, those who run facilities are obligated to keep up with the "state of technology", but the definition of what the "state" is is defined through negotiation. In Germany, air pollution is corporatist; there is an accommodation between the interests of a few organizations and the state. The public is not well integrated into the permitting process. Instead, there is a

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underlying culture among policy makers that portrays the public as being in need of enlightenment. In other words, in Germany “a rule by virtue of knowledge” prevails and that knowledge is largely defined by engineers as opposed to, for example, medical experts.

In contrast, with the three European cases explored in this volume, in the United States, suggests Claudia Jau, the policy making process is quite open to the public. In contrast with the consensus-seeking cultures found in Europe, in the United States policy making is characterized by strong competition among interest groups. The public exerts a strong influence on policy as can be seen by the rejection by voters of measures to increase the price of gasoline or expand public transportation networks. Far more than is the case in Europe, there is an antagonistic relationship between the government and industry. Yet, this does not mean that industry has little or no influence over policy formulation. When compared with European countries, the United States stands out for the comparatively strong influence exerted by economists in policy formulation. This explains the embrace of market-based principles in environmental regulations in the United States. The best known example of this is the 1990 Clean Air Act amendments which introduced a permit trading system for sulfur oxide emissions.

In a long and theoretically-oriented concluding chapter, Richard Münch compares the cultures of democracy explored in the previous four chapters. He labels the United Kingdom as a “representative democracy.” Of the four states examined, civil society is strongest in England where policy networks provide opportunities for a wide range of societal interests to express their voice and work towards a harmonization of interests. Policy making relies on informal consultation between the state and interest groups. Compared with other countries where engineers and physical scientists tend to be very influential in the policy making process, in Britain other specialists, including doctors and biologists also hold considerable sway. Thus, in England environment is dealt with in a quite integrative fashion. Yet, there have been changes away from the politics of compromise towards great reliance on market mechanisms as a result of the revolutionary changes to British politics under Margaret Thatcher. Münch concludes his analysis of the British system with comparisons to the philosophical writings of John Locke, John Stuart Mill, and Thomas Hill Green among others.

In contrast, Münch classifies France as an “etatist republican democracy” by which he means a system where the state administration together with a small circle of interests with which the state closely cooperates. Groups must struggle to be recognized by the state since they depend on the state for financial support, and in this system civil society groups are basically a “parasite of the state” (p. 171). Knowledge in environmental policy making is biased towards elite engineers and scientists that determine what is in the best interests of the public. In this system, nature is viewed as an object to be controlled and improved upon. This form of republican democracy has its roots in the writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The idea of a technoadministrative elite can be compared to the thinking of the Saint-Simonists and examined in the writing of Jacques Ellul.

Germany is labeled a “consensus democracy by rule of law”. There is a heavy reliance on committees that are populated by experts. Germany’s neocorporatist politics largely defines who the members of these committees will be and makes it hard for new groups to penetrate the policy making process. Germany is frequently defined as a state where the rule of law, rather than a system of pluralism and competition. Experts work together to form a general consensus and integrate this into law. The laws are then interpreted during the implementation process by expert commissions. The roots of this system can be traced to early thinking on enlightened absolutism. In particular, Kant’s views that moral principles can only gain validity when made into general law strongly influence German legal and political culture.

Finally, Münch categorizes the United States as a “pluralist competition democracy.” The open network of politics in the United States has resulted in a large-scale industry for lobbyists representing various interest groups. In this system, however, not all rights and interests gain equal consideration. Those who are best able to make themselves heard gain the upper hand. In contrast with Germany where science is viewed as a relatively objective institution, in the United States science is a weapon to be used to strengthen one’s competitive position. Thus, one finds an unusually large number of scientific research centers in the US that seek to influence the policy process. There is also a belief that the state should not interfere in the lives of citizens but should protect them from harm, and in this system the courts play an unusually big role. This idea of a liberal democracy can be juxtaposed with Rousseau’s model of a republican democracy.

This final chapter of the volume raises some intriguing question of what the role of citizens is and should be in environmental policy making. Münch suggests that while the four models explored all have their strengths and weaknesses, the American model of a liberal and pluralist competition democracy may be the best model for the future as Europe moves towards the development of a supra-national state system and globalization processes proceed.

I enjoyed reading this book although the rough English translation of the first couple of chapters was distracting and made it difficult to get into the heart of the material of the book. The systematic comparison of the

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role of knowledge and science in policy making and analysis of what this means for the kinds of democracy that prevail in each of these states was really quite intriguing. I particularly liked the effort to examine environmental policy making practices from a political philosophical perspective since this is so rarely done by others in the field. Something that is lacking in the book is the question of how diffusion processes or internationalization (alternatively, globalization) have influenced policy making processes. The book follows a traditional comparativist model that presumes that policy making is largely concluded within the nation state. Yet, in the area of air pollution policy there clearly has been much borrowing of ideas across national borders and thus, there has been an indirect influencing of policy priorities by actors other than those considered by the authors of this book. It would also have been interesting to learn more how the process of integration through the European Union has influenced national policy making styles of the European countries explored in this book. Finally, I was surprised to find so little attention given to the roles played by Green parties and environmental social movements in the individual country chapters. While these movements may not be tightly involved in the actual shaping of concrete laws, they certainly have played an important role in setting the policy agenda.

**Land, Wind, and Hard Words: A Story of Navajo Activism, by John Sherry, University of New Mexico Press, 2002.**

**Reviewed by Orit Tamir, New Mexico Highlands University.**

John Sherry's *Land, Wind, and Hard Words: A Story of Navajo Activism* is the story of the founding, activities, and growth of Diné Citizens Against Ruining our Environment (CARE), a Navajo grassroots environmental organization whose initial mission was to protect Navajo reservation forests from the organized assaults of industrial logging. Sherry focuses on the group's ties to Navajo culture. The book is also a tribute to Leroy Jackson and his wife Adella Begaye, the original founders and leaders of CARE – their daily struggles to manage development on the Navajo reservation in a manner that complements the Navajo world view and way of life. It chronicles the mysterious disappearance and death of Leroy Jackson. Sherry provides first hand insight into the lives of CARE Navajo activists, documents the group's experiences with lawyers and environmentalists from the "outside," and describes the media frenzy that follows the death of the group founder.

Sherry follows an introduction of the main Diné CARE actors and the setting for their activities (Chapter One), with a brief history of the Navajo people (Chapter Two). The author then describes the careers of Leroy Jackson and Adella – neither of which had formal education in forest management – as forest activists and founders of Diné CARE.

They knew only that they had to do something to preserve the mountains and forests of the Navajo people (Chapter Three). Sherry's friendship with the couple gave him a unique insight into the daily lives of Navajo environmental activists, the threats to local Navajo communities from industrial logging, and threats to the activists themselves. Diné CARE's first success, the Huefrano case, was achieved through the personal struggles and financial sacrifice of the organization's core activists (Chapter Four). Despite the Huefrano success, CARE's activism and legal wrangles often resulted in local suspicions, but also earned the organization the support and cultural endorsement of Navajo elders (Chapter Five).

Chapter Six addresses the unique Navajo worldview with its close connection between humans, animals, and land that is at the core of Diné CARE philosophy, vis-à-vis the Euro-American tendency to clearly separate the human and non-human worlds. Compounding the problem was the fact that too often contemporary reservation social institutions failed to provide local Navajos with the customary opportunity to voice their concerns (Chapter Six).

Diné CARE's environmental struggles did not focus exclusively on the logging industry. Indeed, the organization expanded its activities to include organization of a spiritual gathering, radio talks, and participation in the Navajo Nation Tribal Council (Chapter Seven). The cost in time and finances of these activities often fell on the shoulders of the organization's core activists. As Diné CARE's exposure grew, so did the financial toll, and the organization had to turn to the cutthroat world of fund raising (Chapter Eight). For the most part Diné CARE

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struggled alone. National mainstream environmental organization, such as the Sierra Club Legal Defense which supported the Navajo and Hopi tribes' San Francisco Peaks litigation in northern Arizona, were not eager to risk their reputation in support of a Navajo environmental grassroots organization against its own tribal government (Chapter Nine).

With no outside funding, but with some growing support at the grassroots level, Diné CARE organized a spiritual gathering in the Chuskas, a mountain range located on the Arizona-New Mexico border line. The region has been subject to extensive industrial logging with negative environmental effects, but on the other hand was a source of jobs on an Indian reservation where high unemployment rates are the norm. During the spiritual gathering, Diné CARE activist John Redhouse delivered a poignant message that characterized the organization's approach: "This is not about trees versus jobs... The real issue here is defending our sacred mountain" (p. 133). Selling this philosophy to disgruntled Navajo loggers and to the Navajo Forest Product Industry, and to the Navajo Nation that tried to push timber sales was a different matter altogether (Chapter Ten).

In 1992 Diné CARE embarked on what was to become its most ambitious undertaking: broadening the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act to include a greater number of victims of radiation, and make it easier for Navajo claimants to obtain compensation (Chapter Eleven). In 1992 Diné CARE representatives were invited to participate in the World Indigenous People's Uranium Forum, which took place in Zalzburg, Austria. In Austria, the Navajos encountered "groupies," mainly European "Indian wannabes" who followed them around, and in Germany they encountered "Hobbyists" who played Indians on weekends. The Navajo contingency was annoyed when these European hosts insisted on treating them as helpless victims; they wanted to cooperate with other groups as equal partners. Thus the trip to Europe was a disappointment. When they returned home, Diné CARE representatives learned that Leroy Jackson disappeared.

The mysterious disappearance and death of Leroy Jackson are the focus of Chapter Twelve. Leroy Jackson was last seen alive and in good spirits on September 28, 1993, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. His badly decomposed body was found in his van on October 9, the cause of death was unclear. Diné CARE members bitterly question the circumstances of his death. "Death has always stalked Indian activists" (p. 176). Leroy's death was followed by a journalistic feeding frenzy (Chapter Thirteen). The resulting journalistic sensationalism underscored the environmental conflict on the reservation, and added to Adella Begaye's grief. She ultimately underwent a Protection Way ceremony, after which she was able to say farewell to her husband in a culturally meaningful manner (Chapter Fourteen). By the mid 1990s, the visibility Leroy Jackson and the founders of Diné CARE achieved in the early 1990s brought numerous new activists who continue to carry on Diné CARE's legacy of environmental activism (Chapter Fifteen).

Land, Wind, and Hard Words: A Story of Navajo Activism, is a non-fictional cross between Eichestaedt's detailed account of If You Poison Us: Uranium and Native Americans, and Nichols' Milagro Beanfield War. At times Land, Wind, and Hard Words: A Story of Navajo Activism is a tribute to Leroy Jackson, but the book is much more than that. John Sherry effectively combines participant observation, journalistic style, wit, friendship, and an intimate anthropological understanding of Navajo culture, into a book that will be attractive to general readers interested in environmental activism.