

BOOK REVIEWS

CSILLA DALLOS, *From equality to inequality: social change among newly sedentary Lanoh hunter-gatherer traders of Peninsular Malaysia*, Toronto etc.: University of Toronto Press, 2011, xiv, 336 pp.

It is fitting for *JASO* to be publishing a review of the latest edition in the 'Anthropological Horizons' series from the University of Toronto. Not only is it an insightful and scholarly volume, but it is appropriate given the connection between Oxford's School of Anthropology and the study of the Orang Asli, the indigenous minority of Peninsular Malaysia. Rodney Needham, Kirk Endicott, Hood Salleh and Signe Howell have made significant contributions in this field, all of whom are cited by Dallos in *From Equality to Inequality*.

There is a body of rich ethnography focusing on different groups of Orang Asli, and some readers may have benefitted from a more detailed contextualisation of the community, especially as background to Chapter 2, which explores the ethnic affiliation of the Lanoh with the Senoi or Semang. What is particularly noteworthy throughout, however, is Dallos's nuanced discussion of Lanoh relations with and perceptions of neighbouring groups, particularly the Temiar. Indeed, Chapter 3 stands as an expert inquiry into intergroup relations and the implications of these before and after Malaysian independence in 1957. Other studies have explored this period in detail from a 'Malay versus Orang Asli' perspective, but few have critically examined how post-independence changes have affected relations between Orang Asli groups. This therefore represents a major contribution to Orang Asli scholarship.

In addition to the concrete ethnography, Dallos's theoretical orientation addresses the evolution of human culture and its relation to political structures in egalitarian society. Although acknowledging that the process of social differentiation is difficult to study empirically, the work is structured to emphasise the continuum of social change as the egalitarian and newly sedentary Lanoh adapt to hunter-gatherer trading livelihoods. It becomes apparent that the Lanoh appear to resist integration far more than inequality.

In the opening chapter, Dallos aims to reconstruct recent history to facilitate a contrast between pre-resettlement life (in the Perak valley) and post-resettlement life (in the village of Air Bah). Her approach provides an opportunity to examine internal factors, the role of agency, decision-making and resistance (both ideological and organisational), in addition to external factors, including the effects of modernisation and a developing national economy.

In Chapter 2, Dallos addresses trade and farming in terms of social integration and mobility patterns and concludes that pre-resettlement Lanoh 'sacrificed and adapted all other aspects of their life' to forest collecting for trade, resulting in organisational adjustments that were 'incompatible with the demands of efficient subsistence farming'. The contest for

Book reviews

resources is revisited in the following chapter in which Dallos emphasises that competition for forest products has led to 'open conflict' with other Semang groups and has been a limiting factor in Lanoh participation in the emerging pan-ethnic Orang Asli movement. Dallos traces a trajectory since independence in which the Lanoh have moved from a relatively equal and autonomous position of power, based on the control of forest resources, to a position of powerlessness resulting in withdrawal from interethnic contact (be it with Malays or Orang Asli). Dallos understands this as an attempt by the Lanoh to achieve cultural continuity despite a break from their 'traditional', more socially connected lifestyle.

This idea is further developed in Chapters 4 and 5, focusing on the rise of village identity and Lanoh resistance to the values of neighbouring groups, particularly the Temiar, whom they regard as being more assimilated to Malay (and therefore mainstream Malaysian) society than themselves. Different methods for promoting village identity and unity (exaggeration of external threat; undermining wage opportunities; control of women; village endogamy) work in parallel with ways to resist acculturation (pressures to assimilate; pressures to embrace Islam). Emphasised by the elders of Air Bah, the Lanoh continue to believe that their values are superior to other traditions and, instead of accommodating other values, are becoming an increasingly integrated and segmented village community. In Chapter 5, Dallos explores structural village dynamics, particularly leadership competition, feuding kinship groups and mechanisms of self-aggrandisement, against the backdrop of emerging inequalities in a post-sedentary, small-scale society. Drawing on Bogucki, Dallos suggests that age status may be pivotal in determining who can self-aggrandise and who will be marginalised as a result.

Building on this, the penultimate chapter examines how hunter-gatherers' social organisation has affected the development of social inequality in Air Bah and discusses the prospect of such social groups transitioning from an 'immediate-return' to a 'delayed-return' system of production. A thoughtful discussion of cooperation between the sexes and division of labour within the household leads to questions about the limitations of kin groups and subsequently village integration. As Dallos stresses, despite the elders' attempts to create cohesion, integration remains partial as they have limited control over younger male relatives, who, in turn, will determine the self-aggrandising strategies of those who compete for village leadership. Returning to age status, Dallos presents this as the structural source of rights and privileges in small-scale societies, and in the final chapter she explores the implications of age structures for anthropological theories of equality and inequality in egalitarian political systems.

Dallos revisits theories of equality and inequality and suggests that a theoretical framework that bridges their incompatibility is long overdue. Dismissing the idea of eliminating the concept of small-scale egalitarian societies in favour of seeing all societies as

Book reviews

systems of inequality, Dallos argues instead that ‘an understanding of quality in small-scale societies as resulting from categorical age differences between men allows for a new parsimonious model of social evolution’. By identifying categorical age as a key component, Dallos develops a common framework for both simple and complex societies, relating this to theories of human evolution. Dallos concludes by calling for further investigation of the evolution of categorical age to advance our understanding of its relationship to cognitive-behavioural and accompanying organisational changes.

In short, Dallos presents a well-written, highly accessible and carefully crafted view of the Lanoh community in contemporary Malaysia. In studying how and why egalitarianism gives way to the development of social differentiation in hunter-gatherer trading societies, this valuable contribution to Orang Asli scholarship should also be of interest to a wider audience.

JULIET BEDFORD

ROBERT KOZINETS, *Netnography: doing ethnographic research online*, London: Sage 2010.

Kozinets’ *Netnography: Doing ethnographic research online* is a strong introductory text for those seeking to conduct Internet-based social research. It provides the reader with recommended steps to follow in formulating their own ‘netnographies’ (p. 4) from conception and design to implementation, making it a handy how-to-do guide geared towards students and practitioners who are mostly new to web-based ethnographic inquiry. Sections on research planning, methods and ethics serve to further ongoing debates among media ethnographers.

Addressing a lack of methodological consistency in online research across the social sciences and consumer/marketing fields, the aim of the text is to fill this gap by providing ‘procedural guidelines’ or the necessary steps for researchers to conduct ‘an ethnography of online community or culture and to present their work’ (p. 5). The book therefore offers the term ‘netnography’, defined succinctly as conducting ethnography over the Internet, in the hopes of standardizing this popular and increasingly indispensable form of ethnography focusing on online communities, activities and pursuits.

Netnography, a term coined from within marketing and consumer research (p. 2), is not often heard amongst anthropologists. Upon reading the title of the book, I instinctively questioned the addition of yet another moniker for data collection techniques that already have a plethora of labels. To counter readers’ anticipated doubts about its utility, the author

Book reviews

argues that the term is not superfluous, but necessary for the codification of clear and deliberate standards and ethical guidelines, whereas the terms ‘webnography’, ‘network ethnography’ or ‘digital ethnography’ lack common standards and the ‘stability, consistency, and legitimacy’ that such standards would confer (p. 6).

While this post-facto reasoning is not thoroughly convincing, Kozinets is largely successful in breaking down some preconceived disciplinary boundaries by presenting a balanced approach to online ethnography healthily sourced from both anthropological and consumer research backgrounds. Any opportunity for interdisciplinary knowledge-transfer such as this should be welcomed by all. As both a social anthropologist and a proponent of user-centered ethnography in design and the ICT industry, I read the volume seeking applicable interpretations of web-based research that would suit both social scientists (who study ‘people’ or ‘culture’) and information technology professionals (who study ‘users’ and ‘interactions’).

The introduction of the terms ‘culture’ and ‘community’ (pp. 6-7) early on in the book secure the anthropologist’s attention. A strong literature review in Chapter 2 covers how ethnographers have come to reject the notion of computer-mediated communication as impoverished and sets the basis for justifying the ethnographic approach pursued throughout the book. The anthropologists’ attention is sustained by the characterization of the Internet and online communities as *places* of ‘belonging, information, and emotional support’ that are present in many people’s lives (p. 15). The premise that ‘online communities are not virtual’ (p. 15) is a promising one, furthered by Kozinets’ stance against technological determinism. He eloquently describes the nuanced ‘complex dance’ between technology and culture and shows how understanding the cultural context behind technology or online activities in general requires in-depth ethnography (p. 22).

Internet research necessitates a complex and flexible methodological toolkit. Simplifying and standardizing this represents an impressive undertaking for a single volume. Structurally, the book is well-organized. Helpful context boxes filled with additional notes and further reading, as well as summaries at the beginning and end of each chapter, guide the reader-as-student. In Chapters 3 and 4 (dedicated to methods), netnography is described as both qualitative and quantitative, depending on what the researcher is hoping to learn (p. 42), and a structural overview and flow chart of the process of netnography is provided (p. 61). The next few chapters instruct the reader on how to decide on a research focus or questions to be answered (p. 84), and how to enter the online ‘field’ (choosing a website or discussion forum, for instance) practically and responsibly by finding and interacting with participants (pp. 80-94).

These sections are comprehensive, but perhaps too much time is dedicated to establishing the legitimacy of the netnographic method vis-à-vis traditional ethnography (p.

Book reviews

60). This does not do justice to the author's meticulous efforts throughout the book to offer a strong framework built on solid methods that are already becoming indispensable to qualitative social research. Similarly, when delving deeper into the facets of the netnographic approach, some confusion may arise for the anthropological reader. 'Netnography' seemingly derives from 'ethnography', yet it is presented as having been designed as a separate, more convenient alternative. A comparison between the two labels (ethnography and netnography, pp. 55-56) focuses on the 'ease' and 'cost' of the methods, with ethnography being typified as more expensive and netnography positioned as cheaper and faster. For market researchers this may be the prime concern, but such a distinction is likely to fall short for anthropologists.

Furthermore, the two are certainly not exclusive, and the concerns of one type of data collection will extend to the other. When seeking cultural insights, web-based ethnography rarely stands alone (just one reason why it is not necessarily cheaper/easier). Speaking from my own fieldwork experience, for instance, my investigations into blogs, forums, Facebook and photo-sharing websites ('online content') in Spain were conducted only partially 'over the Internet'. Arriving at the context behind the interactions that I observed *online* required a lengthy *offline* ethnographic endeavour (and, as it turned out, the reverse was also true). In the end, the web-based *and* street-based interactions I witnessed equally shaped the direction and results of the research.

Drawing from this personal experience, I find the greatest contribution of the volume to be in Kozinets' model for blending (online) netnography with (offline) ethnography. 'Blended netnography' (p. 65) involves mixing online data collection via blogs, forums, etc., with offline interviews and physical interactions. It most accurately resembles the kind of work that anthropologists of new media – or more 'traditional' anthropologists prompted to venture on to the web – might be inclined to pursue. While the entire netnographic approach will appeal to Internet specialists, this 'blending' aspect may attract a wider audience of anthropologists who are already familiar with, and engaging in, traditional ethnography.

Kozinets clarifies that the extent to which the two can be combined will depend on the subject or subjects under investigation (p. 63). For example, the author makes a useful distinction between studying 'online communities' and 'communities online' (p. 64), each of which requires a distinct approach to belonging, place, geography, physicality and/or virtuality. He also draws on the results of other CMC research (pp. 66-67) suggesting that, as online communities grow in importance and are woven into most people's daily interactions, the 'value of "blended" netnographic accounts is only going to magnify' (p. 67). I would also add to this that netnographic methods will increasingly be of value even in fieldwork, where the web and online culture or subcultures are not the primary focus of investigation.

As far as putting netnography to practice is concerned, Chapter 6 ('Data collection') is easy to follow and comprehensive, differentiating between 'archive data' (the pages of text

Book reviews

we encounter online and can openly read, record, scan, download or data-mine without any form of interpersonal interaction) and how to produce actual field notes through interviews and participant-observation online (pp. 94-117). The author not only describes, but also evaluates the usefulness of each suggested research strategy that he offers, including when it should or should not be used depending on the project at hand. Readers producing their own netnographies can follow up on relevant scholarly journals (pp. 82-83), survey design tools (p. 43) and qualitative software packages for data analysis (pp. 128-129) noted throughout the text. This will be immeasurably helpful to both undergraduate and graduate students who are new to research design.

What media anthropologists know, but what may be news to others who have yet to approach the web as a field site, is that website communities are socially, hierarchically and culturally rich forms of interaction that develop through people's actions and relationships (pp. 32-4). Netnography therefore consists not just of keyword analysis, coding data and studying 'text', but learning about people's interactions through technology (p. 113). The author draws attention to this fact to dissuade those who think that merely reading or 'lurking' on websites confers the status of ethnographer. The distinction is all the more important in 2011 as fashionable social media gurus of the IT industry proceed to matter-of-factly append 'digital anthropologist' to their grandiose lists of marketable titles. If held to the standards put forward in this book, such loosely proffered credentials would actually be meaningful.

A final significant contribution within this volume is to ethics and the pragmatics of being a netnographer. Kozinets' call for respect, patience and researcher accountability is matched by personal, anecdotal examples that establish a good ethical tone throughout the text. Illustrative case studies of first-hand fieldwork experiences present readable and engaging vignettes to the student reader that reveal in clear terms how key ethnographic moments (such as entering the field for the first time or making first contact with participants) have analogous forms in netnography, including the intricate process of becoming a community member by respectfully building relationships slowly over time. The author's candid reflections (such as his own failed entrée on pp. 76-77) advise the reader on how – and how not – to observe online communities.

Online ethnography is anything but simple. A single research question can evolve quickly, and the ethnographer is forced to jump between Facebook, Twitter, chatrooms, blogs, etc. (p. 87). The public nature of most information on the web also adds complexity in finding and choosing which online communities, persons, voices or opinions to seek out (pp. 88-90). As with any other anthropological fieldwork, researchers must use their intuition when encountering people and their lives online. This includes heightened awareness of the cultural sensitivities of online populations, such as the rules and regulations guiding behaviour that can change from website to website.

Book reviews

Chapter 8 ('Conducting ethical netnography') warns researchers to tread carefully to avoid potential harm to online subjects, whose statements, for instance, can be difficult to anonymize when they are so easily indexed by search engines. Chapter 9 presents a cogent analysis of ethnography to date followed by a list of ten criteria that should be applied to netnographic research (pp. 163-173). These evaluative standards – better viewed as guidelines – include 'verisimilitude', 'groundedness' and 'reflexivity', and directly address the stated aim of the book; that is, to instil quality control into online social research.

I believe that this type of research will definitely become more commonplace within the social sciences as the Internet, computers and mobile devices continue to make their way into the everyday existence of peoples around the world. We may soon arrive at the stage where ethnography over the Internet is simply recognized as 'ethnography', rather than relegated to a specialist niche. Until then, *Netnography* constitutes a thoughtful, helpful and long-awaited first step towards the noble goal of standardizing web-based ethnography. By the end of the book, readers who might have previously under-estimated the complexities of online ethnography will be sold on the notion that better guidelines for ethical online research can only benefit both ICT professionals and social scientists alike. Of course, a single label would help establish methodological consistency or transferability, allowing discussion between the sciences. Whether or not netnography is that word does not detract from this book's many contributions. It will undoubtedly assist those engaging in online research to do so creatively, effectively and ethically.

FRANCINE BARONE

DANIEL MILLER, *Tales from Facebook*, Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press 2011, xx, 218 pp. £14.99 in paperback.

Since its launch in 2004, Facebook has grown at a phenomenal rate. It now has 750 million users and in 2010 overtook Google to become the most visited website in the United States (Dougherty 2010). The key question arising from this growth is what impact Facebook has on our social lives. In this book Daniel Miller aims to explore Facebook from an anthropological perspective, examining how the lives of ordinary people in Trinidad have been changed by using the website. The book is divided into two parts. In Part I, Miller explores the impact of Facebook on people's social relationships through twelve detailed case studies, whilst in Part II he broadens his view and attempts to construct nothing less than a 'theory of Facebook' (p. 205). The book is aimed at both academic and non-academic readerships, with Part I written

Book reviews

in a lively, informal style and Part II discussing relevant academic theories in a more slightly more formal way.

One of the real strengths of the book is the engagingly written portraits in Part I, which focus on how users express distinctive aspects of ‘Trini’ culture through Facebook. Whilst Facebook is a global brand (more than 75% of its users are outside the United States¹), Miller demonstrates that anthropology has an important role to play in understanding how these global products are adapted to the specific concerns of different cultures. The breadth of the individuals covered in the portraits is impressive. They range from what many perceive as the typical Facebook user – the party girl who posts frequent status updates and photos of herself at social events – to a human rights lawyer and activist in his sixties, who is almost entirely housebound after an illness, but has used Facebook to build up a rich and satisfying network of like-minded people all over the world. Miller makes the important point that, although Facebook has its roots in students, an increasingly important use for it may be for older people to keep in touch with family and friends – thus we should avoid making easy assumptions about the ‘typical’ Facebook user. Given the central place Miller portrays Facebook as having in many people’s social lives, it would be have been interesting for him to reflect on how those without easy access to internet² feel about it, and how being at least partially excluded from Facebook may impact on their social lives.

Miller should be commended for attempting to draw broader conclusions about how Facebook affects our social lives from these detailed case studies. He links the way in which Facebook enables us to construct social relationships at a distance with way in which the Kula ring of gift exchange among the Trobriand Islands creates an extended social network, based on mutual obligation. Miller’s thesis is that Facebook helps to reverse a long-term trend of declining sociality, reconstructing relationships with family and friends that through time or with increasing mobility may have otherwise faded away. Thus Miller argues that Facebook has been a ‘social “big bang”, leading to an expanding social universe’ (p. 208). Through both the case studies and the academic consideration, Miller stresses that Facebook is particularly useful for those who, through shyness, illness, location or for other reasons, find it hard to interact face-to-face.

Whilst the book has many strengths, there were some areas where it could have been more tightly integrated with the existing literature in this area. First, the long-term trend of declining sociality, which Miller presents as uncontested, is a hotly debated topic. Barry Wellman offers an interesting historical perspective on this debate, noting that people have always looked back to a ‘golden age’ of community, and highlighting the important

¹ <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/press/info.php?statistics>

² The internet penetration in Trinidad and Tobago is 48.5% (<http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats11.htm>).

Book reviews

distinction between a geographical community and a personal network of friends and family which may be spread widely, but still offers substantial emotional and practical support (Wellman 1999; Wellman and Wetherell 1996). Further, there is only mixed evidence to suggest that there has been a significant decline in either the number or quality of social relationships in recent years (Fischer 2009; McPherson et al. 2006; Wang and Wellman, 2010). This is important for Miller's thesis, as it suggests that Facebook may simply be supplementing these already satisfying social relationships, rather than actually reversing a long-term trend of declining sociality.

Secondly, whilst Part II was admirable in taking a broader perspective and in engaging with related literature in fields such as psychology and social network analysis, it did not include some concepts directly relevant to the 'theory of Facebook' that Miller is seeking to develop. For example, it has long been recognised that interacting via computers can lead to more self-disclosure and thus 'hyperpersonal' communication (Walther 1996). A recent review (Valkenburg and Peter 2009) presented strong evidence that this online self-disclosure can lead to closer relationships being formed via computer-mediated communication than may be formed through face-to-face interaction alone. There has also been an active debate about who benefits most from computer-mediated communication – those who are already sociable and outgoing (the rich-get richer hypotheses), or those who are more nervous of social interaction (the social compensation hypotheses; Kraut et al. 2002; Valkenburg and Peter 2007). These theories are particularly relevant to Miller's conclusion that Facebook is especially useful for those who for various reasons may find it hard to interact face-to-face.

Overall this book provides a valuable addition to the literature, providing a specifically anthropological perspective on the phenomenon of Facebook, which complements the existing literature in psychology and computer science. In aiming to write both for the general public and academics, Miller runs the risk of falling between two stools, but by combining engaging case studies with academic rigour, is able to satisfy both audiences. The book highlights the way in which Facebook is shaped by local culture and is used in quite different ways to fulfil a wide variety of the needs of different people, from the already sociable to those more limited by shyness, circumstance or illness from social activity. The attempt to draw wider conclusions from the detailed case studies is admirable, as is the willingness to engage with related research in areas outside anthropology, something that is not always present in the discipline. The book is likely to be of interest both to the general public, as an engaging account of how Facebook may change our social relations, and to academics from a number of disciplines interested in building integrated theories of how social relationships are mediated by – and potentially changed through the use of – new technologies.

SAM ROBERTS

Book reviews

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MARIO LUIS SMALL, *Unanticipated gains: origins of network inequality in everyday life*, Oxford etc.: Oxford University Press 2009, x, 298 pp.

Through this extensive and detailed study of childcare centres in New York, Dr Mario Luis Small, a leading scholar on social networks and urban poverty, draws our attention to some of the assumptions and shortcomings underlying current mainstream theories of social capital. This book claims three objectives. First, in contrast to present theories of social capital, Small seeks to show how organisations are more effective than individuals in acquiring and maintaining vast social networks that mobilise important resources. Secondly, Small claims to provide an alternative interpretation of the origins of unequal access to social resources in daily urban life. Thirdly, this study also seeks to place Small in a position where he can comment on existing paradigms in sociological epistemology and methodology.

Book reviews

The first objective is immediately accomplished in Part 1 of the book. Small starts out by arguing how the most influential theories of social capital suffer from a problem of theoretical over-determination. In focusing solely and narrowly on the rewards of social networks, these theories invariably view social networking as a 'game' played by rational agents that calculate, invest and maximise their time and effort. Identifying this theoretical problem, Small looks at *how* rather than *why* parents in childcare centres formed bonds of friendship and intimacy. He points out that, although some parents did actively, purposefully and strategically make alliances, the vast majority of friendships and ties between parents were forged and brokered by the centre itself, which demanded that parents work together to organise events, run school policy and raise funds. Thus, the purposeful, goal-oriented actor that is the main preoccupation of social capital theory constitutes only a very small part of a spectrum of actors, resources and friendships formed under a multitude of different conditions.

Within this context, Small's excellent title – *Unanticipated Gains* – occupies at least two meanings. On one level, it shows how individuals participating in such organisations often form alliances and gain resources they were not expecting or actively pursuing. Furthermore, Small's focus on 'the organisation' also yields 'unanticipated gains' for us as researchers. His change in focus opens up unexpected and rich areas of research, presents more questions and develops perspectives missed by previous theoretical frameworks.

Part II constitutes the high point of the book and analyses what Small terms 'social ties' – relationships formed between parents and with the organisation. Through ethnographically rich case studies, Chapter 3 illustrates the effectiveness of organisations in forming networks of alliances by assigning members roles and duties through which they can interact. Social capital, Small argues, is the domain not of the strategising actor, but of socialised roles.

Chapter 4 takes this one step further, exploring what *types* of relationship are brokered by the organisation. The relationships the parents form with each other, Small argues, are theoretically contradictory. In sociological theory, ties can either be 'strong' and 'global' (standard intimates) or 'weak' and 'domain-specific' (non-intimates). Investing plenty of effort to strengthen a tie that can be only mobilised in limited conditions does not make sense. Through centres, however, parents formed bonds which were both strong *and* limited to centre activities (relationships he coins as 'compartmental intimates'). The extra effort required to strengthen and maintain such relationships is supplied by the centre, justifying his focus on the organisation. Through ascription of roles, centres induce individuals to form strong ties, which, because they are brokered by the school, cannot easily be reproduced outside it. One cannot but appreciate Small's skill in using existing frameworks to give meaning and relevance to his findings and in using his data to advance clear theoretical points that supplement and revise existing frameworks. However, while Small is very insightful in

Book reviews

classifying different *categories of relationships*, he does not tell us how, if at all, relationships between parents develop and change from one class to another. This marks a crucial difference between sociological and anthropological methods. The latter, through its extended stays, might observe these very *relationships* and *categories* developing through time.

Chapter 5 identifies yet another interesting contradiction. In classic sociological theory, trust-based relations are based on the availability of adequate information. Centre mothers, however, trust each other with the welfare of their kids even when lacking complete or even basic information about the trustee. Small's main answer is that repeated interaction creates a sense of familiarity that allows mothers to take such risks. However, one could easily come up with alternative conclusions. It seems that mothers (Small specifically identifies them as mothers, not simply members) are willing to trust other mothers on the basis of their being '*mothers*', that is, as people who, like themselves, are sensitive to and can deal with the needs of children and who also occupy a clear *category* whose values, interests and behaviour are defined by the authority of the centre. Indeed, 'she is always there' need not refer simply to the frequency of interaction, but also to the awareness that these parents, like themselves, have a stake in the centre and are responsible mothers who share their values, interests and hopes. It is a pity that Small does not reach this conclusion as it fits perfectly well with his framework. Parents 'trust', to the benefit of all, because they are transformed from random individuals into categorical 'mothers' by the discipline, authority and effort of the organisation.

Part III deals with how parents form relationships, brokered by the childcare centre, with other, external organisations. Chapters 6 and 7 deal with how and why these ties are formed and the different types of resources accessed. Small clearly shows how these opportunities that influence daily life are tightly interwoven with much larger processes and forces operating at different social levels. 'Organisations', however, are here treated as anonymous, reified entities, something anthropology has warned against as being both ethnographically incorrect and as reproducing organisational power. In the sociological tradition, Small concludes by describing what good centres ought to be like, and what types of interactions any organisation should foster in order to improve their services and efficiency.

The book fulfils two of its three objectives. First, it is clear from the wealth of quantitative and qualitative evidence it presents that organisations are indeed effective and important elements in the production of social capital. In addition, it is evident that organisations also inculcate *implicit* ways of acting and thinking: discipline in routine and behaviour, a shared sense of parenthood, the disposition to accept authority, and group membership. My earlier criticism of trust lay largely along these lines. These 'unanticipated'

Book reviews

relationships are articulated and reproduced through rituals, as well as in practice, and one can see where the anthropological method might yield even richer and deeper information.

Small's discussion of inequality falls short of the insightfulness present in the rest of the monograph. Inequality is only briefly dealt with in Chapter 7, and only discusses the varying skill with which different organisations broker relationships for their members. We are not told whether a sense of inequality is (re)produced within the organisation itself. More questions follow. Do these organisations close off networks as well as open them? Do individuals enter the organisation as equals?

Finally, through this research Small has effectively probed sociological methodology and epistemology. His 'meso-level' approach, and his understanding of concepts such as 'friendship', 'place' and 'neighbourhood' as complex and flexible, are often overlooked in sociology. Furthermore, his comparison with other case studies establishes the wider relevance of his approach by arguing that shared political structures and processes produce similar behaviours, values and world views. In doing so, Small provides us with a powerful set of intellectual tools, questions, concepts and methods with which we too, as researchers on our projects, can acquire rich and unanticipated gains.

BRIAN CAMPBELL

CHRISTINA TOREN and **JOÃO DE PINA-CABRAL** (eds.), *The challenge of epistemology: anthropological perspectives*. Oxford: Berghahn Books 2011. 228 pages, bibliog., index
ISBN 978-0-85745-435-5 Pb \$32.00/£20.00.

This volume arose out of a 2007 symposium funded by the Wenner Gren Foundation and the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology. As the editors make clear in the introduction, the participants have not reached a single consensus, as is also made clear by the variety in the papers contained in the volume. However, they do serve to illustrate the range of terms used to debate the subject. As the editors put it in their introduction, we keep circling back to 'the struggle ... truly to understand others without merely assimilating them to our own ideas' (7).

Mimica presents a passionate argument for the centrality of psychoanalysis to the anthropological project. In order to comprehend other life worlds, anthropologists must confront their own. Just as a psychoanalyst must undergo analysis in order to understand and deal with their own biases when dealing with patients, so an anthropologist must understand the complex set of cultural baggage that any individual carries when trying to understand another culture. I regard it as a shame that Mimica presents this in the highest of 'High

Book reviews

Theory' writing styles which the editors apparently have done little to temper. Mimica's observation that 'Reflexivity is a closed-off circuit of the egoic self-regard determined by its own unpunctured narcissistic auto-scotoma' (46) gives a fair idea of the language.

Silva and Veira take an entirely different tack in looking at the connections between sociology (and sociological forms of knowing) and modernity (and the nation state). They see Honneth's struggle for recognition as a key trans-cultural insight (model) for anthropology. Their epistemological take is to reject concerns with foundations, taking seriously the late Wittgenstein's reminder that there is never a moment when 'language takes a holiday'. In other words there is only social construction, but this is intersubjective and amenable to study for all that.

Holbraad uses a further discussion of Cuban Ifá divination to focus on radical alterity: situations in which the anthropological analyst, professionally adhering to the scholastic traditions of academe, differs from the views of informants, seeing problems where they see none (see p. 92 fnn 1 and 2). His discussion of truth (83) makes a huge concession in distinguishing ordinary data with ordinary truths, such as whether the so-and-so are horticulturalists, from data which 'resists collection', such as how Ifá works, or whether it is true. He then (84-5) discusses universalist versus relativist positions on the problematic data in terms of belief. I wonder how the argument would work if he had taken a leaf out of Needham's work and eschewed belief as an analytic term? Holbraad's ontographic (his neologism) solution seems to be a straightforward application of speech act theory: diviners make worlds for their clients to inhabit by speaking, i.e. by relaying the pronouncements of Ifá. If a client accepts (through their actions) that they are bewitched, then Ifá has spoken truly and the client now acts in a world in which they are bewitched. This still leaves open the possibility that the clients could exhibit more agency than Holbraad (and perhaps the *babalawos* he has been talking with) wants to allow: some clients might reject the results with their feet by shopping around and going to another *babalawo* or to another sort of practitioner altogether. The clients often construct the terms of their understanding of the world in collaboration with practitioners, and sometimes in collaboration with anthropologists. My own view is that such an account doesn't need the ontological superstructure that Holbraad erects.

Tony Crook seeks to exemplify Roy Wagner's view of ethnography as illuminating the ethnographer as much as the subjects of the ethnography, seeing anthropology as the 'science of the relation' (Mimica might cite the same source). In Crook's hands this is not an excuse for omphaloscopy but an injunction to honesty: these Bolivip terms have been understood in these anthropological terms (for all the baggage they carry with them). That we learn little about Crook as a person and more about Bolivip and how he has come to understand them is commendable (all the more so since he writes simply and clearly). Crook summarizes Barth's

Book reviews

Baktaman ethnography and uses it to contrast with and illuminate his own. On the face of it Bolivip are similar to Baktaman and other Min groups in linking knowledge to power, seniority and gender. For many things, only old men, initiated old men have knowledge, which they cannot convey to uninitiated younger men or women. In Crook's ethnography this is subtly but importantly changed. Husbands talk to their wives, mother's brothers to their sister's daughters and sons. In private 'secret knowledge' is transmitted, indeed has to be if farming is to be successful. The twist which links Crook and Barth is that there is no legitimate public context in which uninitiated younger men or women can admit to having this knowledge (a similar point is made about the Sande Poro Societies in Bellman 1984).

Goldman discusses Brazilian Candomblé and the history of western consideration of fetishes which allows him to move from Marx and Freud to Latour, whose short piece on 'faitiches' (translated as 'factish' but perhaps 'feat-ish' would be closer to his original pun?). Latour wants a symmetry of study so that scientists and candomblé adepts are studied the same way, using the same analytical terminology. (I would suggest that for Latour, if both react in horror and disavowal with the results, then so much the better.) This leaves the analysis itself in an odd, asymmetrical position. Goldman uses Latour where Crook had used Wagner to make a parallel point: 'Fetishist discourse and practice, for example, should serve essentially to destabilize our thoughts (and ultimately also our feelings). This destabilization affects our dominant forms of thought, while allowing new connections to be made with the minority forces inside all of us' (122/3). The problem with asymmetry is that, for obvious and trivial reasons, the Bolivip etc. have not sent emissaries round the world aspiring to bring back consistent comparable reports of how others live their lives. Despite claims of radical alterities, there seems only one sort of way to manufacture lcd screens, to pick an example at random (I realise that this is a form of 'hitting tables' argument and implies a commitment to a unitary world which Goldman and Latour would question). Although there is variety in the genre of 'travellers tales' (to use one of the most pejorative dismissals of ethnographic writing), there do not seem to be real alternatives to the exercise of anthropology. I would suggest that to recognise this is part of the recognition of weirdness in the western academic tradition, not necessarily a claim for universality. Other accounts are possible, but these are not part of the language game of anthropology: consider as an example what a stereotypically devout and evangelising follower of any of the Religions of the Book would say of most of the groups in this volume, namely that they are pagan idolaters who are at best wrong if not evil, etc., etc.

In her contribution, Toren uses some ethnographic vignettes with great care to put the focus on how her informants understand the world and how they have come to that understanding. She seeks to understand how in Fiji the systems she describes come to have a 'lived validity', which she also glosses as being 'phenomenologically valid' (135). Her focus

Book reviews

on development is summarised as follows: ‘By virtue of evolution, we humans, like other living things, inhere in the world. It follows that we inevitably make use of manifold aspects of the world in making sense of it, and that ethnographic studies of ontogeny are going to be more complete to the extent that they include the study of how objects of manifold kinds enter into people’s intersubjective engagement in the environing world. But there is no mystery here, I think’ (135/6). As well as a lack of mystery, if we follow Toren we have no need of extravagant hypotheses such as multiple ontologies.

Viegas explores how ethnographic involvement in the particular, in a particular place and a single community, nonetheless enables generalization: practical involvement as a consultant in a land claim requires the anthropologist to generalize his or her results. She sees comparison as a ‘generalizing epistemology of [the] particular phenomena in anthropology’ (152).

Pina-Cabral (in a paper which first appeared in *Social Analysis* in 2009) then presents one of the clearest and I hope most influential papers in the collection: a simple but profound argument against all-or-nothing reasoning in anthropology (mainly associated with forms of postmodernism). His argument exemplifies his citation of Davidson’s warning about ‘the fallacy of reasoning from the fact that there is nothing we might not be wrong about to the conclusions that we might be wrong about everything’ (164). He also follows Davidson in distinguishing under-determination from indeterminacy. The world is underdetermined: many different things may happen next, and separately there is indeterminacy: there are arbitrary choices about whether to express distances in miles or kilometres, but having that sort of freedom is profoundly different from under-determination (and of course different people making different choices of measurement unit can lead to a particular set of ‘things that may happen next’, such as the 1999 Mars Climate Orbiter, which crashed into the planet rather than orbiting it because of a mix-up in units between kilometres and miles).

Gingrich sees the intersubjectivity of fieldwork encounters (interactions) as the basis (micro-evidence) for anthropological conclusions. Like Pina-Cabral he is arguing for a sophisticated form of realism (181-3).

In the final paper, Henrietta Moore uses Webb Keane’s work on ‘epistemologies of intimacy’ to link global phenomena conversion to Christianity (being born again) to the particular and deeply personal: Marakwet girls refusing to be circumcised. The living culture of Marakwet society has changed in the last twenty-five years: most are now Christian, and the idea of ‘Marakwet culture’ is now a focus of discussion, exemplified by arguments (and court cases) over female circumcision. This is a fitting conclusion to such an edited collection, since such bodily practices stand as a common reproof to the relativism attendant on extreme social construction of knowledge approaches. The challenge for anthropology is

Book reviews

to find a delicate and sensitive way of acknowledging the recalcitrances of the life-worlds we live in and their comprehensibility to strangers.

REFERENCE

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