

(p. 80). Yet, even so, today mestizo young men who have left the community for study or for work grasp onto the festival's pure, authentic indigenously as a statement of "authentic" belonging and rootedness.

The enormous changes that Venezuela has undergone over the last 25 years, including the tentative consolidation of democracy, an oil-based economy, and rapid urbanization have made festivals, Guss contends, the "vehicle through which participants could dramatize such concerns as race, ethnicity, marginalization and oppression" (p. 91). They have also been subject to appropriation. Not only has the state highjacked festivals into its nation-building project but today multinational corporations, aided by electronic media and global market forces, have also emerged as new agents of cultural production. In chapter 4, Guss explains the ascendance of one multinational, British American Tobacco's Cigarrera Bigott, as a key player in the shaping of Venezuelan culture. At the beginning of the eighties, the Bigott Foundation instigated a multifaceted campaign of cultural renewal, including a magazine, radio and television shows, a grant program, and workshops devoted to the teaching and performance of traditional musical forms. The huge success of the campaign allowed Bigott to emerge over time, ironically, as the embodiment of traditional culture, national values, and identity. The situation also provoked much debate over the ontology of popular culture, and issues of exploitation, manipulation, and control.

In chapter 5, Guss examines the Tamunangue, a suite of dances performed in mid-June in honor of San Antonio de Padua in the western Venezuelan state of Lara. A kind of elaborate, dramatic duel, Tamunangue is a tense orchestration of mimicry and confrontation, control and spontaneity, the ludic and the serious. Eminently transportable and aesthetically appealing, the Tamunangue has been adapted to many contexts, from museums and television to the national opera house. Integrating indigenous, African, and European cultures, Tamunangue is also able to synthesize the national mestizo ideal and its attendant values. However, this mestizo ideal is challenged by Afro-Venezuelans who claim that Tamunangue's origins and significance have been diluted or erased. More recently, Tamunangue has been ensnared in the (nationalist) civilizing project. The dance has been made to conform to a new aesthetic, its contents more carefully controlled and choreographed. The tradition has been reduced to a visually pleasing spectacle, altering the relationship between performer and audience, between men and women (as the latter have become more assertive and coquettish in the dance), and diminishing the dance's symbolic power.

Readers should be aware that this is an ethnography about four Venezuelan festivals, not about Venezuelan culture per se. Indeed, while one can get a sense of the broader Venezuelan social and cultural context from Guss's exploration of these festivals, a more fleshed out and vivid portrait of this larger setting—both local and regional—is absent. In part, this is because of the somewhat limited length of the book (roughly a third of which is taken up by endnotes and

a bibliography). Guss does not remain in one place long enough for the content and color of the scenes he describes to take hold, or for us to remember the cast of characters (though the addition of photographs certainly helps). Similarly, frequent comparisons to other popular cultural forms and traditions elsewhere in Latin America and the world are never satisfyingly developed and, therefore, seem superficial. Much of his commentary on these and other cultural traditions is imprecise and speculative, his sources out of date and often sparse. There is a wealth of new ethnomusical and other historical literature on Venezuelan and Latin American popular cultural forms that Guss should have engaged with more seriously, and that would have enriched his text considerably.

Guss's ethnography is salutary for encouraging us to develop ways to address the thorny issues related to the transformation of traditional culture in the context of globalization. However, theoretically, it does not push our understanding of the nuances of the power-ridden symbolic dialogue between expressive culture and the state or hegemonic social sectors. Guss's rendering of the "performance" framework, for example, pays homage to staple theorists such as Singer, Turner, and Cohen yet overlooks a whole array of other (especially poststructuralist) scholars who have significantly extended analytic frames of cultural performance by addressing the dimensions and phenomenology of symbolic communication and identity formation in the course of social interaction.

In addition, Guss's prose is articulate but sometimes can be overly dry and jargonistic, his style one of flat explanation rather than evocation. Ubiquitous citations and quotes from other theorists get in the way of his own ethnography. We hear many vague and platitudinous comments about ambiguity and contradiction and "new forms of cultural difference" (p. 3) without any close, satisfying account of how these develop and what they really mean to people. In the absence of an explicit concluding chapter, Guss does not have much more to say, and his final comments seem rather pat and facile.

Money in an Unequal World: Keith Hart and His Memory Bank. Keith Hart. New York: Texere, 2001. 341 pp.

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Economic anthropologist Keith Hart has written an unusually creative book about money, ostensibly, but really about the relationships between ideas and real (economic/material) life. He claims to have written this book from memory, relying on the classical canon of modern social thought to create a humanistic and reflexive economic anthropology that captures the style of his lectures—improvisations that draw on working memory. His memory creates the text. The book began as a textbook, *Anthropology and the Modern Economy*,

but Hart decided against publication because "I felt myself to be excluded by its impersonality" (p. 17).

For Hart, money is a source of social memory, a durable store of value convertible against all social things. He sees money and language as the "chief cultural infrastructures that allow us to communicate. . . . 'The memory bank' of the title refers to the exchange of meanings made possible by writing and reading" (p. 17). The book is in two parts: The first, "Money and Machines," traces the history of capitalism; the second, "Money and the Market," treats money and markets from a humanist point of view, looking at the changing character of money and the future of money and the market.

In part 1, Hart asks questions about the relationships between technology, specifically information technology, and economic democracy. "How can the communications revolution be harnessed to the ends of economic democracy?" (p. 31). "Does the emergence of a world market mediated by miniaturized machines contain new democratic possibilities for expressing general human interests; or, are we merely witnessing the culmination of a global capitalism run by and for huge corporations?" (p. 34). He points out that the machine revolution is itself an outcome of economic development, specifically of the system of making money with money that we call "capitalism." His argument in this section is that we are basically primitives who have stumbled into a machine revolution we do not know what to do with. This is why we live in a world of extremes in which the haves (elites) live with obscene wealth and the have-nots suffer in abject poverty. His apocalyptic view is that if the 21st century lives by the same principles of the last century, there will not be a 22nd. After a clear and lively discussion of the history of mechanization and the economy, which is spiced with his own memories of factory life in Manchester, the section ends with an analysis of the political economy of the Internet.

In light of the recent events of September 11, 2001, the implications of Hart's thesis about the contrasts between traditional agricultural societies on one side of the digital divide, and highly complex, digitized, capitalist states on the other, are immense. For Hart "the communications revolution . . . represents a new stage in the formation of world society as a single interactive network" (p. 67). The evolutionary implications of the development of information technology are immense, in large part because large segments of the world's population are, as he puts it "stranded in traditional agriculture." The problem of economic inequality, then,

consists in the persistence of agriculture both as a mode of production and as the original matrix for institutions that still dominate our world. . . . Ours is a world of hectic movement and of remarkably stable institutions. The combination of a machine revolution and the legacy of agricultural society is a potentially lethal one. [p. 67]

In Hart's hands, writing from memory works. His clear explanations of many of the classics, from Locke to Marx to Weber, including many basic concepts, such as capital, capi-

talism, money, markets, commodities, and surplus value, are useful. His informal style of writing helps to make the concepts accessible to a broad audience. The ethnographic/historical examples are crisply presented and question a great deal of conventional wisdom in economic anthropology in particular and Western thought in general. For example, he states that

despite Ghana's standing as the world's leading cocoa producer, little was known about the indigenous producers. They were assumed to be African "peasants" earning a little extra by adding cocoa to their subsistence farms. Polly Hill, Maynard Keynes's niece . . . was able to show that the cocoa farmers were an authentic modern class, migrant entrepreneurs opening up virgin forest often in companies capable of hiring Swiss construction firms to develop the infrastructure that they needed and the colonial authorities could not provide. . . . Her work has barely been absorbed into the modern anthropological tradition because it contradicts deep-seated convictions about Western economic leadership and African backwardness. [pp. 93-94]

Hart knows how to point out institutional complexity in a variety of historical contexts. His own research in Ghana, most famous for his development of the concept of "the informal economy," is not cited as widely as it should be in the United States. His was also one of the first studies of urban economic anthropology since he studied a translocal ethnic community in a slum quarter of Accra, the capitol of Ghana. Hart participated in the criminal economy of this shantytown, "nonparticipation in the criminal economy, left me vulnerable to accusations of being a police spy" (p. 99).

Part 2, "Money and the Market," begins with a long chapter, "The Market from a Humanist Point of View," in which Hart distills the main ideas of Marx, Durkheim, Malinowski, Mauss, Polanyi, E. P. Thompson, and others. He does this in the context of a critique of economic individualism. He then proceeds to an analysis of "The Changing Character of Money," picking up on the theme of money as "mainly, but not exclusively, an act of remembering, a way of keeping track of some of the exchanges we each enter into with the rest of humanity" (p. 234). He treats the history of the money form, including Keynes on money, proceeding to expand his ideas about the meaning of money, commodities, and exchange by going back to Adam Smith, Marx, Polanyi, Malinowski, and Paul Bohannan's "spheres of exchange" among the Tiv. The last part of the chapter deals with "virtual money" or money in the age of the Internet, including Local Exchange Trading Systems (LETS) schemes.

The final chapter of the book, "The Future of Money and the Market," is quite futuristic. Economic justice is its major theme, and Hart manages to integrate the other themes in the book here as well, including mechanization, communication, capitalism, and the revolutions in information technology. He accomplishes thematic integration by posing the following questions:

How do we go about exchanging the squalor of contemporary society for one in which economic justice is taken seriously? A prerequisite is to learn to think creatively in terms that both reflect reality and reach out for imagined

possibilities. This in turn depends on capturing what is essential about the world we live in, its movement and direction, not just its stable forms. I have argued that the stage of capitalism we have reached is at the same time global and virtual, each term reflecting the phase of mechanization I have called the communications revolution. The idea of *virtual reality* goes to the heart of the questions I have raised here. It contains the movement that links the book's form to its content, *extension from the actual to the possible*. "Virtual" means existing in the mind, but not in fact. When combined with "reality," it means a product of the imagination that is "as good as real," almost but not quite real. In technical terms, "virtual reality" is a computer simulation that enables the effects of operations to be shown in real time. [p. 296]

A few pages later, he states: "Nothing less than a world revolution is adequate to redressing the inequality of our times" (p. 305). "The Internet represents a colossal human achievement, yet its origins and future are shrouded in anonymity; rather like money, as a matter of fact" (p. 319). He suggests, ironically, a "repersonalization of economic life [greater reliance on personal credit], as exchange absorbs more information about people" (p. 322). He also recognizes our reliance on impersonal abstraction (computers). "If persons are to make a comeback in the post-modern economy, it will not be on a face-to-face basis, but as bits on a screen who sometimes materialize as living people in the present" (p. 322). Money, then, is less of an objective force than a way of keeping track of complex social networks generated by individuals.

Hart is clearly painting with a broad brush in this book, but it is a brush full of richly textured paint, and a brush that is virtual as well as real. All in all this is a delightfully readable book, one that should promote conversations about how to create more equitable economies and make a better world without engaging in utopian schemes or in dreaming.

Griots at War: Conflict, Conciliation, and Caste in Mande.

Barbara G. Hoffman, in collaboration with Kassim Kone. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000. 298 pp.

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Long famed for their mastery of oral and musical tradition, Griots trace their origins to the Mali empire in the 12th century. With its political and cultural expansion they moved throughout the West African Sahel and Savannah regions, and, today, while southern Mali, Senegal, Gambia, and northern Guinea still form the Griot core area, its diasporic communities extend eastward to the border with Chad (taking in southern areas of the Sahelian states and northern savannahs of the southern coastal states). Sharing common origins and a foundation in Mande languages and culture, Griots retain much of their endogamous clan and lineage structure and, above all, their hereditary profession as bards, or "wordsmiths." Despite their enigmatic reputation and status as a "caste" group, reviled as inferior, they are valued as performers, praise-singers, and advisors to kings and nobles.

Until recently, Griots interested mainly musicologists, literary analysts, and Francophone social scientists. Now, in *Griots at War*, U.S. anthropologist Barbara Hoffman provides an important addition to the literature in English on these accomplished musicians and entertainers, praise singers, genealogists, historians, and skillful and subtle orators and mediators of political disputes. The book combines an exploration of Griot discourse with analysis of Griot identity and caste status. It builds from the events of a three-day meeting that took place in 1985 in the Malian town of Kita, a center of Griot affairs, where thousands of Griots from Senegal, Niger, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Gambia, as well as Mali, gathered to celebrate the installation of a new local Head Griot, inaugurate a new Griot Hall, and end a prolonged dispute (the "War" of the title) over leadership succession among the Kita Griots. The conflict had produced dissension among Griot lineages, mysterious misfortunes, and several deaths. Hoffman, an apprentice Griot engaged in fieldwork in Bamako, was invited to attend and allowed to tape-record nearly the entire proceedings, during which Griot leaders engaged the full range of their rhetorical and declamatory skills to review and resolve the dispute. The text produced from this event, supplemented by coverage by a national Malian television crew of an all male meeting, forms the primary data for her analysis. Large segments of this text, transcribed into Mande and translated into English with help from Kassim Kone, appear in both languages. Hoffman provides extensive commentaries and analyses, which draw on later interviews with the principal speakers and other notables.

Acknowledging the loss of contextual subtleties through the textualization and translation of oral discourse, Hoffman argues persuasively that this is nonetheless warranted by the scarcity of examples of naturally occurring Griot discourse performance. The richness and vividness of the text, and the care and knowledge evident in disentangling its nuances, amply justify her effort. The poetry of Griot oratory rolls majestically, incorporating praise speaking in honor of various dignitaries present, and long recitals of genealogies invoking famous ancestors. Abundant use of proverbs brings many daily metaphors into play, for example, in the saying that "if the milk chokes the gourd ladle . . . the drinker of milk becomes anxious" (p. 172), which Hoffman glosses as implying that verbal and occult combat of Griot against Griot disturbs their noble patrons. Through close attention to textual ambiguities and contextual variations in the cultural rules at play, Hoffman meets the challenges of translating a rhetorical style in which "polysemy is the norm and ambiguity is often the desired result" (p. 19).

Her other interest in the text of this meeting is in its value as an instrument of social and cultural analysis. Asserting that the practices that act to structure and maintain "Griotness" are largely discursive, Hoffman draws on the text, and the concepts of "habitus" and "structuration," to explore how Griots constitute themselves through discourse, and how they mark the boundaries between themselves and nobles, the other group present at the meeting. She undertakes