

Money and the Morality of Exchange

Jonathan Parry and Maurice Bloch, eds.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989. viii + 276 pp. \$44.50 (cloth), \$14.95 (paper)

Reviewer: Gracia Clark
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This collection of essays redeems money from its straw man status as the quintessentially impersonal, antisocial commodity and returns it intellectually into the realm of cultural and social construction. In commendably rich specific contexts, the essays discuss the processes through which money is defined, constituted and harnessed by charging it with intense symbolic value and political content. Taken as a whole, the volume does for money what Appadurai's *The Social Life of Things* (Cambridge University Press, 1986) did for commodities. It dissolves the formal opposition between monetized and in-kind exchanges, and between monetary and non-monetary societies, in order to look critically at the actual social relations and cultural definitions involving money, in exchanges or otherwise.

Each essay crosses a different part of this boundary. Fuller's substantial critique of the *jajmani* concept documents the widespread integration of cash and markets into Indian villages hitherto categorized as non-commercial. Parry shows that giving money in Benares Hindu ritual contexts is actually less problematic than gifts in kind.

Other essays show the reassertion of cultural control over money in highly commercialized contexts, for example, areas with considerable labour migration. Toren's chapter on Fijian drinking fundraisers and Lan's chapter on Dande mediums in Zimbabwe detail rituals that "socialize" money and serve to reclaim externally generated resources for communal purposes. In fact, money is converted to this conservative role more easily than other modern items, which the Dande mediums avoid. Bloch's discussion of Merina ideas about money in Madagascar shows they also give positive spiritual value to money used for maintaining ancestral tombs.

Bloch and Parry discuss medieval and later European ideas about money as the source of this illusory universal dichotomy, both in their introduction and their chapters. A more substantial engagement with the social practice around money would have been a welcome continuation of issues raised by the European material in Appadurai's volume. They and other contributors invoke Taussig's *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980) primarily as a further example.

Sallnow and Harris contribute chapters on pre-Columbian and contemporary Andean locations that discuss Taussig's analysis more fully, along with original ethnographic sources. They bring into question the perfect monetarization of money itself, where mining involves precious metals in symbolic systems of production as well as exchange. Harris follows through more completely the interaction with different ways of generating and spending money, with markets, circulation and other forms of wealth. The enhanced symbolic and ritual value of old coins in the Andes finds an echo in Madagascar. These more socialized money objects associated with families or ancestors are more precious than their value in out-of-control, utilitarian currency.

Two essays on Asian commercial fishing villages show that money is not necessarily associated with less social control than consumption goods or use values. In the

Malay village Carsten presents, "individual male money" from sales to Chinese fish buyers becomes "shared-female-kin" money (p. 135) when handed to women who grow rice as well as buy food with kin. In Stirrat's Sri Lankan village, women sell fish and control the money from profits. Its use for household consumption is standardized by strict communal norms of an egalitarian lifestyle. Men profess disdain for money, but are deeply involved in buying major consumer durables for competitive display (p. 104). Strengthening the social order can involve dispossession of money, as in Fiji drinking rituals, or super-possession of inalienable coins, as in Imerina.

In place of the monetary/non-monetary dichotomy, Bloch and Parry propose a new dichotomy of social vs. individualized spheres of activity. They explain their contrast as between "two related but separate transactional orders; on the one hand transactions concerned with the reproduction of the long-term social or cosmic order; on the other, a 'sphere' of short-term transactions concerned with the arena of individual competition." (p. 24). One does not have to endorse wholeheartedly the universalism of this dualist conception to find it intriguing and stimulating, bringing to mind many supportive examples from classic ethnographies. Its weakness is preserving the moral vs. selfish connotation of earlier classifications of exchange systems or other social relations, simply detaching this value aspect from money as such. In fact, one wonders whether the individual vs. society opposition is not as central to Western social thought as that between market and gift, and subject to some of the same critiques.

Pacific Studies Special Issue: Domestic Violence in Oceania

Dorothy Ayers Counts, Guest Editor

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Reviewer: Ellen E. Facey

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This special issue of *Pacific Studies* makes a substantial contribution to what is, as its editor and several of the authors point out, a remarkably overdue area of concern in anthropology: the study of domestic violence.

In her short "Introduction" Counts outlines five themes that are picked up to varying degrees by the different authors: (1) the problematic, and sometimes limiting, definition of "domestic domain"; (2) the similarly slippery definition of "violence," also a culturally variant concept; (3) cultural differences in regard to social "acceptability" or tolerance of the level of violence engaged in or encountered; (4) the question of why there is so much and so extreme domestic violence in some societies in the region and so little in others; and (5) the dilemma that the anthropological fieldworker faces in coping with incidents of domestic violence, personally as well as analytically.

The volume is composed of 12 papers, plus Counts' "Introduction" and "Conclusion." Its ethnographic range is wide, but the bulk of the papers (eight) concern Melanesia: Hawaii, Fiji (two); Palau; Marshall Islands; Kiribati; Papua New Guinea (six). The collection is also diverse in terms of choice of focus, which results from the combination of several factors: the fieldworker's research focus; differential occurrence and salience of the different forms of domestic violence in the ethnographic context; and the underlying contemporary Western concern with spousal violence, which is highlighted in the comparative literature on domestic violence in North