of two domains with an analysis of social closure as a manifestation of resistance to the White world. "The Aboriginal domain," he writes, "can be regarded as at least in part an arena of resistance to the colonial imperative of assimilating the colonised to the beliefs and practices of the colonising society" (p. 101). But clearly this does not deal with the whole picture because so much of the conception of the Blackfella domain is derived from Aboriginal tradition.

This question of the continuation of certain features of Aboriginal culture in the context of the modern state introduces a new dimension to Trigger's work. Of special importance is the discussion of identity within the Aboriginal domain (chap. 6). What emerges is a diversity of *identities* at the local level. The complex manner in which conflicting allegiances are sorted out produces a semblance of harmony, if not political unity, in the community. Thus, while each of the many language and dialects carries with it a status of its own reflecting a particular social position, the mere fact that many people still speak a native tongue provides a measure of "Aboriginalness" in general. Similarly, claiming traditional knowledge of land-related matters produces hierarchies with their inherent tensions to be solved at the community level. The manner in which the use of traditional kinship terms by individuals in the modern world is evaluated by the community provides a further example of the potential for conflict and its resolution. The picture is, moreover, complicated by the senior age category (elders) to whom special high status is afforded—a status which is capable of cross-cutting other claims to status and honour. Unfortunately, this intriguing material on the contradictions between conflict and consensus is not fully analyzed and the author passes up the opportunity of introducing Gluckman's and Simmel's ideas in his ethnography. In a similar vein, one might hope for a second volume from Trigger at some future date to satisfy the comparativists in social science. The appropriate parallels in the Canadian and Southern African literature with the Doomagee material are theoretically too significant to ignore.

Visayan Vignettes: Ethnographic Traces of a Philippine Island
Jean-Paul Dumont
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. xix + 226 pp. $39.95 (cloth), $16.95 (paper)

Reviewer: Catherine (Rineke) Coumans
Cornell University

Dumont's title signals the reader that here one may find an example of the widely discussed, but still rarely written, "new" ethnography. By "crossing over" and drawing on a term traditionally associated with impressionistic tales in the humanities, "vignettes," and emphasizing the partial nature of his work by referring to its ethnographic accounts as "traces," Dumont clearly breaks with the boldly definitive and unself-consciously positivistic titles of most modernist ethnographies. Dumont maintains that his title presents a more accurate reflection of the contents of his book, the stories he heard and now relates, and of the ethnographic process by which anthropological insights are acquired (p. 1).

Dumont's misgivings about the conventional ethnographic format are epitomized by traditional introductions. Introductions inevitably pre(fix) a text in which ethnographic

information is overly organized and "packaged" (p. 7), in which "localized, situated, partial" (p. 2) and emerging truths are sacrificed on the altar of a coherent and closed discourse and a structural organization and theoretical framework which is associated with traditional scholarship. Dumont, reluctantly, premises his own work by informing the reader of his intention to address these concerns through the medium of a new rhetorical style.

At root, Dumont's concerns are political and ethical in nature. Dumont contends that ethnographers do "violence" to "others" (p. 5) by hiding the confusions and contradictions that accompany the field-work experience, sometimes by not discussing these at all, but always by writing in a manner that implies these hurdles have been successfully overcome. "Others" become reified and are shaped by intellectual debates that are current in the West and by "publishing strategies and academic politics" (p. 5). Because Dumont insists that "the form of a text is itself constitutive of its content and thus . . . a political tool" (p. 7), he suggests that the problem of misrepresentation may perhaps be remedied by writing in such a way that the experience of reading the ethnography becomes more analogous to the fragmented, intercultural and frequently incoherent experiences of field work (p. 6).

As one may expect from a text which grants the writing process itself a central epistemological place, Dumont's book is well written and, barring moments where the text feels too self-conscious and overly crafted, the book is compelling reading. A feature of Dumont's work is its structural organization. The reader receives information on established topics, such as subsistence practices, in a fragmented manner. This clearly emulates the way a field worker receives information, embedded in disparate occurrences and stories, that is later determined to belong together. A drawback to Dumont's organizational choices is that he is sometimes forced to repeat previously presented information.

In a primarily descriptive manner, believing in the "embeddedness of anthropological theory in mere ethnographic prose" (p. 8), Dumont provides information on a wide range of topics including: how the Siquihodnon construct identity and are defined, in turn, by outsiders. He discusses practical, economic and demographic aspects of subsistence practices on the island with references to the effects thereon of external economic and political factors. Dumont ponders the significance of love and of mythical beliefs for the Natives, he extensively details kinship relationships and genealogical memory and he provides scattered nuggets of ethnographic information on socio-economic relations between members of different classes on the island. Dumont, however, does not consider explicitly or systematically the significance of his data for broader analytical issues that have been raised in the academic literature on the Philippines or the region.

Throughout, Dumont blends the presentation of information and analysis with a discussion of his personal involvement in the research. The reader learns about Siquijor islanders *through* learning about Dumont as a field worker; his romantic notions of island research, the obstacles he encountered and how he responded to these experiences emotionally. Dumont illuminates how coincidences, practical considerations and serendipity aided in his accumulation of sought-after data or led him to explore unanticipated areas. While this candid and personalized style of presentation is understandable in light of Dumont's theoretical concerns, it at times (chap. 3) verges on self-indulgence and may distract the reader from the ethnographic topics under discussion.

Given the general style of the book it is surprising to find extended sections in chapters 4, 12 and 13 in which Dumont suddenly reverts to the more conventional tone of

the all-knowing author. Here Dumont discloses to the reader what his informants' motivations are and the dialogue with people's own statements becomes all but non-existent. This more traditional style is also noticeable in chapters 15 and 16 in which Dumont compares people's recollections and understandings of genealogical relationships with the "objective truth" of parish records.

While decrying the fact that fashionable theories or personal ideological convictions (mis)shape the presentation of ethnographic data (pp. 3-4), Dumont cannot escape the fact that his book is itself a product of, and a contribution to, an ongoing intellectual dialogue that Western scholars are presently conducting amongst themselves as they reflect, critically or defensively, upon the rational traditions of their own intellectual history and the ways in which these traditions have shaped the pursuit and presentation of "knowledge."

Between Culture and Fantasy: A New Guinea Highlands Mythology
Gillian Gillison
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993. xxi + 392 pp. $60.00 (cloth), $22.50 (paper)

Reviewer: Dorothy Ayers Counts
University of Waterloo

This is a complex and sophisticated analysis of the relationship between myth, ritual, world view and gender relations among the Gimi of New Guinea's Eastern Highlands. Gillison says: "One of the main aims of the book is to show how men's myths and fantasies play into a different female fantasy based on the female Oedipus complex in which the primary attachment to the father needs to be addressed or resolved before a woman can marry" (footnote, p. 167).

Gillison's discussion of her field work illustrates the vital role of the anthropologist's family, and the serendipitous nature of anthropological research. The presence of her daughter Samantha was critical in Gillison's understanding of Gimi culture. Women's stories are essential to Gillison's interpretation of Gimi exchange and social relations, for they interpret the mythic past in ways that differ from and complement the stories told by men. During her early field work, Gillison was not aware of the existence of a body of women's narratives. Samantha overheard the bedtime songs and stories told by Gimi mothers to her playmates and alerted Gillison to the presence of these myths.

Gillison cites Malinowski's observation that myths refer to life's "unpleasant or negative truths" such as the inevitability of illness, aging and death. She argues that male and female myths engage in a dialogue with each other about the origins and meaning of some of these "negative truths," particularly death and its indissoluble tie to sex and reproduction. Gillison analyzes several Gimi myths, including male and female versions of the origins of marriage exchange, childprice, rites of mortuary cannibalism and the origin and theft by men of the sacred flutes. The flutes are a "core symbol" that combines "relations among generations, parricide and filicide, copulation and death, gestation and birth . . . as if they were instantaneous and the same" (p. 349). Gimi mythic dialogue illuminates the assumptions that underlie Gimi gender and kinship relations and their rituals of exchange. These assumptions constitute "the deepest