professionnelle. Je vais d'ailleurs commencer par ce dernier. L'article de Claude et Geneviève Auroi «Arte popular en el Perú: los mates (calabazas) burilados de Cochas...» a pour objet d'étude une collection privée de 28 calebasses gravées au stylet entre 1984 et 1987 par la famille Poma et appelées au Pérou «mates burilados». La plus grande partie du texte est descriptive (matériaux, technique...) mais la surprise vient lorsque, presque à la fin de l'article, on peut lire que les 28 pièces de cette collection (effectivement privée) de 'mates finos' ont été réalisées à la demande des auteurs de ce texte et que les bons rapports qu'ils ont entretenus avec la famille Poma ont permis que «l'intérêt spécifique que nous avions pour des sujets propres aux paysans huancaivos soient pris au sérieux par les créateurs de ces 'mates' qui ont essayé d'incorporer notre préoccupation dans leurs oeuvres». Je laisse aux personnes qui liront ce compte rendu le soin d'évaluer cette démarche. L'autre article est celui de Eva María Garrido Izaguirre «Categorías del gusto en la escultura de Ocumicho, un pueblo purépecha». Dans ce texte, elle analyse la production, à partir des années 1960 et principalement par les femmes d'Ocumicho (Mexique), de sculptures polychromes en argile faites uniquement pour être vendus à des étrangers. C'est un objet d'art qui n'a pas de place dans les foyers d'Ocumicho (il s'agit de «diables»), et qui est créé en suivant les critères de goût des acheteurs des contextes urbains mexicains ou des acheteurs d'autres pays. À partir de ces constatations, l'auteure décrit comment se tissent les liens entre le goût esthétique de la communauté d'Ocumicho et le style propre à ces «diables» et réussit à appréhender les principes esthétiques, éthiques et stylistiques que doit posséder un objet pour qu'un habitant d'Ocumicho le trouve «beau». Autrement dit, elle réussit à cerner les principes recteurs de l'esthétique purépecha. En ce sens, cet article trouve sa place au sein des recherches anthropologiques intéressées par le contenu des catégories esthétiques indigènes.

Comme je l'ai déjà signalé, l'anthropologie des arts cherche encore sa voie théorique et méthodologique et cet ouvrage est un excellent exemple de la vitalité de ce champ d'études.

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**David M. Guss**, *The Festive State: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism as Cultural Performance*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000, 239 pages (paper).


Reviewer: *Anastasia N. Panagakos*
*University of California*


In *The Festive State: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism as Cultural Performance*, author David M. Guss explores how festivals, rituals, andcultural performances exemplify the ways in which culture and identity become sites of contestation in Venezuela. This point is well illustrated in the opening vignette of the book in which the people of the small village of Catuaro are faced with a most unusual dilemma. Over the years people from the area had formed strong bonds with a statue of the Dolorosa, or Sorrowful Mary, to whom promises would be made to in return for protection. During an attempt to clean the statue, a specialist sent in by the government (which had developed an interest in preserving the national heritage) discovered that underneath her wig and multiple layers of paint, the Dolorosa was actually the youthful saint of San Juan Bautista. At first the people of Catuaro panicked, particularly the devotees of the Dolorosa who had bonded with the saint as a gentle female, not as a male saint who evoked other feelings and meanings. Much discussion was generated with the revelation of the "transvestite saint" including a public meeting at which it was decided that the statue's true nature as San Juan Bautista must be honoured. For Guss, the intervention of the government-sponsored specialist represented a phenomenon happening all over the country—that interference by tourists, the media, political parties, or the discovery of oil was now common in even the most isolated of villages and that so-called local traditions were now a part of national and even global interests.

Guss frames his ethnography by beginning with a discussion about cultural performance and how dramatizations allow participants and observers to understand, criticize and change the world in which they live. Like other scholars

studying cultural performance, such as Mary Crain and David Cahill, Guss recognizes the importance of a discursive approach that acknowledges how actors use events to debate, challenge, argue and negotiate. Thus cultural performance becomes a "field of action" where both elites and oppressed can express competing claims and where the media have the potential to become an authority. Guss pinpoints the beginning of a national interest in folk culture to 1947, after Venezuela's first democratic election, when the "Festival of Tradition" was held to celebrate the new nation's unique heritage. Juan Liscano, the director of the National Folklore Service, which had been established the year before, gathered sixteen different groups from rural communities throughout Venezuela to perform. The performers who until this time had only considered their music and dances as acts of religious devotion found themselves transformed into active participants of a "tradition." For the urban audiences the festival changed the way they viewed Venezuela and as Guss writes, "the folklorization process had begun...permanently suspended between the worlds of ritual obligation and national spectacle, these festive forms now began to negotiate a new and complex reality" (p. 20).

With this brief history of the Festival of Tradition and others with similar themes, Guss devotes the remainder of his book to four independent case studies depicting how political, commercial and cultural interests have melded to promote certain festivals that contest and reinvent Venezuelan identity. The four case studies are the Afro-Venezuelan celebration of San Juan, the seemingly indigenous Day of the Monkey, the production and dissemination of cultural "tradition" by a multinational tobacco company, and the mestizo ritual dances of Tamunangue. While each case represents one facet of Venezuelan culture with a distinct history and cultural meaning, Guss's narrative highlights the features common to all four sub-plots; be it the contested history of the actual performance, the appropriation of tradition to serve national and corporate interests, or how the very nature of these diverse performances exposes the contradictions inherent in Venezuelan identity—African, European, indigenous, Catholic, colonial, slave, poor, elite, urban, rural, Black, White or Brown.

While each chapter provides a thoughtful and in-depth account of each case study, the chapters on the Day of the Monkey and the tobacco-sponsored Bigott Foundation were particularly interesting and insightful. In a chapter entitled "Full Speed Ahead with Venezuela," Guss recounts how the British American Tobacco Company (BAT) became one of the biggest, and most recognizable, sponsors of cultural education in Venezuela. As Guss remarks, a corporation can use the symbols or images of the nation in such a manner hat it becomes one's patriotic duty to purchase their products. BAT's Venezuelan subsidiary, Cigarrera Bigott, was acquired early in the 20th century and, in addition to being a top seller, had a very positive public image due to the philanthropic works of its Venezuelan founder, Luis Bigott. In 1981, however, the Venezuelan government banned the advertising of tobacco and alcohol on television and radio thus propelling BAT to find alternatives to getting Cigarrera Bigott's name and logo on the airwaves. The solution was to redesign the Bigott Foundation (originally founded to help workers secure housing) into an entity that would promote popular culture in both local artistic workshops and television programming showcasing the best of Venezuelan folk culture.

Guss's description of the "Encuentro con" (Encounter with) series of documentaries and the two shorter series referred to as micros and the Cuñas produced by BAT is high quality thick description. Without even viewing the program one gets an immediate sense of how these shows were finely crafted to first establish the legitimacy of a multinational tobacco giant as a producer of Venezuelan cultural programming and later, to publicize its own role as a champion of folk culture. As Guss found in his study, in the end the organization became more than just a way of disseminating culture, but became the subject of its own study, a producer of popular traditions like the communities it had set out to investigate in the first place. The name of the Bigott Foundation (synonymous with Cigarrera Bigott) and its logo of three tobacco leaves reclaimed its hold on the television audience in a way that not only complied with the government's ban on tobacco advertising but insidiously tapped into the emotions of the Venezuelan people who were proud to see the nationally televised attention given to their local practices.

In the chapter on the Day of the Monkey, Guss exposes the complex history of a festival that, according to some proponents, is solely indigenous. By highlighting competing accounts of the festival's origins, the author demonstrates how the festival has come to signify different things for different people. Those who most strongly believe that the Day of the Monkey is an indigenous phenomenon are young men who have left the village for work or study and view the festival as a homecoming celebration which defines their identity against a larger Venezuelan identity poised to engulf them. Yet others, mostly elders with strong agricultural ties, challenge the indigenous roots of the festival insisting that it was a craze of the 1920s. Guss's own interpretation of the festival is based on both ethnographic recollections and historical documentation stressing how this one festival evokes competing ideas of mestizaje for different groups. Given the contested nature of the festival, and that Guss himself was recognized at the festival as an anthropologist and authority, it would be interesting to learn how his recollections could be used by local groups to either reinforce their own views or to disclaim the views of others. The *Festive State* is a rich ethnographic account of the production and reproduction of culture and identity in contemporary Venezuela. Guss's command of the literature and his own intimate ethnographic knowledge of Venezuela help to create a text that reveals the multiple layers of meaning ascribed to ritualized behaviour and the ways in which local groups, politicians, artists and multinational corporations, to name a few negotiate these

meanings to fulfill their own agendas. Given Guss's interest in how the state appropriates local celebrations to promote national identity, I would have been interested to learn how he himself, as an authority of Venezuelan folk culture, is also drawn into the politics of culture production and appropriated by competing interests as an expert. In addition, a concluding chapter revisiting some of the theoretical issues presented in the first chapter would have been an instructive and useful way of drawing together the various themes that unite the four various case studies. In conclusion, *The Festive State* is an important contribution not only to ethnographic studies of Latin America, but to our current understanding of ritual and cultural performance as well.

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**Laura Nader**, *The Life of the Law: Anthropological Projects*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, xiii + 262 pages.

Reviewer: *Alan Smart*
*University of Calgary*

Laura Nader has not only been one of the foremost contributors to the anthropology of law, but has also been at the forefront of efforts to push anthropologists into theoretical and practical engagement with the ways in which disputes and the administration of justice influence and transform the lives of the people we study. Her 1969 call for anthropologists to "study up" was extremely influential in the discipline, and this book demonstrates the results of a career devoted to studying up while keeping in close touch with ordinary people in Mexico, Lebanon and the United States.

This volume derives from the 1996 Cardozo Lectures given at the University of Trento, Italy. The first chapter is a long (53 pages) "personal document" describing the trajectory of her research career and how it has related to general trends in the study of law and anthropology. While perhaps overly familiar for those who have followed her work, or have watched her 1981 PBS documentary *Little Injustices*, the chapter illustrates how a career-long focus on disputing can continually be reinvented with new insights into how ethnography can study issues with a broader, even global, impact. She notes that when asked about her persistence with the topic, she responds that the "present academic scene is cursed by trendiness" (p. 6) and that sticking with a subject in a changing world has "led me to think even more intensely about what ordinary people think is important: disputes. Disputes under changing conditions have challenged anthropologists to rethink methodologies and old theories, to rethink the place of our work in history, and to think about the work of our colleagues in allied areas" (p. 7).

The second chapter explores the changing relationship between anthropologists and lawyers in the study of law and disputes. She traces it back to the 19th century, when several of anthropology's key ancestral figures received their training in law, including Maine, Morgan, McLennan and Bachofen. Professionalization in both disciplines led to a greater separation in the 20th century, but more recently, movements such as Law and Society, Economics of Law, and Critical Legal Studies have increased the degree of collaboration. Nader sees the public interest law movement as an exemplar of engagement that anthropologists can learn from.

Hegemonic processes in law are the focus of chapter three. Her key example is what she calls "harmony ideology" where adversarial dispute procedures are challenged by dominant pressures towards mediation, negotiation and conciliation. She sees this as having been a central feature of many colonial regimes, and came to recognize that processes of "making the balance" that were so prominent in her early Zapotec work were not simply indigenous cultural features but had been actively promoted through colonial pacification. As a result, she is very sceptical about widespread policy concerns about the putative "litigation explosion" in the United States and the Alternative Dispute Resolution movement. This is an ironic case where the work of anthropologists on disputing processes in village or tribal contexts has had a major practical influence but anthropologists have become the harshest critics of the use made of their work. Nader argues that Alternative Dispute Resolution has become a new way of controlling populations that became too interested in gaining access to justice forums in the 1960s and 1970s. The litigation explosion is revealed as representing at best a "quarter truth," and the promotion of alternatives to adversarial legal procedures was intended "to prevent not the *causes* of discord but the *expression* of it" (p. 141).

The next chapter makes explicit an approach that has become more explicit in the course of Nader's work, what she calls a "user theory of law." In contrast to the dominant emphasis in jurisprudence and political science on influential decision-makers, judges and legislators, she emphasizes the plaintiff as a key source of legal transformation. She argues that a search for justice, or more precisely responses to the experience of injustice, is fundamental and universal in human societies, so that forums for justice are also ubiquitous. Furthermore, she asserts that "the direction of law is dependent in large measure on who is motivated to use the law and for what purposes" (p. 169). The unintended consequences of these aggregated patterns of usage are compared to linguistic drift. In the epilogue she takes this approach to examine key contemporary global issues of intellectual property rights and indigenous rights. She points out that anthropologists who may have had little interest in legal questions have frequently been brought into these debates by the insistence of the groups that they have studied, as they dealt with issues such as biopiracy or toxic waste dumping on native reservations. As Nader remarks in the concluding paragraph:

> We live in a face-to-faceless world massively affected by global industrialization. In this world in which the com-