

There is much to consider carefully here, especially the discussion of identity politics and standpoint epistemology. As a Melanesianist, I appreciate the polysemous statement that “Anthropologists are people who care about people and their pigs” (p. 334); as an academic, I am keenly aware (and disappointed) that “the contemporary Americanist discourse about fieldwork ethics confirms that the rest of our colleagues in the other social sciences still have their heads in the sand” (p. 332).

This beautifully written gem of a book, the first volume in the series *Critical Studies in the History of Anthropology* co-edited by Darnell and Stephen O. Murray, makes refreshing, insightful and critical contributions to the history and theory of contemporary anthropology. This text is destined to be a classic in our discipline.

Edward F. Fischer, *Cultural Logics and Global Economies: Maya Identity in Thought and Practice*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001, xii + 320 pages (paper).

Reviewer: *Marilyn Gates*
Simon Fraser University

We (Westerners) tend to view the contemporary Maya with a romantic gaze, as remnants of a long-ago high culture. We think of majestic cities and temples shrouded in the rain forest, hieroglyphs guarding their secrets, such as the riddle of the sudden Classic Maya collapse. We see the descendants of these ancient Maya today as clinging to only vestiges of their illustrious past, glimpsed in stubbornly persistent languages, arcane religious ceremonies, time-tested agricultural practices, colourful costumes and other “folk” crafts, perfect for tourist souvenirs. Guatemala’s relatively small Spanish-speaking ladino (non-Indian) elite, historically have viewed the Mayan majority through much less rose-coloured glasses, aiming at cultural assimilation in the nation-state under the modernization model of dependent capitalism, via “civilizing” and “educating” them, or “disappearing” those perceived as a threat to national security. Despite these concerted efforts, however, the Maya have not vanished, constituting one of the largest concentrations of indigenous peoples in the Americas. They are also one of the poorest and most divided. Edward Fischer argues that, paradoxically, the current surge of globalization provides a window of opportunity for marginalized and fractured ethnic groups such as the Maya to re-imagine and re-assert their cultural identity and distinctiveness vis-a-vis the dominant Hispanic society.

In *Cultural Logics and Global Economies: Maya Identity in Thought and Practice*, Edward Fischer explores the dynamics of ethnic-identity construction among the Guatemalan Maya in the new world-system context of postindustrial core countries and offshore production and assembly in the periphery. Drawing on recent theories in interpretive

ethnography, cognitive studies, and political economy, Fischer applies a multilayered and finely textured analysis to tease out the international, national and local factors that have opened up new venues of pan-Mayan expression, especially since the waning of the civil war in the late 1980s and the rapid expansion of neoliberal free-market economic policies. Fischer maintains that these macro-level economic changes are “...closely correlated in time and space to the rise of identity politics and various forms of hyphenated nationalism in peripheral areas. Indeed, it appears that ethnicity has eclipsed the importance of class identity in stimulating struggles of resistance.” (p. 24)

Fischer examines the apparently successful colonization of this postmodern identity space by uncovering the tensions and synergies that arise at the intersection of national pan-Maya identity politics and the lived experiences of Maya in the Kaqchikel towns of Tecpan and Patzun. Taking a constructionist stance, building on Bourdieu’s model of the habitus and Giddens’s theory of structuration, Fischer is able to navigate smoothly from the macro-level to the micro-level to show how open-ended “cultural logics” as shared predispositions linked both to the underlying cultural substrate and to a dynamic articulation with global relations of political economy condition the ways in which both Maya leaders and the rural masses creatively express their identity. Maya leaders seek to unite Indian groups long divided by rugged terrain, geographic rootedness and local custom in order to attain a greater political voice after centuries of oppression. However, they are constrained in the creation of a new pan-Maya identity by the need to stay true to cultural norms that emerge from everyday lived experiences, as idiosyncratic internalizations of received culture remain firmly embedded in broader cultural continuities and commonalities.

After reviewing the global and national processes which impinge on pan-Maya identity politics, Fischer zeros in on the movement itself and on Maya identity as lived experience in Tecpan and Patzun. There are chapters on souls, socialization, and the Kaqchikel self; heart, kin, and communities; local forms of ethnic resistance; and economic change and cultural community. We learn about contestations over cultural markers, such as the movement towards a pan-Maya language, the symbolic function of hieroglyphs in cultural activism, and the key role of Maya clothing in identity politics. Important sites and strategies of resistance are identified, such as communication media and Maya-oriented education. Ironically, beauty pageants have become a focal point of Maya activism at the local level, “...combining a concern with the beauty of authenticity (and the authenticity of beauty) with a public forum for expressing ethnic pride that would be interpreted by most outsiders as ‘touristic’ and ‘folkloric’ (and in that sense, nationalistic)” (p. 192). The impact of changes in the global political economy at the local level is strikingly evident in the example of Maya producers in Tecpan and Patzun who have profited from the nontraditional agricultural export production boom of the past 15

years on this fertile and temperate plain, bisected by the Pan-American Highway and only 75 kilometers from Guatemala City's international airport. Fragile hybrids including kohlrabi crops and other speciality vegetables were unable to be grown competitively on the large (absentee ladino) commercial farms due to high labour and supervisory costs. However, they thrive on the smallholdings of Maya farmers, where local agricultural expertise and the tradition of household labour pays off. The result, then, of the introduction of new crops for the export market in Tecpan and Patzun, unlike many cases elsewhere, has been a more equitable distribution of resources along ethnic lines.

In the concluding chapter on convergent strategies and cultural logics, Fischer reminds us that at the beginning of his fieldwork he intended to document the constructed nature of Maya identity, and to show how this construction is influenced by contemporary political and economic conditions. Instead, he found that his informants tended to reassert the essential nature of their identity. Clearly, Maya identity today is much more than the product of counter-hegemonic resistance, as cultural logics are deployed in novel circumstances, maintaining an important sense of continuity in the face of change (p. 244). Thus, while the project of promoting a pan-Maya identity involves radical remapping of the ways in which millions of individuals view the world and their position in it, through adoption of linguistic innovations such as neologisms, generic dress, neotraditional use of ancient symbols, etc., this is far from being purely instrumental constructivism with an overriding political agenda. "Rather, it is the conscious and unconscious dialectical reconciliation of received cultural logics and changing real-world circumstances that both reproduces and alters cultural patterns... If culture is like a game, then it is as much Scrabble as Battleship, with actors building words and meanings not by tearing down the existing structure but by adding to it, and changing it indelibly" (pp. 247-248).

In sum, *Cultural Logics and Global Economies* is a theoretically sophisticated, in-depth study of the cultural identity politics of an indigenous people, which is a valuable contribution to not only Maya studies, but also to contemporary ethnography, particularly of the interpretive bent. Upfront about his research methods, positioning and a priori biases, Fischer gives a detailed and nuanced account of fieldwork as a process, not just a product, which is reflexive but does not deflect attention away from his subjects of inquiry. The organization of the book is tight and the exposition logically developed. The text flows quite well, and is expressed with a minimum of jargon, though the language is, of necessity, somewhat dense at times and undergraduate students might find some sections to be tough reading. Extracts from field notes and interviews with informants help to ground the argument in the lived experiences he intends to privilege. Perhaps, inclusion of more of these vignettes would have made the theoretical arguments more accessible to a broader audience. It is important to reach a wide readership with the

message that the contemporary Maya are active and creative agents in the forging of evolving identities, rather than romantic relics of a dead civilization, or obstacles to "progress" by virtue of their lingering traditions, their "otherness."

Susantha Goonatilake, *Anthropologizing Sri Lanka: A Eurocentric Misadventure*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001, xiv + 306 pages.

Reviewer: *Karine Bates*
McGill University

In *Anthropologizing Sri Lanka* Susantha Goonatilake, a Sri-Lankan researcher cross-appointed to the New York Center for Studies of Social Change and the Vidyarthi Centre in Colombo, Sri Lanka, reviews recent work on Sri Lanka by four renowned anthropologists affiliated with prestigious Western universities: Richard Gombrich (Oxford), Gananath Obeyesekere (Princeton), Bruce Kapferer (London), and S.J. Tambiah (Harvard). Through a critical analysis of their works on Sinhala Buddhism, Goonatilake wishes to demonstrate these authors' Eurocentric biases and limited understanding of Sri Lanka's culture and society. Goonatilake sees in the works of Gombrich, Obeyesekere, Kapferer, and Tambiah a resurgence of a "virulent colonial anthropology in Sri Lanka" (p. xiv) and rebukes these authors for offering misinformed accounts of Sinhala Buddhism.

To develop his argument, Goonatilake has divided his book into five parts. First, he situates the anthropological research on Sri Lanka in the global context of the history of anthropology. In part 2, he reviews Gombrich's and Obeyesekere's attempt to interpret Sinhala Buddhism with reference to Protestantism. Thirdly, he examines Kapferer's analysis of the central role of sorcery in Sinhala society. In part four, he presents Tambiah's study of fratricide. Finally, he focusses on the cultural and educational backgrounds of these experts on the anthropology of Sri Lanka. Therefore, what Goonatilake proposes is not only an analysis of anthropological research on Sri Lanka but also a study of the anthropologists themselves.

In part 1, Goonatilake describes the dominant and yet evolving theoretical landscape within which anthropological research tends to be framed. He begins with a reminder that much of current anthropological work is still based on Western models originating in 17th-century Europe. However, he also points to competing frameworks emerging in Asia and non-Western countries that seem to have had a growing impact not only on ways to conduct anthropological research but also on the ways in which anthropologists, especially those from Western countries, are perceived by the societies they purport to study. He also points out how the spread of Buddhism in Western countries may have impacted Western