

l'anecdote de ses réponses aux Chimane cherchant à comprendre la parenté française est tout à fait savoureuse. Notons que l'histoire des Chimane devrait intéresser tous les américanistes du seul fait que, suite aux épidémies, la société ancienne s'est effondrée au XIX^e siècle et que les survivants ont créé une société distincte réinventée sous un mode nouveau qui s'éloigne assez radicalement de l'organisation sociale antérieure. Un cas exceptionnel de rupture de tradition culturelle et de capacité à faire du neuf sur les cendres du vieux.

La seconde moitié du livre est consacrée à l'étude de la cosmologie dans son sens le plus large, c'est-à-dire à l'analyse de la mythologie, religion, chamanisme et des principaux aspects de la pratique rituelle. Encore ici, l'auteur parcourt et analyse avec élégance des matériaux complexes. Car il faut dire que la cosmologie Chimane est intellectuellement exigeante. Les héros mythiques cheminent sur le sentier du passé qu'emprunteront désormais les morts, la terre s'est autrefois retournée sur ses deux axes vertical et horizontal et ainsi, du coup, le passé était là-bas «avant» et l'avenir sera lui aussi là-bas «après». C'est dire qu'un même lieu représente simultanément le passé et l'avenir des vivants. Autre exemple, certains esprits sont considérés comme vivant au dessus de nous parce qu'ils habitent la montagne, mais en dessous de nous puisqu'ils habitent sous terre. Claude Lévi-Strauss disait avoir appris l'analyse structurale de ses maîtres Bororo et l'on imagine facilement Isabelle Daillant reconnaissant sur le même ton sa dette envers les constructions brillantes et le pur génie de la culture Chimane.

Les Chimane appliquent la notion de renversement à la fois au domaine de la parenté, dans le récit du parcours mythique des ancêtres, puis, dans l'interprétation de l'histoire de la terre et du cycle lunaire. Ces renversements sont des événements historiques qui marquent les débuts du monde, soit des phénomènes cycliques et répétitifs, soit des catastrophes majeures qui pourraient demain se reproduire. Seconde idée centrale de la cosmologie, on utilise un contraste entre les notions d'intérieur et d'extérieur, lequel permet de distinguer parmi différents types de parents, un peu de la même manière que l'on sépare la montagne et la savane. Autrement dit, les Chimane sont des maîtres de la topologie et de l'aménagement dynamique de l'espace. Espace qui peut être à la fois physique, social et mythologique.

Il n'est donc pas surprenant que l'ouvrage se termine sur un retour à la géographie et une mise en situation des Chimane en position intermédiaire au sein d'un vaste système de transformation qui inclut les sociétés andines et celles de l'Amazone. De façon un peu lapidaire, on pourrait dire que si les Andins construisent des modèles sous forme de carré et les Amazoniens adoptent couramment le mode circulaire, les Chimane optent pour une pensée en croix formée par l'intersection de deux axes souvent complémentaires et parfois contradictoires.

Les analyses et les conclusions de cet ouvrage sont-elles discutables? Bien sûr! Mais la discussion sera de très haut niveau.

Nigel Rapport, ed., *British Subjects: An Anthropology of Britain*, Oxford and New York: Berg, 2002, 340 pages.

Reviewer: *Cathrine Degnen*
University of Manchester

Despite its subtitle, *British Subjects* is intended to highlight anthropological endeavour which addresses contemporary Britain rather than, as Rapport writes, to offer a definitive anthropological account of "Britain" or "British." Rapport argues for the strengths of such an approach, as well as the ways anthropology about Britain can be "paradigmatic of the discipline's possibilities, skills and significance" (p. 15). Such aspirations are largely borne out by the collection of 17 essays which make up this volume.

The essays are grouped into five broad topical clusters: *Nationalism, Contestation and the Performance of Tradition; Strategies of Modernity: Heritage, Leisure, Dissociation; The Appropriation of Discourse; Methodologies and Ethnomethodologies; and The Making (and Unmaking) of Community: Ethnicity, Religiosity, Locality*. This placing of chapters within the groupings is well thought out and Rapport has written useful introductions to each cluster, drawing out the thematic intersections amongst the chapters appearing in them. The first cluster begins with Anne Rowbottom's considerations of the paradoxical relationship between hereditary privilege and democracy. Through fieldwork with people who regularly attend events where members of the royal family appear in public, Rowbottom builds an argument about practices of "vernacular religiosity" amongst this dedicated group of people who call themselves "Real Royalists." She demonstrates in turn how Real Royalists alternate between frameworks of difference and of national unity in order to circumnavigate the inherent contradictions of civil religion, constitutional monarchy, and democracy in Britain. The second chapter in this cluster is based on the Isle of Man where Susan Lewis describes a different sort of civic event: Tynwald Day. She traces some of the contested meanings this national day holds and argues that despite such contradictions, the event can still serve as a site of collective identity. Helena Wulff's chapter, exploring national ballet styles, is the final contribution to this section. Her research, based on the British Royal Ballet, demonstrates "the ongoing symbolic construction of national difference in the transnational world of ballet" (p. 79); the ways in which aesthetics, dance styles, performance costumes, rehearsal clothing, and bodily decoration are employed towards these ends; and the contradictions of a discourse of a "national" style in the face of the transnational flow of dancers.

The second topical cluster, *Strategies of Modernity*, begins with a contribution by Sharon Macdonald. She draws on fieldwork at the Museum of Island Life on the Isle of Skye, Scotland, to explore "the 'fetishization' of past everyday life" (p. 89) as a form of cultural practice. Macdonald's illuminating piece describes how once everyday objects (tools, crafts, domestic items, mass-produced goods) come to reside in a museum,

they become in effect sacralized, and in turn “de-alienated” from being “just” commodities. She goes on to contextualize this practice within the particular contours of social uncertainty, arguing that the valorization of everyday things is a way of seeking “existential anchors” (p. 103) in the face of social fragmentation as well as a way perhaps of talking back against an all-pervasive consumerism. The next chapter, from Andrew Dawson, takes up the theme of social upheaval and strategies for managing it but within the context of a former coal-mining town in the north-east of England. Dawson is the first author in the collection to explicitly address gender relations. He does so through an exploration of the ways in which the pursuit of leisure (allotments, writing poetry, attending local football matches) serve to help people “work out” social change, and postindustrial change in particular. Dawson interweaves ethnography of postindustrial transformations, gender relations, and the lived experiences of older people with the notion of leisure practices as cultural resource. The last “strategy of modernity” to be analyzed in this section is that of altered states of consciousness, by Tanya Lurhmann. Lurhmann brings together two sets of research experiences (people practising magic in Britain; an American psychiatric setting) to develop a model of dissociation which can be understood as a “social technology” rather than the pathological state that the psychiatric profession insists all episodes of dissociation to be. She argues that the techniques used by people practising magic are learned social processes, “socially organized and more or less systematically learned” (p. 136). Lurhmann illustrates her argument with a case study of one woman who suffered severe trauma as a child but who did not come to suffer from Multiple Personality Disorder. Rather, she has mastered bodily techniques which spark dissociative states, permitting her to mediate her social environment and life-experience in a positive rather than pathological manner.

In the third cluster, *Appropriation of Discourse*, Allison James’ work on childhood and identity politics is juxtaposed with Jeanette Edwards’ processual approach to scientific understandings of biotechnology and with Sarah Green’s essay on ICTs (information and communication technologies) and social disconnection. James charts the processes of childhood socialization through ethnography with primary schoolchildren in an urban setting in the north of England. She seeks to better understand “how children encounter and respond to...versions of the self as ‘child’ and of ‘childhood’” (p. 144), choosing to focus on one aspect of socialization in particular: children learning that they are relatively powerless in respect to the adults in their lives. By selecting power rather than, say, belonging, the chapter becomes one largely about conflict and antagonism in terms of childhood identities. While this is a perfectly reasonable angle to pursue, James runs the risk of distorting her presentation of childhood identity by not explicitly engaging in a discussion of the implications of focussing on power for the conclusions she draws. Edwards’ contribution also engages with questions of power, but in this case in terms of knowledge. In particular, she is concerned with “what counts

as ‘scientific knowledge’” (p. 163) and wishes to counter the view that the only kind that counts is being able to recite “bits and bytes of information” from a liturgy of knowledge, perceived to be either “quantitatively present or absent” (p. 172). Instead, through ethnography on public understandings of new reproductive and genetic technologies, Edwards demonstrates how engagement with science is also part of everyday life experience and knowledge, and that scientific understandings are not bounded but instead “co-produced” (p. 168). Knowledge of another kind is the subject of Green’s piece in this volume. Like Lurhmann, she synergistically draws on two periods of fieldwork (with lesbian feminists in London in the late 1980s; the Manchester Women’s Electronic Village Hall in the late 1990s). Green starts with an intriguing account of the ideological conflicts confronting a group of lesbian feminists nearly twenty years ago. She shows how within this group “too much connection between differences generated disconnection in located networks” (p. 187), a process that mirrored similar conundrums in a different context in Manchester 10 years later. In response to over-connection, the specific and the located/local became all the more important in both field-sites, and Green explores the implications of networks as a “paradigm for talking about culture” (p. 198) while unpacking some of the hype surrounding ICT.

The fourth cluster takes methodology and the “doing” of fieldwork as its subject. Jenny Hockey reflexively addresses some of the implications the ascendancy of participant-observation has made to the discipline. She argues for interviewing to be seen not as the poor cousin of participant-observation but rather as a window of opportunity to engage in moments of experience which open up insights beyond observable dynamics of human behaviour. Christine Brown, seeking a way through the labyrinthine process of gaining permission from local research ethics committees (LRECs) in order to work with people in high and medium secure psychiatric care, turns her frustrations into reflections on the ways in which gate-keeping powers of LRECs intersect with ethnographic projects. She says that the standardized forms and vocabulary of the LRECs to which all researchers must submit, “rooted in the dialect of bio-medical research” (p. 229), severely handicap researchers employing an ethnographic methodology. Brown argues that the very presence of LRECs and their adjudicating powers reveal significant cultural boundary work in the construction of the other within Britain. Carol Trosset and Douglas Caulkins’ chapter, based on fieldwork in Wales, completes this cluster. They set out to test the ways in which cultural values may or may not be hegemonic and the extent to which such values are linked to ethnicity. In the only non-qualitative contribution to this volume, the authors emphasize their preference for “empirically grounding” (p. 239) their research, but do not convincingly argue for valorizing this approach. Using a program called ANTHROPAC and the approach of consensus analysis, they tested for the hegemonic values of egalitarianism, martyrdom, emotionalism, nostalgia and performance, and analyzed their results according to

three types of groups resident in their field-sites (Welsh-speakers, non-Welsh speakers of Welsh ancestry, and English immigrants). With this data, they then propose four ideological categories for respondents' cultural values of Welshness.

Community is the final topic under consideration. In a sort of cautionary tale about social scientific over-exuberance with the notion of diaspora, Vered Amit reviews the ways in which the concept has been embraced by postcolonial, post-modern, and globalization theorists. She argues that it needs to be treated more critically and uses the ethnographic example of her research amongst London Armenians to think through the implications of "fragmentation, dispersal, transnational contact and hybridity" (p. 274). Often celebrated as liberating aspects of diaspora, Amit demonstrates how the very same characteristics were worried over by Armenians in London she came to know. Additionally, she convincingly elaborates on how the concept threatens to support primordialism and essentialism within anthropology, two ideologies the discipline has struggled for so long against. Peter Collins' chapter in turn draws on Bakhtinian theory to work through a transition in his work: from perceiving a Quaker Meeting in the north of England as being about religion and ritual to coming to understand it instead as being about "discursive venture" (p. 286). Making community and making Quakerism here come through melding discourses of canon, of localised practice, and of individual action. In the last chapter of this cluster, Nigel Rapport unites fieldwork experiences in a small rural village in Cumbria with his reading of *A Room with a View* to highlight the role of a reciprocal physicality (including working, fighting, playing, gossiping, business, and extra-marital affairs) in the forging of community and of belonging. Within this paradigm, the Church and vicar remain perpetually excluded from the community as there is no physical exchange or bodily "doing" of Church or vicar within community life. Finally, the volume as a whole is capped by Anthony Cohen's epilogue. Cohen traces three stages of development of an anthropology about Britain which serves nicely to historicize and contextualize the authors' contributions within the volume. He also asks "how does the anthropology of Britain enhance our understanding of Britain" (p. 326), and proposes that an anthropological concern with disclosing and interrogating "otherness" has been a significant, ongoing, contribution.

Taken individually, each chapter is imaginative and thought-producing about different aspects of contemporary Britain, and the volume as whole is a good introduction to the range of possibilities offered by anthropology. However, despite Rapport's clear statement that the volume makes no pretence of offering a comprehensive account of "Britishness," I am left wondering why not. In a volume about Britain, it does not seem unreasonable to try and go beyond demonstrating diversity of social life and of research questions. Why are studying sociocultural practices, processes and conditions privileged over trying to say something more generalisable (without needing to be fixed and unchangeable) about Britishness or

Englishness or Welshness or Scottishness, or indeed the state of these categories themselves? This question is not directed only at this particular volume, but more broadly at the sub-discipline as a whole (by which I also implicate my own work). Can and should an anthropology of Britain go further to say something broader and bolder about Britishness *et al.*, or are these containers just so leaky as to be meaningless? If so, thinking through possibilities as to why this might be the case offers a rich vein of intellectual endeavour to be pursued.

Thomas A. Gregor and Donald Tuzin, eds., *Gender in Amazonia and Melanesia: An Exploration of the Comparative Method*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001, 343 pages.

Reviewer: *Ellen E. Facey*
University of Northern British Columbia

This is a collection of 14 articles, the first of which is Thomas Gregor's and Donald Tuzin's "theoretical orientation." Even from the Acknowledgments, it is clear that Gregor and Tuzin are proud, and justifiably so, to have produced "...the first book to systematically compare the cultures of Melanesia and Amazonia, and to consider the remarkable parallels and illuminating differences that exist between them" (p. ix). Taking the two regions as one (the imaginary "Melazonia," as Hugh-Jones dubs it) is a big task, and one that I suspect many anthropologists have wondered about, but found too daunting to take further than imagining what might explain those parallels and differences. So I congratulate the editors on putting together this project. They are also to be commended, as are the other authors, for doing what is all too seldom done in relatively large collections of articles: each author specifically engages other contributors' articles; in addition, each article is introduced by a paragraph which briefly summarizes the focus of the article and recommends other articles that could fruitfully be read in relation to it.

Gregor and Tuzin's introduction reviews the history of comparative method in the discipline, particularly in American anthropology. They assert that comparison is indeed possible and, in fact, is anthropology's primary contribution. They choose gender as the organizing principle for their comparison because "...the resemblance among the societies in Melazonia that stands out most dramatically is gender" (p. 8). Moreover, "[Gender] is an inherently integrative subject, bringing together intellectual perspectives derived from such diverse areas as human biology, environmental studies, psychology, social anthropology, and the humanities" (p. 8).

As the editors point out (p. 10), Descola is the only contributor who takes issue with this perspective, arguing that gender is not so central, at least in Amazonia. However, I question the conclusions of a researcher who refers to gender as a "fashionable anthropological topic" (p. 92) and who