

## Reviews

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*Mayan People Within and Beyond Boundaries: Social Categories and Lived Identity in Yucatán.* By Peter Hervik. New York: Routledge, 2003. Pp. xxxi + 214, figures, maps, illustrations, tables, bibliography, index.

In *Mayan People Within and Beyond Boundaries* anthropologist Peter Hervik presents a challenge to both popular and academic understandings of Yucatec Mayan identity, which he claims have been largely constructed externally to the communities in question. He bases his book on fieldwork begun in 1989 in the town of Oxkutzcab in southern Yucatán. Hervik's primary argument is that the social categories used by outsiders (academics, the popular media, and the tourism industry) to represent Mayan peoples are predicated on flawed assumptions about cultural continuity with the pre-Hispanic past. All-encompassing categories such as "the Maya" do not reflect the historically complex and internally differentiated subjectivities that today comprise ethnic communities in Yucatán. The author maintains that residents of Oxkutzcab and other southern Yucatec communities, in fact, are more likely to self-identify as *mestizo* than Maya.

Hervik takes a deconstructionist approach to ethnic categorization firmly grounded in postmodern critiques of cultural representation. At the same time, he is clearly apprehensive about the literary turn in anthropology, which he believes has permitted discourse analysis to become the sole "object and means of post-modern ethnography" (163). He is particularly critical of works

that privilege the self-reflexivity of the author over the lived experiences of informants. As a corrective, he offers an analysis of Yucatec social categories based on what he terms "shared social experience" (xxvii). This approach, according to Hervik, considers the social positions and relationships of all the individual actors in the field: informants, the ethnographer, as well as other researchers. A holistic understanding of the fieldwork encounter ideally leads to an analysis that considers the dialectic nature of ethnic identity formation; this includes lived social experiences that lie beyond the confines of language.

Hervik begins his work with a description of the Maya themselves. In Chapter One he introduces the reader to Oxkutzcab and the surrounding region by way of historical overview. He quickly moves through the pre-Hispanic, colonial, post-independence, and post-revolutionary eras, finally reaching the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the bulk of his research was carried out. He lays out a socioeconomic profile of the community, based on indicators such as population growth, native language use, and changing patterns of land use. In the second chapter, Hervik describes the historical conditions out of which various Yucatec social categories (e.g. *mestizo*, *catrín*, *gente de vestido*) emerged. Importantly, he discusses how the term *mestizo* came to be the primary self-identifier for "those people whom we normally speak of as the Maya" (26). Hervik reminds his reader that, elsewhere in Mexico, *mestizo* typically referred to persons of mixed Spanish and indigenous ancestry. However, during the Yucatán

Caste War of the nineteenth century, *mes-tizo* was specifically used to denote pacified Yucatec Mayas, as opposed to the Maya rebels who continued to resist political and economic subordination.

After briefly describing the Mayan history and culture, Hervik turns, in Chapter Three, to focus on external representations of "the Maya." Hervik devotes considerable space to de-constructing visual and textual representations from *National Geographic*, as well as providing somewhat less detailed analyses of sixteenth-century Spanish accounts of Yucatán and newspaper articles, from 1990, about the threat posed to traditional Mayan culture by expanding Protestant sects. In Chapter Four, he moves back to a discussion of social categories and the construction of ethnic identity, arguing that there is little continuity between pre-Hispanic and present-day Mayan society. Finally, in subsequent chapters of the book, Hervik attempts to bolster this claim with ethnographic materials drawn from interactions with a local theater troupe, community festival organizers, and other cultural brokers involved in Mayan revitalization projects. He also includes a brief account of his own experience negotiating the presence of another outsider who arrived to conduct fieldwork in Oxkutzcab. The concluding section of the book theorizes about the "shared social experience" model of ethnographic research. He argues for its usefulness not only in capturing the lived experiences of social actors, but also in producing a critically engaged, self-reflexive ethnography.

Although Hervik's basic premise is provocative, his methodological ap-

proach and analysis are less convincing. One of the most notable inconsistencies is found in his insistence on using "shared social experience" as an analytic frame. On one hand he is critical of external representations of the "voiceless" Maya (85). Yet, with the exception of a few select indigenous cultural brokers featured in the final chapters, the people of Oxkutzcab are woefully under-represented in his text. The relatively thin ethnographic data offered in Chapters Five and Six do not adequately demonstrate the complex matrix of social relations in which external representations of Mayan communities circulate and are contested or transformed by a broad spectrum of social actors. Moreover, the reader is left uncertain as to how Hervik's shared "social experience" approach is different from the best reflexive ethnography, which necessarily takes into account the ethnographer, informants, and other researchers in the field.

Hervik's treatment of the social categories operating in Oxkutzcab ultimately serves to reinscribe monolithic notions of identity. Although perhaps not self-identifying as Maya, he maintains that "the people who live in Oxkutzcab share a single cultural identity, regardless of the fact that they identify themselves by different terms and that different social groups exist" (26). Once again, Hervik does not provide convincing ethnographic evidence as to how he came to this conclusion. His claims appear to be based on a handful of cases in which self-appointed cultural brokers, themselves occupying a certain class position, assert a particular vision of local identity. Furthermore, despite

Hervik's preoccupation with self-reflexivity, he does not consider his own racial/class position as a male European researcher in the community and the limitations it may pose. More critically, he does not acknowledge how he himself is producing yet another singular representation of "the Maya," the term that he uses throughout the text.

It also bears mentioning that this book, first published in 1999 and again in 2003, relies heavily on statistical data and ethnographic materials from one, and even two decades earlier. Surely Oxkutzcab, like many other ethnic and rural communities throughout Mexico, has witnessed a number of demographic shifts in the past fifteen years. This book needs to be updated to include a discussion of current socioeconomic trends, as well as the considerable body of recent literature devoted to this topic. Hervik is well justified in his critique of earlier Mayanists' representations of the region. Nevertheless, the post-1980s scholarship on Yucatec communities, and identity politics generally, has often rejected the reified social categories of which he is critical in favor of locally meaningful terms of identification and cultural production. For a book in its second edition with a well-respected publisher, it also contains a surprising number of typographical and grammatical errors. Not only does this, at times, distract the reader from the author's discussion, but it also lends an unprofessional feel to the text as a whole.

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*Making Music in the Polish Tatras: Tourists, Ethnographers, and Mountain Musicians.* By Timothy J. Cooley. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005. Pp. xvii+293, introduction, glossary, notes, references cited, illustrations, index, compact disc.

Relying heavily on his own position as an ethnographer and musician, Timothy J. Cooley's latest book *Making Music in the Polish Tatras: Tourists Ethnographers and Mountain Musicians* carefully employs an oft-used ethnomusicological model wherein the subjects of music and cultural dynamism guide the ethnomusicologist who offers us a historically and ethnographically dynamic look into the music of a particular region; in Cooley's case, the music of Southern Poland's mountains. Positioned between the geography of its locale and the social community of its musicians, Cooley's stance view focuses on at the process of playing mountain music in the Tatra region of Poland as part of a dialogue between himself and his subjects mapped out in part by previous ethnographers and tourists. The Górale people, the music they play, and the ethnographer are all actors in the challenge of interpreting song definition, cultural questions, and the relationship between music and region (250). While attempting to foreground interpretation, Cooley frames all his questions of place, modernity, history, and globalism as part of a regional and cultural specificity, embodying Górale ethos and the musical culture of the Tatra region.

From the outset, Cooley outlines the important relationship between the ethnographer and the mountain musician as typified in the historical characters of Dr. Tytus Chałubiński and guide Jan Kreptowski-Sabała (introduction). Cooley credits Chałubiński with promoting the Tatra region as a tourist destination and what Cooley refers to as "brokering" Górale cultural practices; by this the author means the ethnographic work on the promotion of music that was often done in tandem in Chałubiński's work (104). Jan Kreptowski-Sabała represents an indigenous and authentic construction of Górale ethnicity, as reified by tourism and cultural promotion, whose local knowledge and relationship to the urban *inteligencja* (Polish "intellectuals") expanded the scope of Górale cultural ethos; he reaped the benefits of Chałubiński's desire to promote Górale culture by providing the musical material that seemed to embody as transient, but tangible, sense of Górale culture. Cooley attempts to form the same relationship with his informants. Like Chałubiński and Kreptowski-Sabała, his position follows the same route already traced by ethnographers and their subjects in search of musical representations of Górale culture.

While this relationship frames the discussion of the book, Cooley proceeds conservatively into his ethnography by describing representative examples of *Muzyka Podhala* (Music of Podhale, also called *muzyka górala*). In his first chapter, entitled "Podhale," he provides detailed transcriptions of vocal and instrumental genres, music for dancing, and the song texts themselves, ultimately at-

tempting to present contextually the way in which these songs types occur in the everyday musical culture of the Górale people. Here Cooley is mainly concerned with showing how the production of *muzyka górala*, whether on the festival stage, or at the restaurant, funeral, or after after-hours gathering, "situationally" invokes contradictory and problematic representations of identity not easily described by a unilateral definition of Górale identity (61). The ethnomusicologist's concern for a music's ability to represent a community's cultural practices, no matter its context, also takes its cue from modernist scholastics as exercised by the urban Polish academics who came in and out of the mountains for both pleasure and research purposes. Cooley's most engaging chapter on the history of ethnography in Podhale, entitled "Making Mountain Music," sheds further light on the issue of modern constructions of *Muzyka Podhala*. The strength of the story he tells lies in the way he historically aims at linking tourism and travel with the cultural brokering and ethnography that accompanied late nineteenth century urban discoveries of the Tatras (85).

Such a historical examination provides a much-needed look at some of the questions of European comparative musicology, particularly in its reevaluation of Central and Eastern European models of folklore and song collecting. As Cooley implies, the essentialisms generated by city-dwelling ethnographers in their definitions of Górale music prove to be productive for indigenous musical practice itself in that the academic interest in the music legitimizes the peculiar-

ity of Podhale's music. In the chapters following Cooley's history of ethnography in Podhale, the study expands panoramically as musical globalism and Jamaican Rastafarianism become tourists in the Górale's mountains. While the cultural brokering of ethnographers succeeded in essentializing Górale identity and musical practice, Cooley's transposition of that very essentialized identity into the complex space of globalism and world music presents new challenges and contradictions. The highly defined and geographically bound category of Muzyka Podhala exists in tandem with world music in that on the festival stage Muzyka Podhala is neither the same as other "world musics" nor is it different; such globalist aesthetics succeed in making the far-off familiar. The reason for this, according to Cooley, lies in the constructed sense of self Górale musicians make whether they play for a multicultural crowd on the festival stage, with Rastafarian reggae artists, for tourists in restaurants, or for their own community at funerals.

While the author heavily leans on culturally centered Górale motivations for identity construction, he only tentatively lays out the contradictory, but productive relationship inherent in the collision of rigid identities and suddenly expansive global interactions. The parallels between early modernism's ethnographic and tourist venture in Podhale remain to be studied extensively, though the productiveness of this relationship is very clear in Cooley's explanation. That is to say, the modernist and nationalist interest in researching Muzyka Podhala in Górale helped to create a musical ideal

beyond that of a reified subject beyond something simply constructed. Cooley alludes. There is an economic process linked with the research via tourism in that researchers and tourists are both paying money to see and hear supposedly "constructed" musical and cultural practice. A question that remains is if remuneration for musicians through tourism helped in creating the salient examples of Muzyka Podhala in both the eyes of the researcher and the Górale community.

For example, in his chapter "Village for Hire," Cooley describes a restaurant with different floors for each type of music found in the Podhale region replete with matching decor for each musical genre (205). This restaurant, with Roma music on one floor, the Górale music on another rustically decorated floor, and a disco on the top floor, is not unlike the archive or the song catalogue of previous ethnographers venturing to the mountains as tourists themselves. The need to compartmentalize song types for either scholastic or tourist purposes seems strikingly similar especially as Cooley has already demonstrated that a sense of a specific Górale culture and music emerged out of the economics of both research and tourism.

Perhaps these markets as well as rigid definitions of a geographic self and music emerge from the way both tourism and folklorics thus magnify the peculiarities of place while at the same time submerging them. It is a contradiction much like the globalist stage of world music and Cooley wisely addresses the musical relationship between reggae musicians the Twinkle Brothers and a Górale



family-band called Tutki as brokered by radio producer Włodzimirz Kleszez. At this point the CD included with the book becomes more exciting to the listener because while one can hear related song types in Cooley's track selection, the Górale-Rastafarian fusion project with its reggae dub and Tatra music patches appears stark and awkward in its contradictions. Cooley emphasizes that while identity was a motivating factor for the fusion project vis-à-vis the parallels in cultural values, the audience for this music was made up of tourists and not the local Górale who normally attend events featuring Muzyka Podhala (185).

While the contradictions of such musical fusion projects, in their attempts to be specific while simultaneously universal, appear under the banner of globalism, Cooley gives us more examples of how this music simply perpetuates more placeless and contradictory music. The broadest example is that propagating a niche and aesthetic (even if it is mixed-up) means Górale musicians will create spin-offs that are increasingly more contradictory. These take the form of tributes to Bob Marley by Górale musicians and technomusic remixes whose only aim is to propagate a message by employing only the general sound of Muzyka Podhala. There is nothing particularly Górale in a dub mix by the Twinkle Brothers or a techno reworking of Górale music, but it is labeled as such and seems to grow out of a market fed by tourists and then analyzed by academics. Similarly, the producer Włodzimirz Kleszez's translation and cover of a Bob Marley tune sounds nothing like reggae. This song seems to em-

body this contradiction. As Cooley states, "They use a de-reggaed reggae song to sing about their own music" (195).

After looking at Górale music from several angles, taking it through global stages with World Musicians, restaurants beneath discos, and the wax cylinders of the region's early ethnographers, at its end Cooley's book returns to the Górale village. The last chapter "Back to the Village" returns to the town of Zakopane with an ethnography of funeral performances of Muzyka Podhala. He then follows up with an anxious and self-reflexive epilogue entitled "Village Exhumed" in which he presents an edgy interpretation of another Górale, fusion techno mix. The juxtaposition is productive and highlights Cooley's facility for posing difficult questions about the ethnographer's process. Ethnomusicology's direction has long been charted by ethnographers asking questions about musical and cultural change and Cooley stays squarely within this paradigm as he researches Muzyka Podhala. Though the book is written according to this conservative, context-centered approach, Cooley adroitly expands its scope a little by hinting at wider interpretations of Górale musical practice that perhaps lay farther afield. By examining the inheritance of tourism and research in the Tatra region's musical practices, Cooley does something new in ethnomusicology by eschewing his field's tendency to write only unproblematized histories of the present. Instead, more of the contradictory discourses in Muzyka Podhala over time come to the surface via Cooley's astute observations and historical analysis.

Researching the historicity of discourses on musical practice, as Cooley does, benefits ethnomusicology and signals an interesting and important direction for future ethnomusicology research and writing.

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*Baseball and Country Music*. By Don Cusic. A Ray and Pat Browne Book. Ray B. Browne and Pat Browne, eds. Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press/The Popular Press, 2003. Pp. 182, notes, bibliographical essay, bibliography, index.

**I**n *Baseball and Country Music*, Cusic offers the reader a historical account of country music and baseball as both forms of entertainment and evolving industries, beginning with their inception in the United States and continuing up to the present. Cusic is a professor of Music Business at the Mike Curb College of Entertainment and Music Business at Belmont University as well as an author, songwriter, and music industry insider in Nashville, Tennessee. He has an extensive publishing history, having written or edited fourteen books on various aspects of country music, including biographies of Eddy Arnold and *Riders in the Sky*.

Cusic's professional background in the music business puts him in a unique position to comment upon the economic and institutional contexts within which country music took shape, many of which, as the author shows, were equally relevant to the development of baseball. He explores these contexts as they took shape in response to significant changes and social forces in American culture, including the impact of World War II, the changing landscape of popular music and the music industry, the advent of suburbs and increased attendance at colleges and universities, and the growth and development of radio and television. Cusic attempts to employ multiple lenses

in his history, including some attention to changes in baseball and country music with regard to class, race, ethnicity, and gender.

Cusic's vision of the core connection between baseball and country music, however, goes beyond their historicity. At the heart of Cusic's book are his attempts to connect both baseball and country music to an essence that is timeless and quintessentially American. Cusic claims that both baseball and country music are somehow microcosms of an American "character" and professional pathways to an "American dream," a dream achievable by the stars and players and experienced vicariously by the masses. As microcosm, Cusic writes, "The story of baseball tells us a lot about America, and so does the story of country music. Each is supremely American, and each presents a unique history of America, particularly during the twentieth century" (3). Although this point is never overtly explored, it serves as a constant subtext for the book, occasionally emerging explicitly in Cusic's prose. For instance, Cusic writes:

Both baseball and country music have taken people who were born without social status, money, and connections but with great talent and allowed them to rise to the top and become heroes. Coming from a working-class background and ending up on top of the world is the American dream. Baseball and country music both deliver that dream, and you can't get more American than that." (146)

For Cusic, the idea of individual triumph over socially constraining circumstances is at the heart of the connection between baseball and country music and is what marks them as American in character, and the celebrities of both are representatives that embody this achievement for fans and enthusiasts. As Cusic elaborates:

...what baseball and country music have most in common is the ability to provide entertainment for their fans. They touch the lives of the many who sing only in the shower or watch baseball only from an armchair but nonetheless find in country music artists and baseball players something that transcends the ordinary and takes those born without wealth, privilege, or social status and turns them into heroes by virtue of their natural talents, dedication, and hard work. In other words, both baseball and country music are tickets to the American Dream. (9)

Cusic's efforts to connect baseball and country music do, however, stray beyond such bold generalizing statements, and are at their most effective and interesting in the details. His accounts of the shift in both baseball and country music from a lower-class to a middle-class pastime, for example, are particularly illuminating. As Cusic summarizes in his introduction:

The story of class and wealth in American society is a touchy one, because Americans generally refuse to admit to living in a class-based society. But the simple fact remains that baseball and country music both have



their roots in the white working class and early on were looked down upon by the upper classes and considered entertainment for roughs and rowdies, the great unwashed masses. Both have fought against this stereotype and become the sport and music of the middle class. In Nashville the city fathers intensely disliked the image of country music taking over "the Athens of the South" image they had carefully and assiduously cultivated. Upper-crust Nashville saw itself as a bastion of high culture, and country music shattered that image. Still, the city's elite managed to keep those in country music on the outside of "respected" society—that is, until money changed everything. Country music and musicians made too much money for the elite to ignore them. (6, 7).

Cusic's detailed description of the tensions between the live attendance of baseball games and country music events and the radio and television broadcasting of these events is also interesting. As Cusic explains, in the early days of baseball and country music, radio provided important revenue streams as well as a means for amassing larger audiences. While the advent of television provided the same benefits, it also hurt both industries by undermining their appeal to live audiences. "For baseball this meant fewer fans paid to see games; for country music it meant being saddled with an image of yokels and rubes that the industry would work hard for years to overcome" (107). The early years of television saw baseball and country music appearing on television primarily through local shows in major

cities such as Chicago, with occasional network exposure. The country shows that originated from Chicago and New York were "yokel-type shows that featured rube comedy" (104). As a result, while television helped baseball become "...a sport loved by the middle class, country music was generally shunned by the middle class, which viewed the genre as backward, uncouth, and low class" (107).

Other efforts at forging the connection between baseball and country music, however, are frequently sprinkled throughout the text as generalizing statements that are not further explored or supported. Take, for example, this passage:

Through the first half of the twentieth century, New York and Chicago each had major league teams—the Yankees, Dodgers, and Giants in New York and the Cubs and White Sox in Chicago. And since many country artists were baseball fans, and since many baseball players came from the South, it is logical to conclude that there was some connection between the worlds of baseball and country music in New York and Chicago. However, that connection was most evident in Los Angeles and Nashville, where top minor league teams played and where a number of country artists lived. (35)

In this example, Cusic wants us to believe that the connection between the worlds of baseball and country music is logically deducible; country artists were baseball fans and came from the South, many baseball players also came from the South, so, logically, when they both

ended up in New York and Chicago, there was a correlation. Perhaps, but Cusic leaves the passage quoted above with no further explanation or supporting information, making statements such as this look tenuous at best.

As a further example, take Cusic's description of the effects of Boots Poffenberger's violent reaction to an umpire's decision that resulted in the end of his career in the Southern Association:

He never played in the Southern Association again. Fans from that time remember him as "looney" even on his best days. Such antics were not unknown to early country music performers either, and it was usually booze that caused the trouble. (61)

Here we are left wondering: which performers? Is Cusic suggesting that there was some shared aspect of the professional lifestyle of both baseball players and country musicians that contributed to their violent behavior and alcoholism? As in the example above, statements of this kind ask the reader to accept its claims without articulating the questions that emerge or offering any evidence to support them. In a book whose title suggests a detailed exploration of the relationship between baseball and country music, all too frequently, when connections between the two are highlighted, they beg for more explication.

While the vagueness of some of his arguments is, at times, problematic, Cusic does sometimes successfully illuminate his intended connections, most often when providing specific examples of how baseball and country music crossed paths in the lives of individual

people. His detailed description of Bill Monroe's passion for both baseball and "country music" (bluegrass in particular) is one such instance:

Monroe went on to create bluegrass music, named after his group, and formed a baseball team made up of his band mates who, before the concerts, played exhibition games against a number of minor league teams in the South. Monroe pitched and played first base. Because he was so infatuated with baseball, Monroe often made his decisions about hiring musicians for his band with additional consideration based on how well they played ball. Banjo player Stringbean was a good pitcher, which added to his value as a musician. (56)

Furthermore, Monroe's Bluegrass All-Stars played baseball on the road for exercise, and even used baseball games to promote their performances. Cusic quotes an advertisement in *Billboard* magazine from April 30, 1949: "Bill Monroe will carry a baseball team with him again this summer in conjunction with his personal tour. Monroe intends to line up fifteen players, some of whom will double in his show set for the evening" (56).

*Baseball and Country Music* is more a historical survey of two parallel cultural domains painted in broad strokes than a focused, critical analysis of specific aspects of American culture. As a survey, the researcher will find many potential connections between baseball and country music glossed here that could be explored in greater detail in future work. Cusic's bibliographic notes, which elaborate on the sources in his bibliography

that he found most helpful, are particularly useful for the researcher. Additionally, fans of country music and/or baseball will enjoy Cusic's investigation into the institutional history and connections between these two interests, and the author's extensive knowledge and experience as both an artist and business executive in country music do provide fresh insights into relatively unexplored topical territory.

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*Ad-Hoc Arabism: Advertising, Culture, and Technology in Saudi Arabia.* By Roni Zirinski. (New York: Peter Lang, 2005. Pp. xiv + 176, introduction, epilogue, notes, bibliography, index, illustrations.)

**A***d-Hoc Arabism* holds as its central premise that advertising is able to convince consumers to buy products by "identify[ing] the reader's desires, hopes, tastes, and yearnings" and then convincing the readers that a product will fulfill them (9). Therefore, a close analysis of advertisements can reveal the culturally specific yearnings of consumers. Drawing on ads in the weekly family magazine *Sayiddati*, Roni Zirinski sets out to do this for contemporary Saudi Arabia. He argues that the primary framework for Saudi Arabian advertisements is "Arabism in the essential sense of the word" (3). Although Saudi culture contains conflicting ideologies, such as Saudism, Wahhabism, and Westernism, Arabism works as a larger reference to bind them into a fantasy that will resonate with all consumers.

The main body of the book is divided into six chapters, which provide an in-depth examination of the visual and linguistic techniques advertisers utilize to market often non-Saudi products to Saudi consumers. Zirinski categorizes the chapters by product: automobiles; food ads; cosmetics and personal care products; electronics, leisure, and recreation; and pens, writing and grammar. Within these chapters, he uses specific ads to demonstrate how the advertisements appeal to, and reinforce the Saudi conception of self. Zirinski shows how

non-Arabic brand names are transformed so that they will sound prettier on the Arab tongue, shifting vowel sounds and often condensing two word names into one word. As further evidence of this process, in his chapter on food he shows how Kelloggs uses advertisements to redefine its products from being considered to be a breakfast food into being seen as fit for a pre-dawn meal during Ramadan.

Foremost among the book's strengths is Zirinski's demonstration of how Western products become Saudi ones. He provides an interesting, well-defended interpretation of advertising as essentially a conservative force. For him, the global economy is not one in which the West uses goods to impose its values upon helpless non-Western societies. Instead, advertising reflects and draws upon culture to make consumers think of global products as local ones. Another strength is his ability to explain complex theories clearly enough so that readers from multiple disciplines will be able to follow his arguments. Additionally, he structures his chapters around products rather than themes. This allows him to describe each ad in precise detail, which is helpful as many of the ads are not reproduced and those that are have been squeezed four to a page.

The drawback to this organizational structure is the lack of discussion of larger themes. For example, in the first chapter, Zirinski discusses how a series of ads for the Swiss watch brand Concord portrays Saudi women to construct a Saudi Arabian fantasy. He emphasizes the importance of the women's veiled dress, particularly the way their face

veils' slits place focus on their eyes. However, in ads in other chapters, not only are the women's entire faces often uncovered, but at times their hair and clothing as well. A thematic approach would allow him to discuss this discrepancy, but the topical approach buries it. As a result, the chapters have the feel of independent articles arguing the same main point rather than component pieces that combine to build an argument.

A more serious drawback comes from Zirinski's following of Derrida's belief that "there is nothing outside the text" (13). Although it is clear from his acknowledgements and his mastery of Arabic that Zirinski has spent extensive time in Saudi Arabia, he does not refer to interviews (either formal or informal), surveys, or focus group results when he presents interpretations. When his arguments focus on the ads' formal features, this is not a problem. When he makes assertions about how readers interpret the ads (for example, that Saudi women interpret images of independent Western women as "no more than a dream; or perhaps even an antigenic vaccine against the possibility of cultural revolution ... meant to release pressure" (133), he is on much shakier ground.

The lack of reference to readers' actual responses also makes his decision to present only one possible interpretation for the ads questionable; at times, the ads suggest alternatives. For example, in his analysis of an ad for Häagen-Dazs ice cream, he explores only how the tropes of forbidden pleasure would appeal to men. His reasoning is that the text is addressed to men. However, the visuals of the ad suggest

women's romance: three women smile in the background while looking at the woman in the foreground, who gazes at a picture and talks on the phone. If the text can appeal to men despite their absence in the visual, then surely the visuals can appeal to women despite the lack of feminine second person in the text. His decision to discuss only one possibility is consistent with his argument that advertisers strive "to produce a message that will limit the reader's freedom of interpretation" (9). However, he also establishes that *Sayiddati* has a varied readership and that contemporary Saudi society is heterogeneous. Without discussion of readership reception, it seems as possible that he is assuming what is convenient for his overall thesis as it is that he is fulfilling his aspiration to "describe how a contemporary Saudi reader, whether consciously or unconsciously, might interpret these texts" (6).

Zirinski's overall argument that advertising in Saudi Arabia appeals to culturally distinctive fantasies is convincing; however, his arguments about what constitutes those fantasies are not. Therefore, this book will be most useful to readers interested in the general idea of how advertising functions in a global world or to scholars of Saudi Arabia who will benefit from the descriptive detail but who have the background to critically examine the interpretations. Due to the lack of ethnographic support for his claims, it will be less useful to readers interested in contemporary culture in the Middle East.

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*The Virtual*. By Rob Shields. Key Ideas. London and New York: Routledge, 2003. Pp xvi + 246, introduction, notes, bibliography, index, illustrations.

**T**he *Virtual*, a volume in a series of equally ambitious titles (*Culture and Racism* are other titles in the Key Ideas series), is not a survey of literature on the virtual, but instead represents the author's own relationship to the subject. Thus Rob Shields' study takes an unwieldy concept and grounds it, for the most part, in everyday experiences. The virtual is integral to both work and play; it supports the continuous function of economies at local and global levels, and provides imaginary spaces for escapist fantasies. Each chapter presents a different approach to the virtual, offering readers an expansive, yet focused, view of the virtual that Shields patches together in a portrait of contemporary life. Shields begins by showing that the virtual is not synonymous with the digital or the simulated. Nor, he argues, is the concept entirely new. Virtuality has an established history in religion, philosophy, and the visual arts. Thus a contemporary treatment of the virtual ought not limit itself to cyberboosters, video games, or dot.coms. Instead Shields argues, "The virtual has become a key organizing idea for government policies, everyday practices and business strategies" (xv). As such, a historically broad and nuanced consideration of the virtual is important for cultural studies. Shields carefully tracks the relationship of the virtual to material reality, taking account of people that virtual technologies and theories of the virtual have tended to displace or ignore.

Shields begins his analysis of virtuality with sixteenth-century debates over the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. "[T]he conversion of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ [was] actually real, material body and blood, insisted the Church. 'Virtually real,' argued Reformation theologians" (5). The virtual is defined in part by its proximity as well as its opposition to the actual; the sacrament is *essentially* Christ's flesh and blood according to Protestants, but is not *actually* so. This disjuncture between the virtual but real 'in essence' and the actual frames Shields' discussion. He relates the virtual to dreams, memories, and absent presences. Although lacking concreteness, the virtual is no less real or consequential for its intangibility. Virtuality is further linked to the *virtuous*; to spirituality, liturgy, and ritual as an ideal, a perfected and/or imagined but 'impossible' reality. Examples of virtuality as experienced reality include embodiments of the divine or supernatural, liminal zones, altered states, and periods of (social) transformation. The virtual contains within it the ideals of a society, whether manifested as embodying divinity through the sacrament or discarding cumbersome and needy physical bodies in virtual reality environments. "'Virtual' is a space," Shields argues, "it is places, relationships, and implies values" (20).

These relationships and values are of primary importance for Shields. He notes that cyberspace as imagined by science fiction writer William Gibson "describes the type(s) of social world that VR [virtual reality] might afford" (52). Cyberspace offered itself as "a haven for

those who are otherwise labeled deviant or feel the restriction of social and moral discipline too strongly" (60). Cyberspace thus provides a liminoid space (akin to Victor Turner's liminal space, but evacuated of the transformative power associated with rites of passage) where experimentations with or expressions of otherwise socially unacceptable identities can occur. As Lisa Nakamura and others have pointed out, however, this may be more problematic than it seems at first glance. The Internet also fosters what might be termed 'identity tourism' where users can be a virtual 'other' (through avatars, etc.) without experiencing material repercussions for the identities assumed in virtual environments. Users thus misunderstand what it is to *be* 'other' as a result of their ability to *play* 'other.'

While Shields does give attention to philosophers of the virtual, such as Henri Bergson and Gilles Deleuze, they remain of cursory importance to this project. In this regard, readers do not need to be familiar with the philosophical texts underlying Shields' work to benefit from this book. Indeed, Shields' real success is not his adaptation of Deleuze and other theorists of the virtual as an abstract concept, but his discussion of the virtual in everyday life, particularly in its redefinition of contemporary labor patterns. Shields criticizes the dehumanization of communication through the circulation of data that has replaced social networks as mechanisms of informational exchange (133-134). He argues that workers are further alienated from their labor in virtualized workplaces because they no longer deal directly with mate-



rial objects. Embodied knowledge required to produce goods or perform intricate surgical procedures is replaced with mechanical processes. Now workers manipulate signs, images, and code as machines output standardized products (130-132).

Shields also criticizes the tyranny of work under the current regime of ubiquitous computing and endless data-management. There is no escape from the digital virtual technologies impinging upon the private sphere: telemarketers place carefully-timed calls based on database profiles of virtual consumers; employees work from home or on the road and are encouraged to stay 'in the loop' with cellular phones, e-mail, and other forms of instant communication. "The job never ends" for workers who have "acquiesce[d] in becoming *cyberserfs-virtual slaves* to technology and to organizations because of their surrender of control over their own *attention* (96-97, original emphasis).

While consumers may be reduced to their database counterparts and workers overtaxed by the surveilling presence of employers, the virtual contains yet another dimension. Consumers' relationships with companies or products are based on intangible, virtual qualities. Brand names inspire trust, and their promises of consistency act as a guarantee against risk (177-178). Virtuality is likewise fundamental to assessing safety and security, vulnerability, and danger (184). The virtual is also a mechanism of war, yet is perhaps simultaneously the antithesis of war as we have known it; a negation of war that Jean Baudrillard suggested in his essays on the Gulf

War—a virtual war, a video game without blood or bodies. Shields rightly argues, however, that even wars fought on screens and monitors have actual, material consequences (211).

It is at the point of war that the path Shields traces through the virtual surprisingly comes full circle: the virtual as digital or technological collapses into the virtual as virtuous or ideal. In war, and more specifically in terrorism, technologies are put to use in the service of ideals as a "violent form of communication" (210). Shields explains, "In the hearts of those who sacrifice themselves for their ideals, the virtual reigns over the material." The promise of the hereafter, of justice (itself an impossible ideal), and of recompense takes precedence over and even justifies material consequences (i.e., deaths and injuries). For Shields, terrorism attempts to actualize the virtual, to bring to pass or make concrete an (in this case religious) ideality. Both terrorism and the 'War on Terror' thus represent "war[s] over virtualities, over 'real ideals'" (211). Reversing the argument, Shields states, "Virtual war is terrorism" (211). Virtuous wars, or wars of virtues and competing ideals, are terrorist. One must ask, when are wars fought for reasons other than competing ideals and opposing worldviews? Is all war therefore terrorist? Yes and no; wars fought as an attempt to actualize a religious or political virtue/ideal, presumably thereby imposing that ideal on other bodies, are terrorist in nature. This assessment is, of course, relevant to ongoing debates around the current war in Iraq, which many critics of George W. Bush have long called terrorist. In its theoretic

cal and historical accounting of the virtual, Shields' argument lends credibility to such a characterization of the Iraq war, which might otherwise seem reactionary.

In the end, we must revisit Shields' statement that "'virtual' is a space; it is places, relationships, and implies values" (20). Just what are the values of the virtual, and where will they lead? Shields' open-ended critique is directed not at the virtual per se, but at abstraction—the denial of physical, material realities and their replacement by disembodied and immaterial ideals. Disjoining the ideal from the actual can translate, as we have seen, into violence. As long as the ideal remains an impossibility, something to work toward but which cannot (should not) in actuality be attained, this violence is kept at bay. Thus Marcel Proust's definition of the virtual as "real without being actual, ideal without being abstract" (25) also serves as a caution. The virtual may continue to provide a space for creation and innovation—"virtue," Shields reminds us, "[is] the power to produce results, to have an effect" (3)—but where the virtual lapses into abstraction and dehumanization, that same power and efficacy is deployed toward destructive ends.

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