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The Festive State: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism as Cultural Performance

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substantially less time in the field than Parker, the quality of Kulick's data is impressive. It is specific, detailed, and personal. He hurls this first hand data at more esoteric but less substantial theories of *travesti* identity in order to demonstrate the essential humanity of his subjects. Using a rhetorical style that reflects his precarious position as neither insider nor outsider, he achieves a voice that is convincing as it is humble. Although he occasionally overgeneralizes from his localized dataset, Kulick's work exemplifies the idea that there is no substitute for nuanced ethnographic perception.

In all honesty, I am aware that I am making an unfair comparison. Despite their overlapping subject matters, Parker and Kulick attempt very different projects. Whereas Parker approaches analytically a multiplicity of cultural phenomena, Kulick delves ethnographically into a singly localized community. If Parker's text seems somewhat dry, it is because he systematically covers an immense amount of material. If I am tempted to praise Kulick for an enlightening and emotionally engaging text, it is only because he has a literary flair that serves his subject matter well. Nevertheless, each book offers, in its own way, an exceptional clarification of a frequently misunderstood topic.

The Festive State: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism as Cultural Performance. David M. Guss. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000. ix + 240 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$18.95 (paper), \$48.00 (cloth). ISBN 0-620-22331-4, 0-520-20289-9. [www.ucpress.edu]

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In *The Festive State: Race, Ethnicity and Nationalism as Cultural Performance*, David Guss examines the changing meaning and organization of cultural performance as it is interpreted and claimed by individuals in the service of local, national, and even global interests. His examples, all drawn from Venezuela, are primarily local festivals that have been variously appropriated and altered by external forces. The one exception is a fascinating description of the role an international tobacco company played in promoting and, ultimately, in defining traditional Venezuelan culture.

Guss deliberately chose examples of festive behavior because he believes they are prone to be sites of contested meaning and thus are constantly in flux. The pluralistic nature of festivals allows for the possibility of a "rearticulation of tradition" and "new dimensions of authenticity." Thus, even when local culture is appropriated by outside forces, new local meanings might actually emerge rather than be completely eradicated by the process.

In the first chapter, Guss establishes his premise and sets the stage, so to

speak, for the subsequent chapters. As an introduction to his discussion of “transformed cultural landscapes,” the topic of the book, he describes the story of the “transvestite saint” of Catuaro, Venezuela. Originally thought to be the statue of La Dolorosa, the sorrowful Mary, the statue was cleaned by representatives of the state and revealed to be a male, San Juan Bautista. Details about the true identity of the statue created upset in the community as its members struggled to reassess their relationship to the newly masculine saint.

Guss describes the Fiesta of San Juan in chapter two. As with the subsequent examples, he provides historical context and possible origins of the festival. Locals deliberately marketed the strongly African drum ritual aspect of the festival, placing it in a national context. This plan proved economically successful, but local cultural meaning was co-opted through external reinterpretation by nonlocal festival participants. The festival was re-appropriated years later by locals.

In chapter three, the author describes the “Day of the Monkey.” The festival, a celebration of local indigenous heritage, is held in a *mestizo* farming community that uses the annual event to distinguish itself from its neighbors. Guss ably demonstrates the complexities of interpreting the origins and changing meaning in specific behaviors and symbols present in the festival. He points out that outsider interest, on the part of the media and anthropologists, legitimizes local performance.

Chapter four introduces the one example that is not a festival per se. Here the author introduces the influence of the international corporation, British American Tobacco, on Venezuelan popular culture. Cigarrera Bigott, the Venezuelan arm of the company, established the Bigott Foundation in part to nationalize and indirectly to advertise its product after cigarette advertising was banned in the country. One function of the Bigott Foundation was to provide economic support for Venezuelan traditional culture. Through quality television productions cataloguing traditional performance culture with strategically placed company logos, Cigarrera Bigott was able to build its reputation, disguise its international nature, and promote its product. Guss provides an interesting description of the uneasy alliance that arose between big business and the artistic community in Venezuela, as well as how and why the relationship eventually, inevitably, fell apart. A question of particular interest raised in this chapter is who has the right to define traditional culture.

The last chapter of the book describes the final example of the Tamunangue ritual festival. To some, this festival is the ultimate representation of Venezuelan national identity. However, Guss demonstrates that all is not as it appears as he unravels the misty origins, as well as the past and current meaning, of this complex yet flexible ritual event. Perhaps one of the more interesting alterations in meaning is the transformed role of female participants as the event entered a national context. Female performers became more visible, active, aggressive, and equal to male performers, introducing a change in gender dynamics uncomfortable for some.

Guss provides a fascinating and well-researched history of certain aspects of Venezuelan performance culture. He demonstrates with impressive knowledge the elements affecting various interpretations of the festival performances. Curiously, Guss neglects to include detailed conclusions. An end summary of his main points with explicit comparisons made between the detailed examples described in earlier chapters would have made a much more satisfying finish to what was otherwise an interesting, thought-provoking book.

David Guss' well-written book provides further support for the contention that what is defined as traditional and authentic is constantly being negotiated, ascribed, altered, and even invented by both insiders and outsiders. Interpretations of festive events are likely to be variable both within and through time as competing interests utilize such performances for their own purposes. Furthermore, the identity of the cultural consumer does not necessarily diminish the cultural meaning attached to the object or behavior (though it may alter it). Early in the book Guss issues an important challenge to anthropologists by suggesting that we need to constantly look for better ways to describe and analyze complex social processes such as the negotiated meaning of festive performance.

Deforestation and Land Use in the Amazon. Charles H. Wood and Roberto Porro, editors. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002. xiii + 385 pp., index. \$75.00 (cloth), \$34.95 (paper). ISBN 0-8130-2464-1, ISBN 0-8130-2465-X. [www.upf.com]

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This volume is an outgrowth of the forty-eighth annual conference of the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Florida. The goal of the conference, whose theme was "Patterns and Processes of Land Use and Forest Change in the Amazon," was to promote a constructive dialogue among specialists who interpret satellite images, researchers who focus on the processes that drive resource use decisions, and scholars and activists engaged in community mapping efforts. The volume consists of selected essays from that conference, as well as contributions specifically written for the publication.

The result is a path-breaking volume that combines sophisticated remote sensing, computer mapping, and quantitative analysis with traditional qualitative fieldwork. The fourteen contributions are organized under four headings: National Policies and Regional Patterns; Land Use Decisions and Deforestation; Fires, Pastures, and Deforestation; and Community Participation and Resource Management. Many of the studies employ color