

on events that could have been cultural traumas, but were not, is presented or available. In addition, varieties of the constructivist approach are not debated, and a choice between those approaches is not explicitly made (although the authors seem to be very close to choosing the “contextual constructionism” version). Relevant criticisms of the constructivist approach are not mentioned. Finally, the discussions on collective memory and commemoration ignore some interesting and relevant developments (e.g., the work of Jeffrey Olick or Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi).

This book grabs the reader’s attention and imagination and is intrinsically interesting to read. Not only is it written in a fluent, readable style, but the subject also makes fascinating reading. The concepts, the expansive historical canvas, and the personal-cultural connections are all enticing and provocative ideas, written by scholars who know their craft. I recommend this remarkable book without any hesitation. The concept of a cultural trauma is probably here to stay (for a while at least), and this book does a magnificent job of presenting it.

*Who Owns Native Culture?* By Michael F. Brown. Harvard University Press, 2003. Pp. 315.

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Anthropologist Michael Brown offers not so much a straightforward academic study as an excursus, grounded in research, on the problematics of “culture” in a time of proliferating cultures. In a series of case studies of battles concerning the ownership rights to native or indigenous (interchangeable terms) artifacts, places, and practices, the reader is led through layers of political, religious, bureaucratic, and moral entanglements. When one finally emerges on the other side, one is left with a useful picture of the contemporary muddle.

Notable for the tone, tenor, and temperament Brown brings to the discussion, he is decidedly unsentimental in his evaluation of claims to culture brought by natives and other bodies, like the United Nations. At the same time, he is conscientious of and sympathetic to the histories of colonial oppression that contextualize current conflicts between governments, commercial interests, and indigenous peoples worldwide. He questions the practical ability of native peoples to lay exclusive, restrictive claim to their “culture,” while acknowledging that “heritage” can and should be respected.

Wary of “totalizing solutions” on the part of any party in a dispute, Brown provides hard-nosed interpretations of cases that deal with, among other things: the copyright ownership of native art and native symbols, such as the well-known Zia sun symbol used by the State of New Mexico; the multiply intertwined interests of drug companies, governments, and

local peoples regarding knowledge and patents of botanical materials; the status of native religious sites such as Wyoming's Big Horn Medicine Wheel and Devils' Tower over against public use of public lands; and questions of authenticity regarding the claims of Ngarrindjeri people with regard to the Australian government's plan to build a bridge over a religious site.

Acknowledging that it is difficult to square the "emotivism of heritage claims with the factual demands of the law" (p. 197), Brown addresses important epistemological and philosophical discontinuities that exist between heritage, law, and morality. In the case of the Zia Pueblo seeking to copyright more than 17,000 of its images, he points out the clear asynchronicity between a copyright that can expire in 75 years and a "moral right" which is, in effect, perpetual. The Zia's efforts, he concludes, are "less about intellectual property than about resistance to the uncontrolled proliferation of signs" (p. 86). It is about cultural integrity, albeit imperfectly pursued.

Brown uses his anthropological acumen to analyze the status of "culture" by examining how the various parties involved frame the conflict. For instance, in discussing the notion of "cultural privacy" often deployed in support of native peoples' claims, Brown points out the contradiction in the idea by reminding us that the "salient features of culture are, by definition, shared and therefore public" and that they are not uniformly distributed among a people and are often acquired from others (p. 28). Thus, it is important for those involved in disputes to recognize that the sharing of cultural knowledge and information is part and parcel of the workings of "culture," and has been from time immemorial.

Questions of the locus of cultural knowledge pose problems regarding who can speak for a "people." In the Hindmarsh Island bridge debacle in Australia, Ngarrindjeri claims that building a bridge and marina would destroy a secret, sacred site used for women's fertility rites were found to be highly suspect when government authorities consulted historical ethnographies, contemporary anthropologists, and, interestingly, the testimony of some elder Ngarrindjeri who denied such a site exists (pp. 173–85). One encounters related problems in the issues surrounding ethnobotany where it is evident that the intricacies of native knowledge and cultural ownership can no longer be divorced from questions of corporate interest and technology. The healing and lifesaving potential of many plants will never be realized unless pharmaceutical companies commit resources into research, extraction, and testing. Yet, the financial return to indigenous people will never match the value of medicines that actually make it to the market. Complicating matters still further is the ambiguity of who can make claims to such knowledge and serve as a legitimate representative—the state? a native bioprospector who knows the plants? an ethnic group as a whole?—when negotiating with companies (pp. 109–14).

Guided by a sense of "pragmatism," Brown wishes to see a "multicul-

turalism without illusions” arise which accepts that conflicts over values are inevitable when societies and legal systems encompass groups that practice different ways of life (pp. 230–31). His belief in the ability of “civil society” to work out these conflicts on a case-by-case basis at times seems to ignore the very power plays he has painstakingly detailed. Getting entangled as he does in the contradictory space where pluralism, corporate interest, and the facticity of ongoing political arrangements come together, however, should not be a reason for outright criticism, but rather an opportunity to admire Brown’s sincere effort to become enmeshed in the problems.

*Unpopular Culture: The Ritual of Complaint in a British Bank.* By John Weeks. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004. Pp. viii+166.

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Everyone complains. But John Weeks’s field observations suggest that British bankers have it down to an art form. And this is ineffective complaining, too. Even good ideas get complained to death. I could feel my energy draining away just thinking about working at the site of this study. Weeks spent three months in the Securities Centre with additional time spent elsewhere in BritArm—Weeks’s pseudonym for a large British bank. He was initially recruited as part of a consulting project to advise the bank on its organizational culture. The initial project fell apart, but Weeks was allowed to stay on and to focus on whatever he wanted. The resulting dissertation and book focuses on complaining, its varieties, and its ineffectiveness. The book is at least half literature review, with the remainder split between analysis and vignettes illustrating the varieties of complaining.

The conceptual frame for the paper is a critique of management literature on “fixing” corporate culture as a strategy for improving productivity. The book provides a good overview of both the literature on organizational culture and its critique. Weeks’s insight is that “fixes” at BritArm quickly get swallowed up in the tar pit of nay-saying and cynicism. Weeks analyzes this negation of change using the literature on cultural and social reproduction—Paul Willis’s work on the reproduction of working-class culture in schools (*Learning to Labor* [Columbia University Press, 1977]) and Michael Burawoy’s work on reproduction of class relations in the workplace through games and making out (*Manufacturing Consent* [University of Chicago Press, 1979]).

Weeks’s most effective material comes late in the book where he discusses the ways in which an attempt at internal reform is picked to death by cynics. Everyone agrees with the general points of the critique, but no one wants to change things. Why? Weeks does not quite tell us, but