

Brower, Barbara, and Barbara Rose Johnston (eds.): *Disappearing Peoples? Indigenous Groups and Ethnic Minorities in South and Central Asia*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2007. 275 pp. ISBN 978-1-59874-121-6. Price: £ 17.99

This attractively produced book includes twelve case chapters: four on South Asia (the Raika of Rajasthan, the Bhil – actually about the Narmada dam displaces, the Tharu of Nepal, and a synthetic chapter about peripatetic peoples); six on northern Pakistan and Afghanistan (on the Dom of Hunza, the people of Kashmir, the Hazara, the Wakhi and Kirghiz, the Badakhshani, and the Lezghi); and two on Tibet (on “The People of Tibet,” one on the Minhe Mangghuer). Most of the chapters take a simple “peoples and cultures” view, with an outline of livelihoods, numbers, a section on “threats to survival,” a section on “food for thought,” and concluding lists of other sources, films, websites, organizations to contact, topped off with a series of questions to think about. The whole would be suitable for high school students, or possibly first-year undergraduates.

Perhaps the most interesting contributions to the book are by Aparna Rao, who died while the book was in preparation, on peripatetic peoples and on Kashmir. Both her chapters ignore the “one tribe, one culture” presupposition that underlies the rest of the book, though neither directly challenges it. The format of the book means that the reader is nowhere made aware of the constructed and processual nature of identity, even though one contributor, Arjun Guneratne on the Tharu of Nepal, has written an exemplary ethnography in this mode (*Many Tongues, One People: The Making of Tharu Identity in Nepal*. Ithaca 2002). The Herderian framework, the lack of any systematic approach to minorities in the two regions treated, and the brevity of the contributions, mean that the book will be of limited use for more advanced students, though perhaps helpful as a first port of call for those seeking material on one or other of the groups described.

David N. Gellner

Chevron, Marie-France: *Anpassung und Entwicklung in Evolution und Kulturwandel. Erkenntnisse aus der Wissenschaftsgeschichte für die Forschung der Gegenwart und eine Erinnerung an das Werk A. Bastians*. Wien: Lit Verlag, 2004. 465 pp. ISBN 978-3-8258-6817-8. (Ethnologie, 14) Preis: € 35.90

Marie-France Chevron has written a book that is less an intellectual biography of Adolf Bastian than an extended discussion of the persistence of fundamental questions about the human condition and the virtues of interdisciplinarity. There is surprising little material in this book about Bastian’s work in museums, the impact his twenty-five years of traveling and collecting had on his thought, his obsession with material culture, his close and influential collaboration with colleagues and friends such as Rudolf Virchow, or his intellectual debt to people such as Alexander von Humboldt. Indeed, Chevron makes little effort to engage other scholars who

have written extensively on these topics. Instead, she approaches Bastian from his most well-known pronouncements and uses her explication of his fundamental theses as a means to argue for new (or rather old) approaches to the study of humanity and human history in the academy today.

Drawing on a selection of Bastian’s publications, Chevron provides readers with an excellent introduction to his thought and to his most salient ethnological ideas. She pays particular attention to his notions of *Elementargedanken*, or “elementary ideas,” and *Völkergedanken*, the unique patterns of thought in which he argued that those “elementary ideas” materialized within different cultures. Bastian stressed that every group of people shared these “elementary ideas,” even though they were never directly observable. Such ideas were hidden behind humanity’s cultural diversity, which he argued was historically and geographically contingent. He also argued that by studying the unique historical development of different groups of people, and placing those results into a comparative framework, scholars could gain a better sense of those elementary ideas, which in turn would lead them to an improved understanding of the fundamental character of the human being and what he called the “psychic unity of mankind.” Ultimately, Bastian argued, this could also lead to an enhanced understanding of the social and cultural challenges that he and other Europeans faced during their lifetimes, and perhaps, solutions.

After cogently explaining Bastian’s notions of *Elementar-* and *Völkergedanken*, and relating them to his idea of geographical provinces, Chevron uses those explanations to clarify his contributions to ethnological thought in general (although she spends almost no time on the origins of his ideas). She underscores the intellectual debts that Leo Frobenius and Franz Boas owed to Bastian, and the fact that E. B. Tylor read Bastian’s work with great interest and profit. Despite that influence, however, Bastian’s challenging, and many would argue, confusing writing style helped to obscure his contributions to the broader history of anthropology. So too did the efforts of a younger generation of ethnologists, especially Bernhard Ankermann and Fritz Graebner, to draw attention to themselves by juxtaposing their own diffusionist theories to a reified version of Bastian’s ideas. In order to correct the resulting misinformation, Chevron goes to pains to demonstrate that Friederich Ratzel, the founder of “Anthropogeographie”, overdraw the distinctions between his work and Bastian’s ethnology during the late nineteenth century, and that Ankermann and Graebner continued to overdraw those distinctions after Bastian’s death in 1905. Because Bastian lacked a direct intellectual heir eager to champion his ideas after his passing, those misinterpretations became part of anthropological lore, taken up and perpetuated by other ethnologists, such as Robert Lowie in his influential “History of Ethnological Theory” (1938).

These are not original observations, but for readers interested in the broader intellectual trajectories of anthropological thought in the German-speaking world,

this book contains a well-argued, welcome, and effectively presented introduction to Bastian's thought and its implications. Especially welcome is her argument that we have much to learn from Bastian and his ideas. Coming from an era in which the disciplines of ethnology and anthropology were only just taking shape, and drawing on the ideas of people like Alexander von Humboldt, Bastian approached the question of human development and cultural history from an inherently interdisciplinary perspective. He also eschewed deductive, theoretical positions, held most famously by Charles Darwin and his emulators, in favor of inductive analyses based on extensive empirical work. This fundamental methodological distinction championed by Bastian (together with Virchow) caused him to disdain speculative systems. Chevron shares that derision, and she pleads for scholars today to practice an anthropology driven by greater and more self-reflective interaction between theory and practice, much as Bastian advocated. She also calls for more unity in the human sciences. She implores anthropologists to step out of their disciplinary boundaries more willingly, and she encourages them to harness the methods of philosophy, psychology, sociology, and related disciplines while engaging fundamental questions about the human condition.

This makes for stimulating reading. By arguing for the future of the discipline while drawing on Bastian's contributions to its past, she reminds us that many of the questions anthropologists face in today's increasingly globalized world are the same questions that perplexed our nineteenth-century predecessors during the age of empire. She also emphasizes that our predecessors still have much to teach us. Thus Chevron's book is notable for both her insightful excursions into a neglected area of disciplinary history and her provocative pronouncements for anthropology's future.

H. Glenn Penny

Clara van Groenendael, Victoria M.: *Jaranan*. The Horse Dance and Trance in East Java. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2008. 293 pp., CD-ROM. ISBN 978-90-6718-306-2. (Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, 252) Price: € 39.90

Clara van Groenendael is an established scholar of Javanese performance who has published in English and Dutch. This latest book in English is a welcome contribution to the field of Indonesian ethnology and performance studies. It is an in-depth study of the Javanese horse dance (*jaranan*, also known as *kuda lumping*, *kuda képang*, or *jathilan*) based on the author's ethnographic research with two troupes, Samboyo Putro and Haswo Usodo, both based in Kediri in East Java. This regional location makes it particularly useful. East Java may have provided us with anthropological accounts of religion "in Java" in the last fifty years, but except for Bouvier's work on Madurese theatre (La matière des émotions. Paris 1994), there has been very little published on performance in East Java recently.

The original manuscript was completed by 1991, but "became lost," so this book is a reworking of

fragments and new data from 1992. The material is organised in three sections. Part one introduces the genre and its regional status in relation to national cultural policy during President Suharto's New Order regime (1966–1998). Part two goes in greater detail, including historical perspectives. Part three focuses on variations, with a detailed account of a performance by Samboyo Putro which reflects the troupe's unusual attention to verbal content in the form of the chanted text by a narrator-singer (*dhalang*), and considers what factors account for the troupe's success. This material is now historical; from 1997 the Samboyo Putro troupe no longer existed, although its name had been taken on by another troupe.

The analytical approach is interdisciplinary, and informed by anthropology, history, and ethnomusicology. The anthropological framework relates to Beattie (Other Cultures. London 1966) and Keesing (Cultural Anthropology. New York 1965), so theoretically we remain in the domain of structural functionalism, and it would be unwise to expect engagement with more interpretive or postmodern concepts. Ethnomusicologically, the work takes up Anderson Sutton's debates about regionalism under the New Order (Traditions of Gamelan Music in Java. Cambridge 1991). Trance is analysed ethnomusicologically, largely in relation to Gilbert Rouget's seminal study, "Music and Dance" (Chicago 1985). Altered states of consciousness which occur in *jaranan* are characterised as trance possession, although questions having been raised by Luh Ketut Suryani and Gordon Jensen (Trance and Possession in Bali. Oxford 1993) about the appropriateness of Rouget's categories for explaining Indonesian trance phenomena.

Although the book is written in a rather formal and impersonal style (despite the photo of the author with Pak Samboyo; p. 256), it provides a very useful ethnological account of horse dancing. Researchers of Asian performance will find much of interest in the detailed discussion of the dance in performance: the role of the masked characters, the relationship to the Panji story cycle, the relationship to the associated *rèyog Ponorogo*, the different kinds of songs and poetry, and innovations such as *bridhèn* (break-dance). Short samples of music and singing are also provided on a CD-ROM and the speeches and lyrics are transcribed in the appendix. Disappointingly, only Javanese speakers will be able to follow these as they are not translated. This is a shame, as it will restrict the extent to which a wider readership will be able to appreciate evidence for the section of the book which discusses the verbal content of *jaranan*. The music is evocative, but it is also a shame that the author did not include any video documentation of performance.

The ethnographic account of the social context of the dance is rich and compelling, particularly in its consideration of the positioning and promotion of the genre in New Order cultural policy. Samboyo Putro was very much part of the New Order cultural agenda. It was founded in 1971 after a policeman who belonged to the government's Golkar party received divine inspi-