

brath offers this as evidence in support of her interpretation of the Borgia scene as likewise portraying a solar eclipse.

Studies by other codical scholars have suggested different interpretations of the iconographic component. Boone, for example, describes the central image as the birth of Nanahuatzin, a pustule-covered deity who immolated himself to become the sun. She interprets this scene in purely cosmogonic terms, as part of a creation narrative. In contrast, Milbrath's model of the Borgia pages as an astronomical narrative based on events that were actually witnessed challenges the prevalent view of the Borgia Group codices as being essentially prognosticatory or predictive in nature.

Milbrath provides additional data to support her astronomical model, suggesting that each page of the Borgia narrative can be associated with significant events in Venus' cycle. For example, she interprets page 29 as showing Venus-Quetzalcoatl's immolation, an interpretation suggested by the presence of ashes in a greenstone bowl designed to hold the hearts of sacrificial victims. Drawing on a description from the colonial period *Anales de Cuauhtitlán*, Milbrath relates this imagery to the death of the Evening Star during inferior conjunction (Venus' disappearance from view when it travels in front of the sun). According to the *Cuauhtitlán* account, Quetzalcoatl undertook a final journey, leading him from the west to the east, where he set himself on fire and spent eight days in the underworld before emerging as the Morning Star deity.

While I find Milbrath's astronomical interpretations appealing, this volume is certain to engender considerable discussion concerning how pre-Hispanic codices were used and the role of astronomical narratives in the everyday and ritual lives of Late Postclassic Mexican populations. As a note of caution to those interested in pursuing these questions, "Heaven and Earth in Ancient Mexico" contains a number of errors that were not corrected prior to printing. The author is happy to provide a list of corrections to anyone requesting them, but it is unfortunate that these errors appear in the hardcover edition. I strongly urge the press to provide a corrected version, in either paper or ebook format, at the earliest opportunity. An ebook with links between the text, illustrations, and schematics would greatly enhance the reading experience and allow readers to more quickly grasp the basics of Milbrath's novel approach to interpreting the Borgia 29–46 narrative.

Gabrielle Vail

**Moberg, Mark:** *Engaging Anthropological Theory. A Social and Political History.* Abingdon: Routledge, 2013. 360 pp. ISBN 978-0-415-69999-0. Price: £ 80.00

Many undergraduate, and most graduate, academic programs in anthropology require that students complete a course in the history of anthropological theory. The purpose of this course is to acquaint students with the intellectual legacy to which they, as newcomers, are heir. The course also serves as a systematical introduction to theory, in case students have missed it elsewhere in their curriculum.

Mark Moberg has written "Engaging Anthropologi-

cal Theory" as a textbook for such a course. His textbook embeds theory in the context of social and political trends, thereby anchoring it in the real world. The textbook is also written in accessible – and opinionated – prose, so that it should engage students and belie their common preconception that learning theory is irrelevant or boring.

Moberg begins with a discussion of various issues in the history and philosophy of epistemology, focusing on the nature of science and the difficulties of applying it to anthropology. He starts with the historical origins of empiricism, David Hume's philosophical challenge to it, and Karl Popper's resolution of the challenge in the form of logical positivism, to which Moberg juxtaposes Thomas Kuhn's concept of paradigms. Moberg then shows how these issues apply to anthropological fieldwork, citing as examples controversies surrounding the early-twentieth-century fieldwork of Bronisław Malinowski and Margaret Mead as well as the postmodern critique of scientific fieldwork that overtook anthropology in the 1980s. This organizational approach sensitizes students to theory and allows them to read his historical narrative more critically.

That narrative begins with what Moberg calls the "prehistory" of anthropology, by which he means anthropology before the mid-nineteenth century, ranging from Classical ideas through Enlightenment thinking to the sociology of Auguste Comte, which Moberg situates in the context of a backlash to Enlightenment-inspired Napoleonic wars. He then moves on to an exposition of Marxism, not only the formal theory of dialectical materialism but also the increasing political awareness of the plight of industrial factory workers, manifest, for example, in the Luddite rebellion of 1811–12. Interesting here is his analysis of how the New Deal policies of US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt staved off more radical reactions to the failures of capitalism in the Great Depression, helping set the stage for the overt political repression of Marxism, including Marxist anthropologists, in the early years of the Cold War. It is important to Moberg that students understand capitalism, because capitalism figures prominently in his analysis of numerous anthropological theories. At the end of the book he explains the rise of postmodern theory in part as a reaction to structural changes in global capitalism.

Moberg's presentation of the theories of Émile Durkheim and Max Weber, next of Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin, and then of Edward Burnett Tylor and Lewis Henry Morgan, is essentially traditional. Both Durkheim and Weber reacted to Marx, with Durkheim stressing social solidarity rather than conflict and Weber stressing individual agency rather than external forces as the engine of social change. Spencer and Darwin were both evolutionists, with Spencer the original "Social Darwinist" and champion of competition among individuals as the best way to eliminate the weak and improve the human race. This discussion allows Moberg to link social Darwinism to wide range of social philosophies, including racism, laissez-faire economics, and the libertarian philosophy of Ayn Rand. Moberg, like most historians of anthropology, sees Tylor and Morgan as the first generation of recognized anthropologists, and he uses his discus-

sion of their varied approaches to cultural evolution as an opportunity to explain the difference between materialist and idealist theories of cultural change.

Moberg's interpretation of the role of Franz Boas and his early-twentieth-century American students is also essentially traditional, with Boas and Robert Lowie portrayed as the groundbreaking critics of cultural evolution and Alfred Louis Kroeber, Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, and others taking anthropology in a psychological direction by incorporating some, while rejecting other, elements of the psychology of Sigmund Freud. A pedagogical strength of this section is Moberg's engaging forays away from pure theory into the realm of politics and popular culture, as he discusses Boas' opposition to anthropologist spies in World War I and the overt participation of anthropologists in the Office of War Information during World War II. Freudianism lends itself to Freudian humor, which Moberg mines with glib comments on the shape of Freud's cigars as well as a sophisticated Freudian analysis of the 1958 Alfred Hitchcock film "Vertigo."

The presentation of the structuralist and functionalist theories of Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown and Bronisław Malinowski is heavily contextualized by British colonialism, and appropriately so, because colonialism provided the fieldwork setting for much of the ethnographic work conducted by the British school. Moberg adds anecdotes of his own fieldwork in Belize and then links changes in the theories of latter-day structural-functionalists to the demise of colonialism in the 1960s. This discussion allows him to comment on the transactionalism of Fredrik Barth and how it links to social philosophies of individual self-interest.

Another strength of Moberg's book is the considerable attention it devotes to cultural ecology and cultural neo-evolutionism as promoted by, among others, Julian Steward and Leslie White. This discussion segues into a related discussion of cultural materialism and a relatively lengthy analysis of the theories of Marvin Harris, whom Moberg refers to frequently throughout the book while comparing and contrasting theories. Surprising in this context is the relatively little attention he devotes to anthropological political economy as promoted by, among others, Eric Wolf.

Somewhat untraditionally, Moberg places the French structuralist theories of Claude Lévi-Strauss alongside the symbolic and interpretive theories of British anthropologist Victor Turner and American Clifford Geertz. Included in this same discussion is cognitive anthropology, or ethno-science. According to Moberg, what all these theories have in common is an idealist, contrasted with materialism, orientation. This may be true, but the theories are at least as different as they are similar, and grouping them together in this way does each a partial injustice.

Probably the most original section of Moberg's book is his concluding analysis of postmodern theory, inspired significantly by anthropologist David Harvey's 1989 book "The Condition of Postmodernity." This wide-ranging discussion again veers into politics, popular culture, and Moberg's own personal history growing up in suburban Chicago, including a charming anecdote about his father's first new car in 1962.

"Engaging Anthropological Theory" deserves to be widely read. Its author, a reluctant quasi-postmodernist, has brought the history of anthropological theory down to earth, probably just about as far down as it ought to go. Endnotes, a list of references, and an index will be of pedagogical help, but what is most likely to spark student interest in this book, at least while flipping through its pages, is the number and variety of illustrations, totaling more than 60, many of them light-hearted and provocative. Each of the 15 chapters concludes with 10 self-quiz questions, which disappointingly are only true/false. One small disappointment, however, is a small price to pay for a book that is otherwise so worthwhile.

Paul A. Erickson

**Molland, Sverre:** *The Perfect Business? Anti-Trafficking and the Sex Trade along the Mekong*. Honolulu: The University of Hawai'i Press, 2012. 277 pp. ISBN 978-0-8248-3653-5. Price: \$ 26.00

Based on long-term ethnographic research and his involvement in the anti-trafficking sector, Molland's provocatively titled book, "The Perfect Business?" explores the everyday realities of sexual commerce and migration along the Thai-Lao border and global and local development efforts to combat trafficking.

In the introduction, Molland sets the theoretical framework of his book, being discourse analysis coupled with practice theory and Sartre's analysis of bad faith, popularised by Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1992). His choice of analytical frameworks helps to address some of the shortcomings of discourse analysis in trafficking research, which often struggles to adequately explore the social world of sex work and capture the lived experiences of sex workers and labour migrants. Molland describes the setting of his fieldwork on the Thai-Lao border (Nong Kai and Vientiane) and his own positionality, and frames his book as being based on the "three facets of trafficking" – the global trafficking discourse, trafficking activists (labelled as "anti-traffickers"), and the local context of sexual commerce along the Thai-Lao border. The book is set out in three parts: Part 1 examines the trafficking discourse (two chapters); Part 2 the everyday social realities of sex work (three chapters); and Part 3 the anti-trafficking sector in Laos (two chapters).

In Part 1, Molland discusses global definitions of trafficking, and shows how national security concerns have come to take precedence over concerns about migrants. In chap. 2 he demonstrates how this has resulted from international laws on the issue being located in the UN Transnational Organised Crime Convention, with the issue being cast as more about organised crime and controlling migration than labour and migrant rights. In chap. 3 he examines the anti-trafficking sector's intimate involvement in meaning making, carefully detailing how anti-traffickers engage in constructing, defining and shaping understandings of sexual commerce, migration, and trafficking. In this chapter, Molland reveals the different interest groups involved in discursively shaping trafficking and highlights the different political interests pursued in