al transformations in the year 2000 in a final statement: "Nowadays my recordings are the main conservator of the Piaroa musical tradition – I mean."

Besides the fact that another proofreading is necessary we have to agree with his statement as the presented collection of material is very important for further investigations, restudies, and reinterpretations.

Matthias Lewy

High, Casey, Ann H. Kelly, and **Jonathan Mair** (eds.): The Anthropology of Ignorance. An Ethnographic Approach. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 220 pp. ISBN 978-0-230-34082-4. Price: $ 55.00

Many years ago Mark Hobart pointed to the "growth of ignorance." It would seem that in the intervening years since 1993, ignorance has burgeoned. A concern with ignorance and not knowing has been the subject of numerous seemingly unconnected enquiries by researchers from diverse fields including not only anthropology but also sociology, political science, history of science, and information technology studies, among others. By pushing at the boundaries of our knowledge of knowledge, researchers have increasingly become aware of the flipside to ways of knowing: to the place of ignorance, not knowing and nescience in our own academic disciplines and in daily social life. Specifically, anthropologists, in their intense desire to discover knowledge about the native Other, have often overlooked informants' own accounts of ignorance, those points where the people themselves recognise the limits of local knowledge.

This collection of essays edited by High, Kelly and Mair brings together articles written by a number of recently established scholars on this very theme from an anthropological perspective. In this they have been successful: this collection contains high-quality, engaging, individually informative chapters that cover regions as diverse as Senegal, Japan, the UK, Amazon, Greenland, Brazil, and the US. The Introduction by Mair, Kelly, and High on "Making Ignorance an Ethnographic Object" argues the case that: "… ignorance has a substance of its own, as the product of specific practices, with effects that are distinct from the effects of the lack of knowledge to which the ignorance in question corresponds" (3). They locate the issue of ignorance within the history of the discipline and offer a wide-ranging review of aspects of not knowing in anthropological perspective from Durkheim and Malinowski through to Marxism and post-structuralism. Part of their argument is that ignorance is produced through social relations, and that ignorance is productive of new social relations. Indeed, it should not pass without comment that the strategic gaps in the editors' own representations of knowing about not knowing is itself productive in this specific disciplinary field.

Ignorance is construed in many ways by the authors of individual chapters, which deal with, for example, "temporal ignorance" – a state of unknowing arising from actors' concerns about the future, which by definition is unknowable and uncertain – to the plotting of complex dialectics in the production of ignorance set within a matrix of social and political relations. Pfeil's chapter on almsgiving in Dakar, Senegal, is perhaps one of the most complete accounts that adopts the second perspective. Taking ignorance to be "the presence of an absence of knowledge," she skilfully traces local interpretations and diagnoses of the circulation of anonymous objects given to beggars at traffic lights or other observable places in the city. She argues that ordinary people's ignorance of the origins and intentions behind individual acts of sacrificial gifting and almsgiving "makes possible certain forms of local knowledge about the city, as a unified moral agent" (35). In a similar vein, Nozawa's chapter on amateur Japanese life-writing (*jibunshi*) is at once a reaction to the "increasingly hegemonic process of standardisation" dating from the 1960s in Japan, as well as a democratic process of popular literacy in which ignorance of the potential readership and the erasure of authorial presence are key factors. Ignorance here is a source of agency that gets the writing done in a field characterised by the anonymity and the ordinary.

High's chapter on Amazonian Waorani shamanism highlights the way in which shamanic knowledge is constitutive of a kind of person capable of predation on other beings – human and animal. Shamans are different kinds of being in the world, and this marks them out as potentially dangerous. The decline in the number of people willing to admit knowledge of shamanism has less to do with the impact of missionaries or other such factors, and more to do with strategic denials of inappropriate relations on the part of individuals wishing to live in a relatively harmonious way with others. High thus illuminates the connections between ignorance, knowledge, and being. Flora's chapter on the denial of knowledge of the reasons for suicides in Greenland also examines aspects of the person in her explanation of why people claim that they "don't know." Not only is it inappropriate, we learn, to venture views about another person's intentions, but to speak of suicide leads to dangerous thoughts that might cause future suicides through the agency of words themselves.

Indeterminacy, uncertainty, and the unknowability of the future play a part in the other three chapters of the book. Leitner focuses on the unknown possibilities and future promise of spaces within the social and professional networks of researchers in Cambridge University, who are actively involved in creating social links, financial opportunities, and so on for themselves. His ethnography of a networking workshop, the mapping of social relations entailed in the workshop's activities, and the kinds of reciprocal roles the participants play out over time, all reveal the constant interplay between knowing and not knowing. Procupez focuses in her chapter on a number of families that formed a housing cooperative with the aim of becoming lawful residents in a poor urban squatter quarter in Buenos Aires. Caught between the ever-present threat of eviction and the indefinite wait for bureaucratic authorities to act, members of the group resort to patience as strategy of coping with the unknown. This quality is not just an inner disposition of those resigned to their fates, but is a political stance and a means to work

through uncertainty, she argues. Finally, Romain examines the situation of single professional, North American women facing what has been labelled the "crisis of childlessness." She shows the way in which women use egg freezing as "a strategy for managing and coping with unknown futures," and for creating hope in the face of anxiety over what is known about age-related infertility.

The editors of the volume point to some broad common themes that loosely link together the diverse chapters: namely, exchange and relationality, personhood, and time. Different aspects of ignorance are examined via each of these themes. What the editors do not attempt to do in their introduction is to provide beyond this minimal form of identification, any deeper sense of, or the broader conclusions about, the nature of ignorance, its production, reproduction, and productivity. Theirs is a particularistic and contextually specific approach confined to ethnographic case studies. Their conclusions focus primarily on field methods and ethics, and the final paragraph of the "Introduction" poses eleven or so questions following from the idea of making ignorance an ethnographic object. Is this an opportunity missed? Perhaps we will never know.

Roy Dilley

Jeremiah, Anderson H. M.: Community and Worldview among Paraiyars of South India. "Lived" Religion. London: Bloomsbury, 2013. 211 pp. ISBN 978-1-4411-7881-7. Price: £ 9.75

What does it mean to be Dalit *and* to be Christian? In the past several years, the literature on Dalits, on Dalit theology, and also on Dalit Christianity in India is increasing. This is happening against the backdrop of a political and legal struggle to obtain constitutional recognition as Dalits for the "ex-untouchable" Muslims and Christians. It is also the outcome of a huge shift in studies of religion in India over the last few decades. After Dumont's celebrated if controversial studies, the critique of his ideas opened up the space in Indian sociology and social anthropology for the study of the diversity and complexity of India's religious traditions, turning away partly from the earlier overwhelming focus on Hinduism. With respect to Indian Christians, of whom Dalits and tribals are the largest component, a number of interesting and dense studies have recently appeared; Jeremiah's book is the latest contribution to this rapidly widening subfield.

However, Jeremiah's understanding of the question posed at the start of this review is inflected with a significant difference for he writes as a Dalit Christian and a Paraiyar himself, even if one who had for long remained shielded from the cruelty of that knowledge and that position. Jeremiah's study is based on his fieldwork in the village of Thulasigramam. Thulasigramam is only about 120 km from the swiftly changing city of Chennai, but the patterns of life Jeremiah describes for the Paraiyar reek of oppressive tradition and a debilitating lack of choices. Jeremiah brings out the many dimensions of the violence suffered by the Paraiyars on an everyday basis: physical violence, verbal abuse, the violence of fear and shame, of helplessness and perpetual dependency, and of alienation – spatial as well as from the public resources of the village.

Christianity has enabled the Paraiyar the opportunity to constitute their identity anew. This is true in other parts of the country as well from where we obtain evidence that the shift to Christianity has been significant in making Dalits conscious of their identity and, in some cases, given them the symbolic and collective resources not only to assert themselves against the humiliation of a stigmatized identity but to lead the struggles of others against it. This is very much the case, for instance, in Andhra Pradesh where the church – regardless of denomination – is predominantly Dalit. Even the Paraiyars that Jeremiah interacted with, despite their conspicuous subordination to the landowning Reddyars, find various ways to subvert and challenge their stigmatizing caste identity.

For instance, Jeremiah narrates how the Paraiyars have laid claim to a hill where they placed a cross and which they named Oliva Malai (Olive Mount). Despite Reddyar objections and attempts to reclaim the hill, the Paraiyars fenced off the hill path and have formally applied to their elected representative to have the spot declared as a Christian sacred site. Further, the hill is higher than the one close by on which stands a temple to Lord Murugan, thus enabling a young Paraiyar person to claim that "our cross is higher than their Murugan" (135). In other words, Christianity is superior even if in reality the Christian Paraiyar are subject to their earthly Hindu masters.

Thus, conversion to Christianity has given the Dalits a modicum of dignity and sense of worth. Even when they are not entirely able to emerge from under the humiliating duties imposed upon them by the dominant caste, their adoption of new forms of dress, practices of personal hygiene and deportment helps them to separate themselves from their oppressive past as well as assert themselves against the shame of their present-day position. At the same time, destructive hierarchical patterns tend to be reproduced within the Paraiyar community and not just between it and the dominant Reddyars.

Jeremiah's fieldwork undercuts romantic ideas about Dalit cohesion and communitarian values. He shows how Paraiyars make invidious distinctions among themselves between the "purer" who live closer to the church and the more "sinful" who reside at a distance from it. Gender is a strong marker of difference, within and without the church. Within the church, women are expected to sit on the floor; the chairs are occupied by men. Moreover, the differences between the lives and the life-chances of Paraiyar men and women outside of the church emerge from the text.

Thus, the author narrates his experience of beginning to understand the extent to which Dalits continue to bear the stigma of "untouchability" and to experience discrimination within their own churches, and within the educational, health and allied institutions run by these churches. Even when sheer numbers have forced the inclusion of Dalits into situations of power or control, it is usually the urban educated Dalits who come to occupy the bulk of such positions. Moreover, the facilities offered by such institutions are usually affordable only by middle class