

gia itself. Opening the volume is a provocative chapter from David Berliner, asking whether anthropology itself may be an act of nostalgia. By this he intends to not only to question the discipline's nostalgic origins, figured in attempts to salvage disappearing "primitive" cultures, but also to question its ongoing emphasis of the particular over the general and the subaltern over the powerful.

If Berliner invites us to think through how the discipline's past contributes to the present fascination with nostalgia, William Cunningham Bissel's afterword asks how the rapidly unfolding future of late-modernity – from climate change to neoliberal globalization and mass urbanization – may likewise contribute to both ethnographers and their interlocutors' intensified interest in nostalgia. Here, Bissel challenges anthropologists to approach nostalgia not only as a means for understanding the past but also as a critical engagement with the present.

While the authors of the book make several important contributions to the study of nostalgia, it is not always clear that they are all studying the same object. Throughout the book, nostalgia is alternately described as an act of memory and an act of forgetting; an affective attachment and a bargaining tool; a way of recalling the past and imagining the future; a reassertion of identity and an apolitical activity. As the introduction readily admits, the term itself is diverse, often referring to a wide variety of memory practices that share little in common. Though this volume adds much to our understanding of nostalgia in various contexts, the work of connecting these different manifestations of nostalgia will have to be undertaken by future scholars. As a result, the book serves more to open valuable questions than to delineate a fully realized field of study.

Despite this, the edited volume remains an important contribution to the increasing number of anthropologists who encounter affective remembrances of distant pasts. Particularly valuable are its methodological focus on the concrete discourses, materialities, social interactions, texts, and technologies through which nostalgia manifests. Scholars who work on memory, politics, affect, identity, and material culture will all find many valuable and challenging insights throughout the book.

Jonah S. Rubin

Bartmanski, Dominik, and Ian Woodward: *Vinyl. The Analogue Record in the Digital Age.* London: Bloomsbury, 2015. 203 pp. ISBN 978-0-85785-661-6. Price: € 19,95

This study is a very insightful and informative contribution to the emerging literature on vinyl, as the most lauded of recording formats. It sits nicely alongside historical studies such as Osborne (*Vinyl. A History of the Analogue Record.* Farnham 2012), considerations of record collectors and collecting vinyl (Shuker, *Wax Trash and Vinyl Treasures. Record Collecting as a Social Practice.* Farnham 2015), and celebratory volumes on the art of record covers and key contributors to them (for example, Robertson, *Factory Records. The Complete Graphic Album.* New York 2006).

Dominik Bartmanski and Ian Woodward combine a cultural sociological approach with insights from material cultural studies, supporting and illustrating their theoretical discussion with frequently fascinating material from interviews. Those they talked to are introduced as "*dramatis personae* of sorts" (xiv) and given brief biographies in the acknowledgements: Included are label managers, managers of pressing plants, producers and DJs, musicians, and store owners, with many combining several of these roles. Of particular interest are their discussions with professionals who work with vinyl, largely for small boutique record labels. The scope of the interviews moves us beyond the usual emphasis on the role of record collectors in preserving vinyl, and away from a preoccupation with vinyl as a negative fetish. A strength is the international setting of the study, with fieldwork undertaken in a number of cities, including London, Melbourne, Moscow and Bogota. Berlin features most strongly, with the city seen as emblematic of the localised subculture associated with vinyl.

The starting point for Bartmanski and Woodward is the seemingly contradictory survival of vinyl, the analogue record, in the digital age. Following the introduction of the CD in 1983, vinyl's market share began a steady decline: by 1988, CDs outsold vinyl records, and vinyl continued to be a steeply declining format through the 1990s, especially the vinyl single (the 45). By the early 2000s, vinyl as a format now made up only a small percentage of the total market for recorded music. More recently, as Bartmanski and Woodward document, vinyl has undergone a revival, and is the fastest growing format, at least in percentage terms. As they argue, this is culturally significant, but it must be recognised that its market share remains small against the current predominance of digital downloads, and even CDs.

In chapter 1: "Vinyl as Record. Several Lives of the 'King Format'," the authors outline the scope of the book and its central arguments. While the study is focused on the contemporary situation, here vinyl is situated within the general history of recording formats, especially the rise and fall of physical records within the mainstream music market. The Golden Age of the vinyl LP, the 1960s, is adequately covered, along with the various claims made for different formats. The rise of turntablism and Electronic Dance Music (EDM) is regarded as a crucial point for the format, and "the trajectory of vinyl in the digital age indicates that matters of *style* in music consumption and production is a key issue. Vinyl as a medium and a practice is an element of style in the music world" (23), associated with the concept of "cool."

Chapter 2: "Medium. Handling and Hearing," considers issues of form and function, including the practise of "digging" for sought after records. Vinyl's status as an iconic good is shown to be "ritualized through certain practices of acquisition, collection, playing, handling and listening. Vinyl is a medium to play and play with. The vinyl enthusiasts we spoke to were unlikely to believe that vinyl is the most perfect medium. Most were more than aware of the limitations of vinyl. Nevertheless, many keep coming back to the special aural properties of vinyl. More

than this, many believe that these idiosyncracies of vinyl are in fact special properties that can be aesthetically exploited” (59).

Chapter 3: “Things. Qualities and Entanglements,” provides a thorough and theoretically sophisticated examination of the materiality of the format, and as a thing which is culturalised: “Well beyond its musical capacities, it is something to behold and touch, to display and to offer as a gift, a medium to play and play with” (63). Included here is the actual production of vinyl records, with a fascinating discussion (and illustrations) of cutting the template, and pressing the copies. The discussion of vinyl as a commodity (chap. 4) embraces issues of value, including rarity, vinyl as an art form, and marketing. There are multiple markets for new vinyl releases, driven by the recent emphasis on marketing “heritage” within the music industries, especially though reissues, and by the new prominence of boutique labels and small-batch production. The consideration of music retail in chap. 5 is of particular interest, given this has been a relatively neglected topic within popular music studies. Drawing on their fieldwork and personal shopping experiences, they identify three types of shop involved with vinyl, and consider how these have managed to survive, and at times prosper, during a period of the decline of physical music retail.

Bartmanski and Woodward are at pains to eschew a reliance on privileging one aspect or factor in vinyl’s revival: “A specific advantage [of our research] is that we emphasize contemporary *vinyl culture* and focus on the vinyl as material object from a variety of perspectives rather than exploring just one aspect of it, such as vinyl consumption or collectorship, for example. We find that it is precisely the combination of different features that makes vinyl enduringly interesting for various publics” (167). That recognized, I feel the authors tend to rather overstate the importance of producers and consumers associated with electronic dance music in the revival of vinyl and the importance of the format in the current music market. I would argue, as they do, that EDM has been significant in the production and consumption of *contemporary* vinyl recordings. However, the wider vinyl culture continues to rest on the on-going historical preference of most “record collectors” for the format. Admittedly this preference is largely based on nostalgia, but the majority of collectors emphasise the use value of their records, and their collecting is based firmly on a love of music rather than some sort of commodity fetishism (though that is also present).

As the conclusion shows, what is emphasised is the manner in which vinyl demonstrates the social life of things, following and building on the work of writers such as Daniel Miller and Arjun Appadurai. The emphasis throughout is on how “vinyl culture forms tight knit communities and ever-expanding social networks based on trust and communality of style,” primarily through independent scenes in cosmopolitan settings. The authors are passionate about their subject: “our book is about a love” story (xvi), with their analysis informed by their own experiences with the format, especially in relation to electronic dance music: “we are both vinyl lovers as well, personally immersed in the scenes we have researched”

(xvi). This facilitates their access to those scenes, and those engaged in them. Throughout, the discussion attests to the importance of immersion in the social field. This is a fascinating and instructive study.

Roy Shuker

Bassett, Molly H.: *The Fate of Earthly Things. Aztec Gods and God-Bodies.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015. 283 pp. ISBN 978-0-292-76088-2. Price: \$ 60.00

Molly Bassett attempts to reanalyze pre-Hispanic Aztec religion and religiosity through three important concepts: *teotl* (god), *teixiptla* (localized embodiment), and *tlaquimilolli* (sacred bundle). She does so by asking how Aztecs conceived what they termed *teotl* and what they perceived in ritually fabricated objects like the *teixiptla* and the *tlaquimilolli*. In order to understand these concepts, she elaborates on their etymology, rituals, agency, and embodiment (3 f., 9 f.). She enriches her approach by confronting Aztec ethnohistorical documentation with contemporary religious practices among the Nahua in Central Mexico. Careful not to draw direct links between them, she uses the contemporaneous devotion of the Nahua to paper figures/effigies in the festival of Chicomexochitl – as living beings representatives of the Maize God – to argue for some resemblances (14–25, 198 f.).

The book covers five chapters plus an introduction and a concluding section, and there is an endnote apparatus and an index as well. The introduction centers about the question what animacy means to contemporaneous Nahua in their linguistic and ritual practice. She shows how the Nahua divide the cosmos into a spectrum of animacy in which deities, planets, elements of the natural environment like mountains or the wind, and animals are categorized as animate beings, whereas things like plants or stones are not (12–14, table I.1). However, it is clear that none of these boundaries are permanently fixed. She relates this permeability to a fundamental question on how the Nahua transform material of non-animacy (like paper) into something highly animated, (the paper figurines) as Chicomexochitl. Her investigation into this ritual complex leads her to conclude that animacy results from the ritual process itself – that the ontological transformation is through the change and the treatment of the material by the devotees and how they verbally address the objects during the transformation (15). These findings are made relevant in the subsequent chapters in regard to how the Aztecs conceived and constructed ritually molded effigies (*teixiptla*) or bundles containing sacred objects (*tlaquimilolli*) as animated representatives of various deities.

Unexpectedly, she opens the discussion in chap. 1 with the debate of whether the Spanish conqueror Hernán Cortés upon his arrival on the coast of Veracruz was recognized by the Aztecs as Quetzalcoatl, a deity who, according to ancient chronicles, had fled proclaiming to return (28). In contrast to Captain Cook’s presumed deification as a native god by the Hawaiians two centuries later (because of his return to the island and his ritual killing by the natives), Bassett does not center upon the debate about a Western construction of history or indige-