

believed they were on an eschatological mission. Some ministered to higher caste Christians, while others cared for the Dalits. Their organization became one of splitting and dividing based on dynastic or language differences. Bergunder is to be applauded for codifying a complex phenomenon.  
Ruth Vassar Burgess

**Berliner, David, and Ramon Sarró** (eds.): *Learning Religion. Anthropological Approaches*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2007. 239 pp. ISBN 978-1-84545-374-9. (Methodology and History in Anthropology, 17) Price: \$ 70.00

Undoubtedly, the most prominent trend in the anthropology of religion within Europe and America in the first decade of the twentieth-first century has been the developments within cognitive studies and evolutionary approaches. Scott Atran, Pascal Boyer, Harvey Whitehouse, R. N. McCauley, Thomas Lawson, Justin Barrett, Maurice Bloch, and others have contributed to these cognitive-evolutionary studies of religion. This anthropological trend seeped into American public discourse via a lengthy essay entitled "Evolution and Religion: Darwin's God" in the *New York Times Magazine*, March 2007. The reaction to these evolutionary-cognitive studies has varied within the anthropological communities in Europe and the U.S. The collection of essays in "Learning Religion. Anthropological Approaches" is devoted to the restoration of the social-cultural aspect of religion that tends to be marginalized by many of these cognitive studies. The major question of the volume is how ethnographic studies may illuminate the transformation of an individual as she moves from ritual mimicry to become an authentic religious believer.

Carlo Severi and Michael Houseman author the first two essays in the volume. Severi questions Rodney Needham's argument that "belief" is an arbitrary product of Western culture and cannot be applied cross-culturally. Needham relied on Wittgenstein and Hume to suggest that when one held a belief, this ruled out any form of doubt. Severi notes that Wittgenstein's "On Certainty" was much more compatible with what ethnographers tend to find everywhere; religious doubt often occurs as a condition for the acquisition of religious beliefs. In addition, Severi indicates with reference to his research on Kuna shamanism and other ethnographic work that beliefs can be developed without clear and specific semantic content. He concludes his essay by suggesting that "learning to believe" involves both memorization and the unconscious acquisition of the social context whereby various types of inferences can be developed. Houseman's essay focuses on menarche rituals from Neopagan or New Age Internet sites. The Neopagan and New Age practitioners use innovative rites of passage ceremonies that emulate ancient and tribal cultures to produce empathic relationships among mothers, daughters, and other women. Both Severi and Houseman integrate the cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions to demonstrate how both religious beliefs and rituals are transmitted.

David Parkin introduces his essay based on his long-term ethnographic studies of Islamic education and discourse in Zanzibar with a new reinterpretation of Geertz's definition of religion based on cognitive-evolutionary studies. He suggests that the original Geertzian definition tended to produce a meta-separation of the emotional and cognitive. Parkin asserts that acquiring a world religion such as Islam involves the formal inculcation of unquestioned assertions along with both unconscious cognitive and affective processes. He notes that learning religion (or science) involves an inner epistemological struggle that usually entails doubt, uncertainty, and ambivalence. Parkin has focused on how endless interpretations through contests between Wahabi and Sufi-based forms of Islam, along with serendipitous events influence religious learning. He concludes his essay with reference to how Wahabi and Sufi and animistic notions coincide with Harvey Whitehouse's distinctions between doctrinal and imagistic modes of religiosity.

Michael Lambek's essay draws on both analytic and existentialist philosophical traditions to understand religious learning for spirit mediums of Malagasy. He begins with Austin's category of illocutionary speech acts such as prayers, or sacrificial or purification rituals that can induce a new state of affairs. Lambek indicates that these rites become embodied within the individual and are radically different from theatrical performances. He is critical of the new cognitive and epidemiological studies and comments on how both Rappaport's and Geertz's critique of private language also applies to dubious theories of mind. Through a case study of a particular spirit medium in Malagasy, he emphasizes how collective rituals and interpersonal social relationships trump the vagaries of belief and scepticism to produce a serious practitioner.

Three of the essays reconstruct Lévy-Bruhl to illuminate how inner subjectivity is transformed through religious participation. Tanya Luhrmann relies on both texts and practices to investigate the strategies that evangelical Christians use for experiencing the divine directly. She features testimonials about how individuals discern whether their divine contacts are authentic. Luhrmann notes how individuals transform their inner subjectivity through both literacy and social processes. Marcio Goldman's essay draws on his ethnographic research on the Candomblé beliefs and practices in Brazil. He reflects on his own theoretical movement from a Durkheimian structural position to a post-hermeneutic, "musical" understanding of Candomblé. João Vasconcelos does ethnographic research on the Christian Rationalist movement in the Cape Verde Islands. He demonstrates how the Christian Rationalist movement provides both meaning and moral sustenance for literate middle-class women who face life crises. Vasconcelos has become like Goldman much more "musical" in his approach to religion.

Aurora Donzelli, a linguistic anthropologist, has been assessing the global encounter of Dutch Calvinist missionaries and the process of conversion among the Toraja highlanders of Indonesia. As Toraja religious lead-

ers have become more professionalized and educated, they have become more reflexive and concerned with copyright issues regarding their use of ritual speech. Drawing on Goffman, Donzelli notes that innovative style in ritual speech invests the performer with a higher degree of agency compared to the past. She argues that these new styles produce new forms of historical consciousness, personhood, and subjectivity associated with voluntarism, choice, and modernity. Laurence Hérault's rich detailed essay "Learning Faith" compares Roman Catholic and Protestant (the Reformed Evangelical Church) communion rituals in Switzerland. She discovers basic similarities in both the Catholic and Protestant strategies in the transmission of belief. Abandoning older dialogical pedagogical methods that attempted to indoctrinate supposedly passive children with fixed dogma, new methods encourage a much more experiential approach to faith. Hérault indicates that ritual transmission does entail fundamental differences in practice that reinforce Catholic versus Protestant beliefs about the Eucharistic act.

Charles Stafford has been analyzing Chinese religious belief and practice in rural Taiwan and China. Contrasting his own dull childhood experiences in Christian rituals with the colourful attention-grabbing Chinese rituals with firecrackers, drums, gongs, cymbals, and food, he relies on the cognitive approaches to emphasize the "catchiness" of certain religious representations for our evolved psychology. Furthermore, he suggests that learning religion involves concentrating on the psychology of humans in our social arena. Stafford suggests that the excitement of food and firecrackers draw Chinese children into other social occasions that involve rich narratives, religious doubts, and other psychology lessons. The volume concludes with Michael Rowlands's research on a Pentecostal tradition in a small provincial town in Cameroon. He describes how amplified noise, sound, and music create a "sonorific bath" that enhances religious transmission highlighting the power of the Holy Spirit in collective rituals.

This volume demonstrates that a formidable barrier divides social and the cognitive anthropologists. Sperber, Bloch, Whitehouse, and even the very Durkheimian Mary Douglas have been encouraging a merger between cognitive studies, hermeneutics, and ethnography, while others have been more reticent or antagonistic. One might ask whether drafting Kierkegaard or a reconstructed Lévy-Bruhl has really enhanced the anthropological study of religion or just edified our conversations as the late Richard Rorty would say. Either way, this work has helped to advance the discussion.

Raymond Scupin

**Bierlich, Bernhard M.:** The Problem of Money. African Agency and Western Medicine in Northern Ghana. New York: Berghahn Books, 2007. 228 pp. ISBN 978-1-84545-351-0. Price: \$ 80.00

The problem posed by this book is based on the old anthropological and structural functionalist notion

that the nature of contemporary traditional societies involves interplay of tradition and change. Society, it is observed, is made up of many constituent parts and institutions which together work in such a way as to build a harmonious social system. Consequently, any significant alteration or modification in the structure and function of any or some of these parts leads to alterations in others and eventually in the texture and shape of the social life of the whole society (Parsons, *The Social System*. New York 1951). This assumption underlines Bierlich's work. In many instances, the introduction of Western norms and values including monetised economy and new ways of healing into hitherto traditional social structures has in several respects either disrupted or distorted cultural ways of doing things or as in the case of the Dagomba in northern Ghana, it has exacerbated the cultural schisms based on gender differentiation. In other cases, social change has led to new forms of adaptive behaviours that painlessly blended the old with the new. In this book Bierlich is at pains to establish how the penetration of globalised money and *materia medica* (medicines) has exacerbated already existing tension generated by cultural ideology relating to power relations between Dagomba men and women in the northern region of Ghana. The book also describes how the people have in their own ways interrogated the change through new forms of adaptive behaviours to contain the love-hate relationship between men and women. The consequences of social change and its acculturative effect in traditional societies is a favourite pastime for many anthropologists who have studied societies in the developing world and in this book, Bierlich has followed in that tradition.

How the Dagomba traditional arrangements have interrogated the change has been elaborated in eight interconnected chapters. The first chapter sets the tone for the study with a description of the people, their land, their historical origin, and the cultural locale of men and women in the home and in the larger society. The second chapter discusses the nexus of kinship, gender, and witchcraft ideology. In chapter three, the author examines issues relating to common diseases/illnesses, ethnophysiology, and medicines for diagnosing a variety of health problems. In chapter four the author discusses the multivocal nature of medicines – the people's classificatory arrangements of these products and the therapeutic options available in times of ill health. In chapter five, the author examines the role of traditional healers in the context of plural medical culture of the Dagomba. In chapter six, the author examines the relationship between health, wealth, and magic as perceived by the people. In chapter seven, the author describes the position of women in health care vis-à-vis the overarching role of men in health care. Finally in chapter eight, the author focuses on the ramifications of what Nichter (*Anthropology and International Health*. Dordrecht 1989: 236) refers to as the "commodification of health" – the tendency to treat health as a commodity which one can buy and as a commodity which one can obtain through