

Collins, Samuel Gerald: *All Tomorrow's Cultures. Anthropological Engagements with the Future.* New York: Berghahn Books, 2008. 140 pp. ISBN 978-1-84545-408-1. Price: £ 16.50

“Anthropology is the study of humankind and all its manifestations in all times and places” (Sheldon Smith, Philip D. Young); “Cultural anthropology deals with the description and analysis of cultures – the socially learned traditions – of past and present ages” (Marvin Harris); “Cultural anthropology decenters us from our own cultures, teaching us to look ourselves from the ‘outside’ as somewhat ‘strange’” (Barbara D. Miller); “Anthropology is an intellectually challenging, theoretically ambitious subject which tries to achieve an understanding of culture, society, and humanity through detailed studies of local life, supplemented by comparison” (Thomas Hyland Eriksen). We all know these popular formulas. In this light, the anthropologists are studying other cultures and other peoples, always in the same time, in the present. From another perspective, historical anthropology offers interpretations of former ways of life. But what about the future? What about cultures and peoples in the future?

How will we live in the future? Are we moving towards global macdonaldization, cocacolonization and cultural, economic, social, and esthetic homogeneity? Or are there other possibilities? Samuel Gerald Collins – ethnographer and anthropologist who researches globalization and information society in the United States and South Korea – not only argues for the importance of the future of culture but also stresses its centrality in anthropological theory over the last century. “All Tomorrow's Cultures” has two major goals: “(1) excavating anthropology's ‘future work’ over the past two centuries and (2) suggesting where the future thinking about the future may be (and may be heading) in anthropology” (8).

Chapter 1 (Anthropological Time Machine. Setting the Controls for the Future) centers on future in nineteenth-century anthropology and a specific kind of cultural “time machine” (see the work of Johannes Fabian and his concept of “allochronism”). An examination of the works of prominent evolutionist anthropologists – George James Frazer, Edward B. Tylor, Lewis Henry Morgan and others – suggests an important problem for anthropology: how can culture simultaneously exist in past, present, and future? In chapter 2 (Margaret Mead Answers [About the Future]) Collins analyzes the oeuvre of Margaret Mead in the context of speculations on the future of culture. Mead wrote extensively about a possible future, in fact, she was not only a classical anthropologist but also a serious futurist. Collins looks on Mead's development from a “social engineer” (30) in her wartime work with Gregory Bateson to her model of cultural “microevolution” (35). In the next chapter (Chad Oliver. An Anthropologist on *Star Trek*) the author presents Oliver as a truly unique person. On the one hand, he was an anthropologist at the University of Texas, on the other, he was an author of anthropological science fiction, saying that “the kind of rigor that anthropology has, conceivably has made me a better science fiction

writer” (42). Collins suggests that “Oliver's importance lies not with some ... concatenation of anthropology and science fiction, but with his ... deployment of one to develop, critique, and imagine the other. In this way, we might see Oliver as the critical foil for Mead” (43).

The next two chapters look at the legacies of Mead and Oliver for anthropology and anthropologists in the 1970s and 1980s. In chapter 4 (Close Encounters of the Anthropological Kind), e.g., Collins examines the searching and theorizing about extraterrestrial life. It was then the time, when anthropology engaged the paradigmatic Other in another way – in dialogue with such institutions as NASA, SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence), and others. Collins wrote that this was a kind of fascination with the “ultimate” Other, Other in situated in the future of the human. Chapter 5 (Playing Games with Futurology) concerns the “official” anthropological practice of cultural futurism. There are important questions about tempocentrism, modernity (“we have never been modern?”), and faces of the future on many levels.

In the next sections of this book (chap. 6: “The Surprising Future” and the conclusion: “The Open Future”) the author evaluates anthropological future work in the present. “In a recent collection, *Histories of the Future*, anthropologists set their gaze on ... California and the West ... [and] write: ‘this region became a laboratory, an imaginary, in which we explored the cultural and sentimental microdynamics of future making’” (93f.). Of course, this is only one example. In general, Collins presents a search for an anthropology for the future rather than of the future.

This book has taken anthropological theory into places with which it is ordinarily not associated: futurism, biogenetics, NASA, and so on. Collins explores how anthropological knowledge(s) of the past and present human cultures have been applied to speculate on its future. He emphasizes the great importance of future studies in anthropological thinking, especially in the light of the ongoing planetary pull between forces of global homogenization and local creolization. “All Tomorrow's Culture” is a very timely and accessible book; it is a well-organized and well-written study for readers interested in social anthropology, literary criticism, and everyone thinking about the future of cultures and the whole world.

Waldemar Kuligowski

Dark, Philip J. C., and Mavis Dark: *Vukumo. Art and Life of the Kilenge. A Personal Perspective;* Papua New Guinea. Adelaide: Crawford House Publishing, 2009. 289 pp., photos. ISBN 978-1-86333-330-6. Price: \$A 69.00

In 1974, Melanesianists welcomed the late Philip J. C. Dark's “Kilenge Life and Art” (London), based on his 1966–67 fieldwork in West New Britain. The book included only 32 pages of text (along with over 200 photographs), and offered little in the way of systematic analysis. Dark's academic training was in Art more than in Anthropology, and he was best known as an authority on Benin bronze heads. But at the time the Kilenge