
REVIEW ESSAY

Sverker Finnström*Uppsala University****Disillusion, Embodiment and Violent Reconciliations: Engaged Anthropology on Rwanda, El Salvador, and Peru******Genocide Lives in Us: Women, Memory, and Silence in Rwanda***

Jennie E. Burnet (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012)

Everyday Revolutionaries: Gender, Violence, and Disillusionment in Postwar El Salvador

Irina Carlota Silber (New York: Rutgers University Press, 2011)

Intimate Enemies: Violence and Reconciliation in Peru

Kimberly Theidon (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013)

These are three exceptional ethnographies of death and survival that can be grouped together under the umbrella of post-conflict studies, a thematic focus that has received considerable attention in anthropology in recent years. As a matter of fact, much recent ethnographic research on war has actually been carried out in the immediate or more distant aftermaths of war rather than at the heights of war, even when the research focuses on war itself. The great bulk of research for the three books under review was also carried out in the aftermaths of wars. Questions of humanity linger in all three books. They all focus, in one way or another, on the complex interplay of wartime legacies, peacetime developments, and social repair. They all lay emphasis on the war-peace continuum of violence, both direct and structural, both physical and discursive. “Wars are fought,” as Kimberly Theidon tells the reader. “They are also told, and the telling is always steeped in relations of power” (p. 6).

Jennie E. Burnet’s *Genocide Lives in Us* delineates how Rwandan women seek reconciliation as they cope with a recent but extremely violent past, and remake their lives amidst extraordinary devastation and authoritarian governance in post-genocide Rwanda. She warns the reader of heartbreaking stories that may undermine the reader’s faith in humanity. Despite her warning, humanity can repeatedly be found in the remarkable lives of the women who tell these very stories. The research was made extraordinarily complex because of the authoritarian situation of constant and all-encompassing state surveillance in Rwanda. It became necessary for Burnet to do more than respect the silences of her informants, she had to listen to these silences meticulously as well. In a fascinating description of her field methods, Burnet outlines this intersubjective learning process of how to listen to silence.

Turning now to Latin America, Irina Carlota Silber's *Everyday Revolutionaries* is a multi-sited and transnational as well as longitudinal account of the legacies of the war in El Salvador as experienced by various activists and agents of development and democratization. She delineates, to use her own words, "the *entangled aftermaths* of war and displacement" that produce "postwar deception and disillusionment" (p.10). Methodologically, she relates this focus to her changing role as a fieldworking anthropologist, or what she calls the performative aspects of doing fieldwork: "For the anthropologist is also entangled" (p. 19). This, she notes, is not to be read as a confession but rather as an ambition to extend a conversation on methodology.

Lastly, Kimberly Theidon, in *Intimate Enemies*, invites the reader to follow her fieldwork and her Peruvian informants as they rebuild individual and collective existence in the aftermath of their civil war. One's presence, one's speech, Theidon suggests, elide neutrality. An anthropologist hears stories of war and violence, and can do nothing but choose a side or have a side chosen for her, she argues. In being equally honest and inviting about the actual fieldwork process, in this sense Theidon's *Intimate Enemies* does not differ from the two other books. All three books are profoundly personal and existential accounts of the anthropological encounter. As all three books illustrate, here is perhaps only another application of the old anthropological chant of "participant observation" that, nevertheless, needs to be re-construed in the context of war and violent conflict.

Even if it is impossible for me to summarize the three books in a fair way in this short review, there are some common themes. Integral to the argument in all three books is a well-placed gender perspective which the authors frame in terms of global politics, local cosmologies, and, to speak with Theidon, "local biologies" (p. 37). All three books address, in one way or the other, the theme of embodiment. So when Burnet innovatively focuses on Rwandan silences and stories untold, and how people mourn in silence and how silence actually is amplified, Theidon quotes an informant who treats ulcers in Peru: "Everyone has them." Theidon then adds that silence "has been imposed and there are secrets that eat away at a person from the inside out" (p. 364). But in situations of "too much memory" people were also in search for strategies and practices to forget, whereby they could agree to bury things "between" them (p. 33, 269). In my own work in war-torn Uganda, I sometimes heard informants talk about the importance to be able to "feel free, not to think too much" and to find ways to "swallow" sorrow and bitterness physically as well as ritually. More as a parallel than a contrast to these examples, Burnet's female informants in Rwanda were exercising "their agency by controlling when, how, and to whom to tell their stories," something that "restored the dignity stolen from them" (p. 86). The women in Rwanda were also looking for ways and strategies that would assist them to avoid remembering the past. By way of such examples, Burnet and Theidon join a growing anthropological critique of the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder paradigm as reductionist, mechanistic, and a model which removes local agency and local histories from the equation.

To furthermore compare the three books, Silber's words in *Everyday Revolutionaries* are illustrative: to a certain extent they all exemplify a growing trend of "activist-inspired anthropology rooted in the *everyday* nature of witnessing, of being present

to testimony, of engaged listening” (p. 159). More, in constructive, yet quite different ways, the three books unsettle the line that scholars tend to draw between war and peace. So if Burnet’s book on Rwanda includes the words “memory” and “silence” in the subtitle, Silber uses the terms “disillusionment” and “postwar” in the subtitle to her award winning book on El Salvador. For Peru, Theidon offers a powerful title, *Intimate Enemies*, which again is a clear indication of the common focus of all three books, and Theidon’s subtitle proceeds to unsettle another dichotomy that we need always to problematize and deconstruct in our effort to contextualize war and postwar, namely that of “violence” versus “reconciliation.” The legacies and manifestations of violence are present in the reconciliatory efforts of Theidon’s postwar Peruvian informants, but also in the memories and active silences of Burnet’s Rwandan women informants as well as in the disillusionments of Silber’s Salvadoran female political activist informants. Silber refers to fellow anthropologists Carolyn Nordstrom and Anna Tsing: while peace often debuts before war ends, rather than being something that suddenly appears through the signing of accords, “habits” of war always “linger.” And potential possibilities for a better future also harbor “friction” of global interconnectedness (p. 93). Such legacies are illustrated by Burnet’s poetic and haunting title, smartly borrowed from a statement of an informant, *Genocide Lives in Us*. Theidon puts words to an insight she shares with Burnet and Silber: “there is no ‘observation’ when people are at war and you arrive asking them about it. You are, whether you wish to be or not, a participant. When terror weaves its way through a community, words are no longer mere information” (p. 12).

As Richard Fardon (1990) once pointed out, there is a potential problem with too much of an interest among anthropologists in regional studies at the cost of global and thematic comparison. When anthropologists enter regional fields that have been established and mapped by previous generations of anthropologists, such as Africa, Central America or South America, in their analyses they obviously cross-reference previous regionally specific scholars and in doing so they may unintentionally regionalize theorization as well, which then is at risk of becoming parochial. In other words, a regional focus may limit anthropologists theoretically because too much of a regionalizing of theory and analytical concepts may not assist scholars in generating an overarching body of theory. It would therefore be a pity if any of these three books did not reach a broader readership, transcending their regional focuses. They all have important stories to tell of general interest in anthropology; theoretically, thematically, as well as methodologically. For example, as I read Theidon’s stories of the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) guerrillas in Peru, over and over again I note similarities and parallels with my own experience of working with a focus on the Lord’s Resistance Army rebels in Uganda, which encourage me to revisit my notebooks and rethink my own analyses. Such a reading experience is truly inspiring.

On the other hand, my Africanist bias may also be a problem. Having worked in neighboring Uganda for many years, I found Burnet’s book on Rwanda to be exemplary when it comes to contextualizing and historicizing the argument and analytical key concepts as well as the post-genocide situation that Burnet focuses on. In the introduction she positions her fieldwork and the book’s main argument pedagogically

in relation to Rwanda's recent history. Turning to the Americas, and as I am not that familiar with the history of Central and South America, I sometimes felt that Silber's "broad strokes of history for those unfamiliar with El Salvador" were not enough to settle my curiosity for the war context in El Salvador, yet I sympathize with Silber's ambition to rather open up "a window into postwar lives by rooting them in localized memories of war" (p. 40). For the anthropologist, it is always an act of balancing the past with the present, while also outlining actual hopes and anguishes for the future. In doing this, Silber focuses on the agency of "becoming or 'being revolutionary'" (p. 42) and how these revolutionaries eventually became "postwar development beneficiaries" (p. 25). So even if I sometimes had more of a problem in following the context of the actual war in El Salvador that Silber's stories revolve around than I had with Burnet's genocide story on Rwanda, I also need to be honest: perhaps my familiarity with the literature on Rwanda makes me a biased reader? I suspect that this may actually be the case, and Silber's stories of postwar frustration and legacies of disillusionment are anyway very important and instructive also for me, not least because I work in a different part of the world. Silber's take on activists and NGOs is especially memorable. As her ethnography details, a focus on NGOs should not be on the all-too-common failures in terms of good or bad NGOs but rather in terms of the constant negotiations of meanings and practices among activists and practitioners, and more so in terms of negotiations between the NGOs and their constituencies. Postwar governmentality, Silber notes, is about the control of time. Anyone who has attended NGO meetings can attest to this as well as to the "lies of democracy" (p. 5) so acutely present in times of transition from war to peace.

And even if the armed conflict in Peru to some extent remains a riddle after reading Theidon's book, I learned a great deal about the world-infamous yet elusive Shining Path insurgency. Again with reference to the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda (and beyond), I certainly know how important it is to nuance and anthropologize the black and white global narratives of the world's most infamous rebel groups. God forbid that Invisible Children Inc., the celebrity organization behind the *KONY 2012* online film on Uganda's rebels that went viral, would make a film on the Shining Path as well. Theidon's book is mandatory reading for anyone who as much as wants to mention the name "Shining Path." With its more than 400 pages, it is indeed an exceptionally rich and thick account. One important lesson from Theidon's book is that if people are to understand anything about the Shining Path and the present situation in postwar Peru, they need to understand the motivations of some key players, including victims of war and violence of course, but they also need to listen to the unsettling stories of the perpetrators themselves, including members of the Shining Path. This combination is exactly what Theidon is offering to the reader. In the Andean context, she explains, the status of human being is a moral quality that is acquired, and it may be lost. In a most tactful way, Theidon contextualizes and describes such processes of gain and loss without denying the humanity of the perpetrators (or of the victims for that matter). It is both a powerful and painful reading. And it is important. As anthropologists, I believe we are to try to understand the reasoning and humanity of our informants, whoever these informants are. One reviewer of my own work on Uganda was upset because apparently I made the perpetrators seem too human. I was "overhumanizing"

the Lord's Resistance Army rebels. Even if framed as a strong criticism, I chose to regard the overhumanizing aspect, whatever this term was supposed to mean, as an anthropological achievement. In a similar yet very different way, Silber skilfully uncovers the humanness in situations of postwar disillusionments in El Salvador and beyond. "Reconciliation," she concludes as she accounts also for the stories of the agents of violence (e.g., guerrillas, rebels, perpetrators and thus not only victims in the one-dimensional sense of the word), "takes part in departures and in making [oneself] anew rather than in searching for truth or justice" (p. 190). But even to seek only the possibilities of *coexistence* can in many contexts be an ambitious goal indeed, notes Theidon. And in Rwanda, as added by Burnet, *cohabitation* remains a matter of necessity. But even as the legacies of civil war and terror are still unfolding more than fifteen years into El Salvador's transition to peace, and as the global war on terror foster new imaginations of terrorist revolutionaries all over the world, Silber concludes her truly longitudinal and transnational anthropological account with a return to those small stories of wartime hope that may, for example, make up "an astronaut-boy's dreams" (p. 201).

All three books struggle with detail and context, offering, as Don Handelman puts it in a defense of the anthropological monograph as an academic and scientific genre, a "powerful sense of discovery" yet "with the sense of uncertainty lingering, troubling, perhaps always eluding any finality of closure" (Handelman 2009: 219). If Burnet's book is exemplary in presenting such a clear structuring of the argument as it progresses from chapter to chapter, Theidon adds another quality that I am equally sympathetic to. "This was not a simple story to follow," she notes, and thus she wants her book to be faithful to the way she experienced the research (p. 22). But also social coexistence and reconciliation may take turns that elude the categories of the observing outsider. "If you are confused," she tells her reader, "that is precisely the point. Ambiguity is what allowed this to work" (p. 260).

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REVIEW ESSAY

News Media and the Manufacture of Liberal Lifeworlds

The Life Informatic: Newsmaking in the Digital Era

Dominic Boyer (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013)

Back Stories: US News Production and Palestinian Politics

Amahl A. Bishara (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012)

News Talk: Investigating the Language of Journalism

Colleen Cotter (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Much contemporary work in the anthropology of news media can be understood as a special sort of commodity chain analysis. Although when broadly construed the anthropology of news media investigates social worlds oriented to and influenced by the production, circulation, and consumption of news media texts, the vast majority of news media ethnographies focus on journalists and examine the professional labors and institutional mediations that constitute newsmaking (see Bird 2010). News, however, is not like the stereotypical retail commodity. Compared to other commodities, news is produced differently, consumed differently, and bound by very different standards and temporalities of use and value. On another level, newsmaking intersects with and reflects historically specific regimes of truth, knowledge production, citizenship, and mass publicity. Anthropological investigations of news production, at their best, thus serve to elucidate political formations and the ideologies of knowledge on which they rest.

In this review essay, I consider three recent entries into the anthropology of news media: Dominic Boyer's *The Life Informatic: Newsmaking in the Digital Era* (2013), Amahl A. Bishara's *Back Stories: US News Production and Palestinian Politics* (2012), and Colleen Cotter's *News Talk: Investigating the Language of Journalism* (2010). These books continue the subdiscipline's focus on journalists and journalism to explore the complex and changing conditions and procedures of mainstream news production. Moreover, they offer insight into how standards for journalistic practice—such as accuracy, originality and objectivity—can articulate with broader social categories to shape not only the content of news commodities but also belonging and difference within late liberal political landscapes. Taken together, they amount to a fascinating, ethnographic exposé of liberal ideologies of mass communication and of how news media and news media technologies condition forms of political and social reasoning and even affect the material circumstances under which

people live. After discussing each work independently, I will conclude by developing further the collective significance of these works for the anthropology of news media.

Dominic Boyer's *The Life Informatic* presents ethnographic accounts of three different German newsrooms—at a news agency, an online news portal, and a regional public radio station—to examine how digital communication technologies have altered contemporary journalism and the news product. Chapter 1 on the news agency highlights the ascendance of what he terms screenwork (that is, office-based, computer-dependent labor) and the new temporalities of labor that this work responds to and enables. Chapter 2 on the online news portal addresses the challenge that news organizations face to add value to news products at a time when online news aggregators have rendered basic news coverage ubiquitous. Here Boyer analyzes how the figure of the consumer is institutionalized in journalists' practice of evaluating news stories' success, in updating coverage, and in rationalizing their own contributions to news production. In his third chapter on the regional public radio broadcaster, he examines how journalists see the vocational aspect of their profession—to inform and educate the citizenry—to have transformed in this new and rapidly changing media context. Throughout, Boyer offers ethnographically rich accounts of how journalists grapple with their own changing sense of agency—or the lack thereof—in these new working conditions.

These ethnographic chapters constitute careful and insightful dispatches from a rapidly neoliberalizing profession where old practices, norms, and standards are being remade as technologies, audiences, and financial models change. Boyer sees the era of relatively centralized, hub-to-spoke “radial messaging” (p. 127) in mass communication—epitomized by concentrations of major media networks—being eclipsed by pluricentric, bi-directional, point-to-point “lateral messaging” (p. 127). Examples of lateral messaging can include social media but also include rescaled and reformatted news outlets that are increasingly attuned to user experience and interaction. News organizations affected by this shift, he suspects, will have to adapt their business models, their communication strategies, and their newsmaking methods to incorporate the technologies and opportunities of an increasingly lateralist media landscape.

Boyer contends that such shifts in the field of journalism will affect how anthropologists go about studying news media. In line with scholarship on so-called convergence culture, he emphasizes how the decline of radial messaging has “rendered epistemic distinctions between terms like ‘production’ and ‘reception’—radialist categories at their core—increasingly hazy” (p. 129). Here Boyer gestures to a yet uncompleted anthropology of media interaction that would go beyond the production/reception binary. In addition, he urges scholars of news media to reckon with the mutual reinforcement between technologies of lateral messaging with neoliberal understandings of the self as autological (see Povinelli 2006), that is, as autonomous and self-generating. This argument foregrounds how media technologies can become in certain contexts integrally intertwined with social categories of the person in ways that can help redefine commonsense experience.

The Life Informatic, however, ends with an argument on the hidden legacies of digital reason, those “companion modes of thinking and understanding that have been shaped by experiential encounters with institutions, environments, and practical engagements of electronic computation” (p. 153), within anthropological theory. As Boyer sees it, postwar theories of culture and society often unwittingly drew on computational models from information theory and cybernetics to explain human behavior and institutions. Furthermore, Boyer finds the imprint of digital reason on the poststructuralist theories of unbounded systems that saturate so much current anthropological writing. Hence, he links the ascendance of Foucault and Deleuze in anthropology to how they “struggled to think through digital ecologies before they were normatively accessible” (p. 171). Boyer thus asks anthropologists to be reflexive about the potentially unexpected genealogies of their own theoretical toolkit. Here Boyer sees an opportunity to clear new theoretical positions beyond those with a digital stamp, from which anthropologists might understand and analyze social worlds.

Timely and original, Boyer’s book deserves commendation both for its groundbreaking and insightful analysis of the digital-age journalism and for the important questions it raises about anthropology’s blindness to its own digital thinking. *The Life Informatic* is one of the very first ethnographies to detail and mediate on how changing technologies are reworking journalism. However, Boyer foregoes the opportunity to discuss how the rise of lateral messaging and autological dispositions will affect political formations more broadly. On a different level, the book’s account of the popularity of poststructuralism in anthropology is also mute on politics. In contrast, I recalled Renato Rosaldo’s (1989) account of how a world moved by civil rights, anticolonial struggle, feminism, antiwar protests, and other liberation movements forced anthropology into new modes of analysis and engagement—attention to difference, conflict, and contradiction—in order to remain relevant. In information theory, politics might be but noise that obscures the informational signal, but this reviewer wished to hear more such cacophony in *The Life Informatic*.

Back Stories, by Amahl Bishara, couples an impressive ethnography focused on Palestinian journalists in the Occupied Territories with a brilliant mediation on the principles of liberal news media and their political consequences. As the author pithily summarizes in the book’s conclusion, “This book asks us to broaden our understanding of the basic conditions required to create spaces of free expression” (p. 254). Chapter after chapter, Bishara mounts this interrogation by demonstrating how the concepts and norms that undergird liberal institutions of the media (such as balance, distance, neutrality) come undone when examined from the point of view of a people under military occupation, in this case, Palestinian journalists during the Second Intifada. Bishara’s book thus stands as a critical analysis of the political presuppositions and semiotic ideologies underlying notions of free speech as well as moving study of the violence, both material and symbolic, that defines life under police and military regimes in an era of the 24-hour news cycle.

The first four chapters of the book focus on the experiences of several Palestinian journalists who work as fixers, that is, as local liaisons, for American and European

journalists, who come to cover Palestinian issues. Each chapter dwells on the work of Palestinian journalists within international news production and the practices, assumptions, and concepts that function to minimize that work in a broader public sphere on Israel-Palestine. As Bishara repeatedly shows, although these journalists' contribution is usually invisible within the finished news commodity, the production of international news from the Occupied Territories depends on their professional expertise and physical labor.

Chapter 1 accomplishes this by revealing how the value placed on supposed balanced objectivity in mainstream American journalism functions to misrepresent the power asymmetries inherent to occupation, especially, but not only, by orienting American journalists toward official state discourse. In this context, Palestinian journalists are often pigeonholed as local guides and informants, even though as Bishara shows, these Palestinian fixers contribute to international news texts in significant ways. In doing so, she suggests that attention to the "accumulated authorship" (p. 57) of news, that is, the collaboration and multivocality inherent to news, could offer a different model of news production compared to balanced objectivity and its hierarchies of knowledge. Chapters 2 and 3 each examine the relationship between free speech and a coercive state apparatus. While liberal theory views these two things as antithetical, in chapter 2, Bishara documents how an Israeli state politics of closure and state discourse of security functioned to construe Palestinian speech as a threatening form of incitement in contrast to the calm reason of state speech. The ability to deliberate what is free speech and what is violent incitement, Bishara describes: "relies on the wielding of social or political power" (p. 90). Chapter 3 on the social role of the journalist in Palestinian politics presents an ethnographic deconstruction of the concept of disinterested speech. As Bishara argues "disinterest is only conceivable if there is a space outside of the political realm" (p. 110). Under occupation, however, few dimensions of one's life remain untouched by politics. In contrast to the values of detachment celebrated by liberal theories of the press, in chapter 4 Bishara details Palestinian journalists' "skills of proximity" (p. 139), that is, the embodied tactics they used to navigate the material constraints of the occupation. As Bishara argues, these embodied skills are crucial to understanding events, but undervalued by journalism's professional claims to knowledge production.

The final two chapters in the book look more closely at how Palestinians in the Occupied Territories reacted to constant international journalistic attention. Chapter 5 examines the different ways in which the separation barrier could figure into Palestinian performances for international media in order to question the liberal model of publicity that assumes publics are constituted by shared orientations to texts. Chapter 6 considers the representational politics at play during Yasser Arafat's funeral in Ramallah and the confusion of normative state and media roles in representing the people. Here Bishara describes the breakdown of a liberal political ethics, which asserts that states should not engage in journalistic representation and that journalists should not engage in political representation. The chapter asks, when this ethics of representation fails to describe actual norms, then what is it accomplishing?

As an ethnography of news media, *Back Stories* powerfully demonstrates how the processes by which news is made intersect with and even constitute larger political processes. Bishara goes beyond the now conventional argument that news texts and news production are inherently ideological to explore how the idea of objective news coverage functions to reproduce normative state forms and to maintain hierarchies that determine how one can participate within international news publics. This analysis of who can participate in news coverage is not only true for professional journalists, Palestinian or otherwise. As Bishara writes in the book's conclusion "while it has been widely recognized that our lives as consumers, tourists, and other kinds of thrill-seekers deepens on global flows of money, labor and commodities, it is less widely acknowledged that our lives as citizens and thinkers depend on these global flows as well" (p. 256). Her investigation of news production during the Second Intifada thus amounts to an impressive inquiry of the labor and exclusions that condition liberal politics. In my mind, news media anthropology has never felt more relevant.

In this regard, *Back Stories* makes for a powerful complement to Boyer's argument by foregrounding the underlying political economy of journalism, even in the digital age. While radial models of news messaging that support the hierarchy between correspondents and fixers may be coming undone, it seems unlikely to me that the lateral messaging revolution will significantly shift the hierarchies of knowledge that make Palestinian journalists so central to international news production but virtually unrepresentable within it. Thus, if Boyer draws readers' attention to the increasing neoliberalization of news media in the digital era, Bishara underscores how the autological projects assumed and enabled by digital media are not accessible to all, especially those living under occupation.

Coleen Cotter's *News Talk* is a sociolinguistic analysis of the process of producing news stories that draws on ethnographic research among American and British journalists. Cotter rightly points out that the interactions and linguistic practices of newsrooms and newsmaking have been under-examined in the critical literature on news media. She fills an important void with her comprehensive and careful analysis of several different phases of journalistic news production in a classic newsroom setting. Drawing on concepts from sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication, she examines the relationship between the institutional and professional norms of interaction in the typical newsroom and the nature of the texts produced from such a context.

The book is divided into three parts. The first examines the overarching norms and standards of news production in major US and UK newsrooms. Here Cotter elaborates one of the central tenets of the book: that scholars should understand journalists as constituting a discourse and interpretive *community* linked by shared notions of journalism as a *craft*. The second part takes us deeper inside newsrooms to see the interactions that bear on the production of news media texts, such as deliberations over newsworthiness, the institution of the story meeting, and discussions of the audiences imagined for journalism. The third section turns to how stories are constructed and designed to conform to particular genre-conventions. As Cotter shows, there are conventions governing the writing of a story lead and boilerplate summaries of the

story's background, and these conventions condense mainstream journalistic values and norms of objectivity, neutrality, plain language, and balance. They also have implications for what aspects of a story are framed as relevant to readers. In her attention to detail throughout her analysis of phases of news production, Cotter masterfully troubles the notion of a coherent, autonomous author yet also lays bare the skill, training, textual conventions, and cultural assumptions behind the informative voice from nowhere that is privileged in so much contemporary journalism. In doing so, she provides a fascinating glimpse into the institutional and ideological mediations that constitute classic American and British journalism.

Yet, for all the richness of Cotter's study, its purview is limited to and takes mainstream news organizations of the US and UK to be representative of journalistic practice. Both Boyer's and Bishara's ethnographies throw into question the appropriateness of this model for contemporary journalism. As Boyer argues, the rise of digital media has thrown both journalistic practice and values into a period of flux and redefinition. Bishara's work, in turn, punctures the easy notion of the journalistic community, pointing to the relationships and interactions discounted and erased in making the news. The strength of Cotter's book is its close analytic attention to the institutional dynamics of particular mainstream newsrooms, but this is also a weakness in the face of new scholarship and changing journalistic practice that challenge the norms and sanctity of the institution.

Taken together, these three works demonstrate the fertile and varied work being done within the anthropology of news media. Despite their diversity, however, they work to establish one possible common object of investigation and theoretical elaboration within news media ethnographies: the news process. Among the volumes reviewed here, only Colleen Cotter defines the news process as a key term and she uses it to refer to the "norms and routines of the community of news practitioners" (p. 4). Within the scope of her project, Cotter does a fine job of explicating the process of news production in the classic American and British newsroom. In different ways, Dominic Boyer and Amahl Bishara are also concerned with the norms and routines of news practitioners. The stories their analyses of process tell, however, are different. They take us into the lifeworlds of neoliberal professions, the political ecology and exclusions of free speech, and to the limits of anthropological theory.

Importantly, all three authors provide an ethnographic focus on news process that goes beyond over-worn reliance on the production-reception problematic. As these works show, reference to production and reception as an analytic framework has become too compromised by detailed analyses of the complicated authorships (Bishara) and messaging structures (Boyer) that now congeal within news texts. Attention to news process orients researchers to different orderings of the social life of news media, ones that do not necessarily privilege the authorial work of textual production as something prior or autonomous from reception, but that instead reveal the histories, intertextual connections, semiotic ideologies, and relationships that mediate and complicate news production and its circulation. As the works discussed here show, this attention to news process can lead anthropologists into a critical examination of the very basis of

modern forms of communication and our own anthropological capacity to understand them.

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