commonly occurs in commodity auctions. While it would be difficult to document and compare these different dynamics given the highly closed nature of many of these auctions, such findings would be priceless.

Even the more limited findings presented in this book, however, go a long way toward revealing the inherently social and interactive character of auction markets, whatever their particular form. This book clearly shows that auctions entail considerably more than simply revealing participants' preferences, as assumed in classical economic models. Another important social dynamic of auctions implicitly presented in this book is the extent to which the meaning of various embodied actions emerges only when coupled with the various responses that are generated. The manner in which split bids are treated, for example, is fascinating not only insofar as they are treated differently at different times, but also insofar as pretty much everyone, including often the auctioneer, is uncertain what he or she will do until he or she has actually done it. When cultural differences are added to the various varieties of difference already noted, the riches that auctions offer for sociological research remain many. For anyone interested in ethnographically exploring these possibilities, this book provides a compendium of starting points. I hope the publishers might consider offering it at a lower opening price.

Coding Freedom: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Hacking. By E. Gabriella Coleman. Princeton, N.J.; Princeton University Press, 2012. Pp. xiv+254. $60.00 (cloth); $24.95 (paper).

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The rise of free and open-source software (F/OSS) has played a central role in the social, cultural, and political changes associated with computer and Internet technologies, and while much discussed, there has not been a great deal of detailed research on their social and cultural dimensions. E. Gabriella Coleman's *Coding Freedom* substantially fills this gap, in which only Christopher Kelty's *Two Bits* (Duke University Press, 2008) has so far provided a close engagement with the practices of free-software hackers and only Steven Weber's *The Success of Open Source* (Harvard University Press, 2005) and my own *Hacking* (Polity, 2008) offer a political science–based engagement and a cultural studies–based engagement. Coleman develops not only novel and insightful accounts of F/OSS practices but also clearly articulates the political dilemmas that are posed. Coleman's book is powerful and essential reading, both because it contains excellent research eloquently written, and because it addresses central issues for societies in which code is a core cultural, legal, and political issue. Coleman

covers a wide range of aspects of F/OSS, but her central thrust examines the way a particular ethic or politics of participation in free-software production does not sit on the usual political axes of left and right and because of that is able to motivate a wide range of hackers for whom the practical examples of F/OSS hacking provide ethical models. In these struggles, Coleman argues, a new cultural politics addressing freedom of speech and of property is articulated.

Coleman's book addresses both a range of F/OSS hackers and explores in detail the Debian project for producing a free-software operating system. Debian is an operating system that is a key project in F/OSS because it makes Linux into an available (both in the sense of "free speech" and of "free beer") fully featured computing environment (that is, operating system and applications), and because its organization involves one of the most extensive engagements with the meaning of free software. Coleman both clearly outlines Debian's particular characteristics and explores through well-constructed ethnographies how the ideals of Debian operate in practice. The ethnographic work is methodologically sound and explores how Debian operates; Coleman also develops a critical basis for analyzing Debian and F/OSS. Two brief examples from her work illustrate this.

Coleman is the first analyst to really pay attention to the nature of humor in F/OSS. This effort considerably enriches our view of F/OSS cultures and provides attention to an often-neglected cultural practice. The strength of her ethnography produces this innovative focus. She examines something like the "life course" of F/OSS hackers, thereby making available for sociological and cultural analysis an important community that is often obscured by the technical nature of its practices. This analytic focus on the "life," constructed from over 70 life stories from hackers, clearly establishes the rich community that underpins such technological projects as Debian.

This work is then also clearly related to the wider politics that has arisen in relation to freedom, both personal and informational, in the 21st century. Coleman particularly does this by analyzing the way the F/OSS community developed a politics that cannot be mapped onto a left/right axis and the ways their politics has been influential in issues that were once arcane, such as intellectual property rights, and are now often at the center of political debate. Her analysis in this context of Lawrence Lessig as a translator of F/OSS political ethics into wider political issues is deeply insightful. Coleman not only opens up an understanding of Lessig and the Creative Commons but also situates such politics in relation to its own issues rather than assessing them from preexisting political positions. Doing so allows the particular politics of F/OSS to be seen in its own terms instead of being assessed for whether it is or is not, for example, a critique of capitalism or a proof of libertarianism.

Coding Freedom is, in my opinion (as should be clear by now), an excellent book and an important contribution to understanding central issues of 21st century society. I do have some cautionary comments though. First, the obvious limiting point is that this work primarily addresses ethical issues in the F/OSS community through analyzing the Debian project, and while this point does not undermine any of Coleman's arguments in relation to Debian, a reader should be aware that there is differentiation within F/OSS, with different organizational forms and different relations to ethical issues across communities such as Apache, Linux, and so on.

A further concern is one that seems to be true these days for much anthropological work—that theories are sometimes treated as supporting explanations and hence as tools that can be dropped in where necessary. This tendency leads to preexisting theories not being used much to develop an overarching case and to the use of theories sequentially, as if they can be applied at specific points within the text and hence any contradictions between them need not be addressed or explained. For example, in one section Coleman goes from using Plato to explain a particular phenomenon to, within a page, introducing Mikhail Bakhtin, and each is used quite independently from the other. Within a primarily anthropological worldview that privileges close empirical accounts, this variety can seem to make sense, but it also allows the simultaneous use of possibly contradictory theories whose relations are not resolved, and it disconnects the overall argument from existing theoretical frameworks that might be criticized or developed. Here, Coleman seems to me to be well within a particular way of doing anthropology that many will find unproblematic, but there were times when I would have liked to see some of the major theories of networks and network societies more systematically addressed and, more important, more clearly heard Coleman's critical appreciation and development of these theories.

Such points should also underline how strong Coleman's book is, as they do not really affect its central contribution nor do they undermine her work. *Coding Freedom* is an important analysis of F/OSS that offers deep ethnographic detail and creates a complex appreciation of this phenomenon. Coleman is also able to take this rich detail and extend it into the ethics and politics of F/OSS, connecting internal community principles to wider political effects, of which she provides a unique analysis. This book is compulsory reading for anyone interested in the cultural and social meaning of F/OSS and will powerfully repay anyone interested in the nature of ethics and society in the 21st century.