Comprised of an introduction, five diverse, rich, and occasionally dense chapters, and an epilogue, this book contains ethnography interwoven with fascinating ideas and influences of such diverse figures as Charles Tilley, Indira Gandhi, Ernst Heckel, Keith Thomas, and even Thoreau and Wordsworth. The basic segments of inquiry, as the chapters show, are well configured and internally differentiated. Thus, for example, in the first, second, and fifth chapters Gupta discusses, evoking wide ranging scholarship, some major issues in global developments vis-a-vis the Indian nation-state, its modernity, "agrarian populism," and local/regional peasant movements. In the third and fourth chapters, on the other hand, he presents an intensive field-based account of village agriculture, ecology, and cultural praxis for highlighting Indian villagers' identity-forming actions, social mobilization strategies, and knowledge use. With the help of a suitable and consistent interdisciplinary stance, he interrelates "different scales of explanation and different discursive spaces," especially across the local and the global, and the indigenous and the developmental (pp. 337–338). Most of this works well. And, to his credit, Gupta does so mostly without isolating, reifying, or caricaturing the local and the indigenous before globalizing discourses.

Different chapters unfold the same profile in more detail. In the first chapter, Gupta begins by tracing the complex demands of Indian agricultural life, government development programs, and postcolonial modernity, while also recognizing "underdevelopment" and peasant activism as "a constitutive feature of [Indian, and the Third World] social and political life." He addresses the resulting "mixed" strands of modernizing agriculture within Indian village social life in chapter 2, showing also how, among other developments, postcolonial forces try to loosen, if only unevenly, the grip of feudal practices in land distribution and the associated caste patronage system. In chapters 3 and 4, the ethnographic core of the book, Gupta produces a sensitive ethnographic sketch and analysis of Alipur's indigenous as well as recently acquired art/science of agriculture and ecology, while also carefully evaluating "the limits of the Western episteme" within Indian (and also, more generally, the Third World) postcoloniality. Similarly, when villagers describe their improved crop yields, essentially with the help of new seeds and agricultural technology, they provide Gupta with not only their assessments of recent changes, but also distinct grounds to interrelate traditional Indian conservatism to social creativity, and these two to emerging postcolonial forces.

But while adapting this way, Indian conditions yield cultural mimicry, hybridity, and "internal incommensurability" (pp. 227–233, 285–290). In the final chapter, Gupta examines these against a cluster of local, state, and national agricultural issues, environmental problems and peasant protests, and against some major global developmental initiatives, treaties, accords, environmental summits, and the "common-future" debates. The results for peasants raise only cautious hope amidst despair. As explained in the epilogue, here "global governmentality" (as evident at the Earth Summit in Rio) and North/South divisions (reflected in Karnataka farmers' and peasants' activism) played their roles in India, especially after the 1991 opening of the Indian economy and the entry of Cargill Seeds, and of such American fast-food and drink franchises as Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pepsi, and Pizza Hut. Such postcolonial "shifts do not necessarily augur an improvement in the life conditions for the rural poor in India" (p. 339). Still, proposing to look beyond the local/global dichotomy, Gupta discovers positive in "new" transnational knowledge systems and political processes, for they help peasants connect with new "epistemologies of agriculture."

This profile epitomizes rather well the whole book for its reasoning as well as contributions. As intended, the author also succeeds in raising "a different set of questions" and "look[ing] for different kinds of empirical materials" for probing Indian peasants and farmers (pp. 6–10), while letting postcoloniality come alive with engaged rural Indians' experiences, ideas, feelings, struggles, aspirations, and voices. For me, the book thus stands out. Thankfully, trendy theoretical fluff was also controlled by an imaginative focus on multi-sited ethnography, where careful contextual differentiation, rigorous situational analyses, proportionate relationships, and cautious conclusions matter most. The book is thus a substantive and pace-setting anthropological study of peasants and agriculture in modern India, a country and culture caught in multiple "inner" and "outer" worlds. ⇔

Sambia Sexual Culture: Essays from the Field. *Gilbert Herdt.* Chicago: University of Chicago, 1999. 327 pp.

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Sex had a great start in anthropology, being identified early as a central and legitimate means to understand the human condition. So much so, that in 1932 Malinowski admitted he had to plead guilty to a surfeit of sex: four books on the subject, including two with the word in the title, and one with an introduction written by progressive British sexologist Havelock Ellis. Despite such a salubrious start, in following decades much ethnographic writing on sex was either ethnopornographic (titillating but offering little of theoretical substance) or was marginalized, maligned, or just plain missing. It was not until the early-to-mid 1980s that sophisticated book-length ethnographies of sexual behavior emerged. A primer in this regard was *Guardians of the Flutes: Idioms of Masculinity* (McGraw Hill, 1981), in which Gilbert Herdt addressed Sambian sexual behavior and meanings, especially those surrounding what he initially labeled "ritualized homosexuality" and now terms more specifically "boy-inseminating rites." This was one of the first ethnographic texts to deal with sexual behavior in depth and frankly. Perhaps a new openness in anthropology and the Academy to such treatments were only really possible post-HIV, but Herdt's contributions were preemptive to this change and proved crucial to defining a new field of enquiry that made holistic/four-field anthropology richer.

With twenty years of field experience now accrued, Herdt's writing about the pseudonymic Sambia has emerged as one of the most thorough, systematic ethnographic studies of human sexual expression yet conducted. *Sambia Sexual Culture* is an organized collection of Herdt's essays written across much of that period. The Sambia are a highly gender polarized, sexually antagonistic, small subsistence-based community in the fringe of the eastern highlands of Papua New Guinea. A central theme of Herdt's work, reflected in this book, is understanding how

Sambian ritual illuminates same-sex erotics specifically and human sexuality and gender more generally. Various other themes woven into this text include how power and agency operate where only unequals have sex, and developmental shifts in sexual experience across the life course.

The book is introduced with a winding but highly readable narrative that explains (with the added value of hindsight) the thematic shifts in Herdt's program of research. Each of the following essays uses the Sambia case, alone or as comparative contrast, to deal with diverse issues surrounding sexual culture. Chapter 1 opens the book with an ethnographic interpretation of Sambian song as masculine identity, followed in chapter 2 with description of key elements that define Sambian sexual culture, particularly focusing on male:male and male:female semen transactions. Sexual symbolism in Sambian ritual is addressed in chapter 3, and the role of nose-bleeding in gender relations is interpreted in chapter 4. In chapter 5, the earliest written essay, Herdt uses psychoanalytic models to explain how the act of semen depletion is experienced as part of the emergence of gender identity, a theme continued in the next chapter with a discussion of father absence and development of homoerotic identity. The more recent essays in chapters 7 to 9 deal with discontinuity in sexual development, cross-cultural representations of third sexes, and historical representation of "homosexuality" respectively. Appropriately, the book has its own developmental trajectory. It moves from Herdt's earlier concerns with ritual and gender, to using psychoanalytic tools in the early 1980s, to a reflexive, critical approach, and culminating in an explicit expression of the importance of cross-cultural fieldwork and comparison for insight to the human experience. As sexuality is such a laden topic, this format provides in sharp relief a view of some of the key shifting concerns in wider anthropology since the late 1970s.

The essays in this book have been published elsewhere, so for readers familiar with the large body of Herdt's work already in print there are no surprises. However, because of the mature way these essays are tied together by a fresh introduction, and the thoughtful ordering of the contents so that the reader can reconstruct Herdt's changing ideas and interpretations in an interesting way, this represents a useful and timely volume. As Herdt is not planning further field research, it also represents a suitable summation of a truly significant program of Melanesian field research. ⇔

Cooperative Learning in Context: An Educational Innovation in Everyday Classrooms. *Evelyn Jacob.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999. 223 pp.

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In this monograph, Evelyn Jacob analyzes the implementation of two "innovative" cooperative learning programs at a suburban U.S. public elementary school with a diverse student population. While the fieldwork was carried out in the late 1980s, it has great contemporary relevance, since the cooperative learning programs she examines, along with the standards-based curricula that are a major part of the context referred to in the title, have become ubiquitous in public schools during the last decade. The public school where my own students do fieldwork—serving (as they say) an almost exclusively African American and poor student population—has recently made a major commitment to the very kind of cooperative learning program discussed here, and this cooperative learning is carried out in the context of curriculum and pedagogy driven by state-mandated performance standards, and strict surveillance of teachers and students from above. Jacob's ethnography is a model of clarity that would be very useful and accessible to undergraduates or graduates in a number of disciplines, including anthropology, but perhaps most especially to courses in educational psychology or policy.

The two cooperative learning programs Jacob discusses are the Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT) method associated with Robert Slavin and his colleagues at Johns Hopkins, and the Learning Together (LT) method developed by David and Robert Johnson. Each is a prescriptive plan that requires teachers to involve students in cooperative and collaborative activities that will lead, hopefully, to improvements in academic achievement and social skill. In the TGT method, students work in small groups (usually four) on the same academic tasks, and then compete as teams with other groups for various rewards and recognitions. The LT method is based more on principles than procedures, and encourages positive interdependence, individual accountability, and group processing, among other things. Both methods, it is worth noting, have evolved into profitable enterprises, through the offering of workshops, materials, supervision, et al., and the Johns Hopkins cooperative learning program has been linked to equally prescriptive, and more expensive, reading and math materials. These programs of cooperative learning are grounded in quantitative research in educational psychology, and both draw heavily on motivation theory.

Cooperative learning has most often been investigated, according to Jacob, through acontextual experimental studies—when failures have occurred, they have generally been attributed to practitioners' lack of fidelity to the methods and principles, but the popularity of these programs attests in some degree to their effectiveness. Jacob's study is meant as a curative, in which she undertakes to study how cooperative learning functions within a number of related contexts that have been identified as having significant effects on learning. The conceptual framework employed here derives more from cognitive and educational psychology than from anthropology. She relies on what she calls the "cultural-historical tradition," represented most importantly by Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky and American psychologist Jean Lave. The categories of contextual influence that Jacob focuses on are: "task structure and knowledge domains, psychological and technical tools, interpersonal and social relationships, individual and social meanings, local cultures and institutions, and larger cultures and institutions" (p. 9). She is concerned to take neither an overly micro or macro view of the educational phenomena, and to identity meanings and structures across these different categories. Her very careful analysis, utilizing numerous data sources and types, yields success on both counts, though readers looking for cultural interpretations of the Geertzian variety, or inferences that stray far from the data, may be disappointed.

Jacob observed cooperative learning in two classrooms: a fourth grade mathematics class where the Teams-Games-