acknowledgment of social maternity and social paternity; in doing so, she discloses what she characterizes as legal fictions and the paradox on which they rest. In a somewhat different vein, Diana Mulinari shows how women in Nicaragua simultaneously contest and exploit the dominant imagery of women in their political struggle. Ragoné discusses how gestational surrogates try to circumvent the genetic tie to the child and demonstrates the inconsistencies of the nature versus nurture argument. Inhorn's description of Egyptian women's struggle for motherhood points yet again to how infertility is a burden that women alone often have to bear. Underlying many of the arguments is the troubling question of how to be accepted as a good woman while deemed a failed mother.

Although each case study speaks for itself, an overall connectedness makes this book an interesting read. *Ideologies and Technologies of Motherhood* is both thought provoking and unsettling. The authors present evidence that together sound disturbing echoes of recognition while simultaneously reverberating significant distinctions through an imperative stress on context and positioning. By illustrating throughout the book that motherhood must be understood in and through the contexts where it is produced, the authors make a valuable contribution. The material presented also gives impetus to future directions of research in the field. To address fully the politics of reproduction, a volume incorporating men's positioning and voices from similarly marginal locations would be welcome, as would a more focused and ethnographically grounded discussion of the construction and significance of different forms of relatedness.

Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video. *Catherine Russell.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999. xvii + 391 pp., photographs, notes, bibliography, filmography, index.

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As a professor of cinema, Catherine Russell offers in-depth readings on experimental and avant-garde cinema in order to liberate the practices of ethnographic film. In *Experimental Ethnography,* she recounts key ideas from 150 books and essays, demonstrating the importance of these works in assisting visual anthropology's difficult passage toward a more politically effective future. Russell's arguments proceed allegorically through three-dozen film analyses representing different theoretical foci. I do not summarize here all of Russell's useful discussions of the aura, spectacle, apparatus, gaze, or optical unconscious, nor do I consider Russell's lengthy commentaries on specific structural and found-footage films, fake and ecstatic documentaries, and autoethnographies. I describe, instead, the assumptions, goals, and tenor of Russell's argument, as well as its strengths and contradictions.

Russell's critique of modernist vision—of the ideologies implicit in cinematic representation, essentialism, and realism—demonstrates convincingly that the aesthetics of ethnographic films, like their subjects, often transmit reactionary messages. Russell renders trenchant suggestions and corrective strategies for new visual media through her focus on experimental works; her broad familiarity with film history and feminist, postmodern, and postcolonial theory; and her redeployment of Walter Benjamin's arguments ("The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations,* Hannah Arendt, ed., Schocken Books, 1977:217–251).

Embedded in Russell's suggestions are critiques of what she understands to be failures of anthropological theory and practice. Unfortunately, many arguments of *Experimental Ethnography* are flawed by the author's incomplete knowledge of the field. She glosses "ethnographic fieldwork," for example, as brief, generally clueless, outings away from home (p. 290, *passim*). She accepts uncritically James Clifford's extreme characterizations of the discipline as a whole (*The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art,* Harvard University Press, 1988). Russell's condemnations of anthropology sometimes falter also because they rely heavily on secondary sources—works by Bill Nichols, Trinh Minh-ha, and Fatimah Tobing Rony. These important theoreticians do not know anthropology well and often generalize from weak exemplars. Nowhere does Russell consider rebuttals or alternatives to the biased perspectives of her sources.

From these sources, Russell argues that ethnography and visual anthropology are in desperate trouble. Its practitioners are epistemologically naïve. Ethnographers depend on a

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"scientific, omniscient perspective" (p. 86) rather than "a critical method, a means of 'reading' culture and not transparently representing it" (p. xvii). Ethnographic filmmakers repeat these errors because they insist on employing the realist aesthetic, "practices [that] have been declared dead" (p. xii). Russell also flatly condemns most ethnographers, especially those whose specialty is not postcolonial theory, suggesting naively that anthropologists are unaware that native peoples experience cultural transformation (p. xvi). Russell's suggestions for a liberated ethnographic film do not build on strategies through which generations of anthropologists have identified and addressed related questions. Such historical indifference and stereotyping will alienate many anthropologists before they can profit from Russell's insights about visual media.

Among Russell's strongest insights is her advocacy of cinematic allegory. Expanding on works of Benjamin and Clifford, Russell describes allegory as "a fluid conception of reality . . . in which meaning is not 'closed' but escapes and evades representation" (p. 4). The power of her suggestions lies in how allegory can counteract semantic closures and default racist meanings that audiences may draw from the aesthetic of realism. In one of many cogent examples, Russell discusses Edward Curtis's 1914 Kwakiutl film "In The Land of the Headhunters." She demonstrates that when early film footage is made strange and evocative of allegorical associations, the film allows certain viewers insight into filmmakers' colonialist assumptions.

Although Russell's theorization of allegory is an important contribution, it is also inadequate for visual anthropology. Its limitations characterize those of *Experimental Ethnography* as a whole. Russell speaks from her own subject position as a viewer when she says that Curtis's Northwest Coast footage is a "legible" allegory of imperialism (p. 114). Yet she also mentions that a Kwakiutl museum curator read the same footage merely as "hokey" (p. 113). Russell acknowledges that it is an error to theorize from a solitary viewing position (p. 121); nevertheless, she fixates on her own readings and those of similarly trained university intellectuals. She does not contend with the burning question of why alternate readings occur. Nor does Russell explain, in light of the overwhelming number of readings different from her own, why filmmakers should expect allegories to communicate universally ideas that are "radical," "subversive," "critical," "dialectical," or "committed to social transformation" (*passim*, p. xiii)— her goals for experimental ethnography.

Russell's theory and practice of the allegorical aesthetic offer neither a consistent strategy nor consistent epistemology for educational and political uses of film. She praises allegorical images for their "refusal to explain or understand" their subjects (p. 93), and the refusal engulfs her argument with inconsistencies. Russell is unable to recognize that truthful statements about other cultures and other people can be made. Truth claims, she suggests, are not only impossible but essentialist, Orientalist, and irresponsible. Yet, paradoxically, the condemnation of truth claims is predicated on truth claims. Russell elsewhere argues that truthful representations *are* possible, not with respect to "the representation of other cultures but to the discourse of culture in representation" (p. xvii). The argument is flatly inconsistent. For visual anthropology to be consistent, it must acknowledge that both people and the representations of people are subject to meaningful, even truthful, description. An effective political strategy, like a coherent epistemology, must not exclusively "evade . . . representation" (p. 4). Words and images, in any aesthetic, must often be required to refer.

Nation Dance: Religion, Identity, and Cultural Difference in the Caribbean. *Patrick Taylor,* ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001. ix + 220 pp., bibliography, index.

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In *Nation Dance,* the outcome of a series of presentations at York University in Toronto in 1996, contributors examine Caribbean religion and identity. They describe, or reflect on, features of Santería, Palo Monte, Vodou, Winti, Obeah, Kali Mai, Orisha work, Spiritual Baptist Faith, Rastafari, Congregationalism, Pentecostalism, Catholicism, and liberation theology. This book of 14 chapters is divided into three loosely defined sections called "Spirituality, Healing, and the Divine;" "Theology, Society, and Politics;" and "Religion, Identity, and Diaspora."

The collection's breadth is one of its most exciting dimensions. Contributors include religious practitioners as well as scholars. Academic

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