adaptations to changes in the larger society reveal just how conscious and intentional their wielding of that power may be.

Yet with each Brethren-building adaptation to modernity comes the seeds of potentially Brethren-destroying practice as well—what Reynolds calls "kitchen traditions as sources of integration and disintegration" (p. 110). Reynolds introduces us to Eliza, a recent graduate of a River Brethren school, who now works at home, baking for the local "grocerette," also operated by River Brethren kin. This kitchen enterprise keeps her at home, something her mother dearly wanted, "so she could help me." But Eliza is also working at another home-based occupation: tutoring learning-disabled children from her former school via computer. She has plans to expand this computer-in-the- kitchen enterprise:

> I'm starting the New Hope Learning Center and offering this program to the public, to students whose schools do not have a program to equip them . . . I'm doing this out of my house, too. Probably I'll give up the pie business if this does well . . . I can probably make from two students a month what I make with the pie business. [p. 115]

What will happen when Eliza shifts from a foodways enterprise to a technological one, even if she stays in the kitchen?

In addition to Eliza, Reynolds introduces the reader to Deborah, who "runs a home-based business supplying tourists 'Amish-type' meals," and to Nora who "bakes goods and sells them at a weekly 'farmers' market" (p. 109). These women, too, reveal through their words as well as their lives the importance of women's work in cultural and boundary maintenance; the dilemma of women's work when it pulls them both toward—and away from—the families and communities they want so much to maintain; and the precarious balance of women's relationships to their husbands, men to whom they grant authority but men whose authority depends on women's willingness and women's work.

Reynolds concludes, like many of us who have studied Old Orders, that the worldviews of such individuals are so "vastly dissimilar . . . from that held by [those] in mass society" (p. 165) that only the work of an honorable ethnographer with articulate informants can begin to help us understand "what the devil . . . they think they're up to," as Geertz so bluntly put it (1976:224). Reynolds's research goes a long way to answering Geertz's question about Old Order River Brethren women. Bronner's problematic presentation of Reynolds's work is clearly important for the ideas it engenders, the issues it raises, the questions it answers, and the questions it implicitly asks. Even without analytical clarity, *Plain Women: Gender and Ritual in the Old Order River Brethren* offers us another welcome and worthwhile perspective.

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The Network Inside Out. Annelise Riles. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. 2000. 242 pp.

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This immensely rewarding book is, on one level, an ethnographic account of the work of Fijian women delegates to the United Nation's Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995. It is an ethnographic account of bureaucracy, nongovernmental organizations and transnational issue networks. On another level, however, it is a trenchant and thoroughgoing reassessment of dominant modes of explanation in anthropology and allied fields. While tracking women "networkers" who compile documents, disseminate information, and extend their networks in international spaces, Annalise Riles also brings networking itself, and its attendant knowledge practices, to bear on the apparent exhaustion of paradigms that characterizes Turn of the Century anthropological analysis.

If anthropology in the 1990s seemed paralyzed by the discipline's internal squabbles over objectivity, partiality and perspective, it nonetheless trundled along discovering cultural logics behind social practices and deeper meanings in phenomena that, on the surface, appeared straightforward. Cultural analysis proceeded, as it had done for half a century or more, by revealing deeper or higher orders structuring everyday social and cultural phenomena—epistemologies in winks, as Geertz had it. Yet there had been a nagging suspicion that the Durkheimian and Saussurean legacies that led anthropologists to deduce social and semantic process, on a different scale from on-the-ground practice, were inadequate to the worlds anthropologists increasingly attempted to describe, from "globalization" to international institutions, civil society, finance, law and science. This awareness arose not the least because the processes some anthropologists were attempting to analyze resembled nothing so much as their own production of knowledge. It also came as "globalization" led some to query the logic of shifts in scale as an analytical device for gaining new knowledge about social phenomena (or, which comes first, levels of analysis or levels of reality, from local to global?). As Riles demonstrates, the issues here speak to the unexamined everydayness of social scientific reasoning, the distinction between description and explanation, and the very documents and bureaucracies—field reports, tables, diagrams, funding agencies, academic institutions, governments, and nongovernmental organizations—that are the nuts and bolts of ethnographic practice today.

Riles's main argument is that the artifacts, bureaucratic practices, and social worlds of Fijian networkers share a formal aesthetic with modernist academics. The analytical enterprise of attempting to find a critical perspective on networking fails. The networkers themselves are already engaged in and indeed have already produced such perspectives for their own purposes (i.e., maintaining the network) that would not differ in any substantive manner from what

a diligent ethnographer might construct for hers—gaining intellectual purchase on social life. The sort of contextualizing moves an anthropologist might make have already been made. Anthropology and networking come to seem like two versions of the same thing, a thing "seen twice," as Riles puts it (p. 61). Networkers, like anthropologists, create, disseminate, and use information to extend their networks, and they instruct themselves to reach out to their "grassroots" by techniques that mirror ethnography ("You have to be part of the community. You eat whatever they eat. You sleep with them. . . . You have to go down to them, and they will believe in you," said one networker, p. 55). Like anthropologists, networkers are obsessed with the power of language, its performative force, and its use in documents and designs that are supposed to have specific political, emotive or rhetorical effects (p. 66). What matters to networkers, in contrast—perhaps—to anthropologists, is the aesthetic of form itself. The aesthetic of form is "inside" academic knowledge practices, too. When there is no outside, analysis is a re-staging or replication of the same aesthetics, a turning "inside out."

Riles's endnotes warrant special attention, for they map out the book's analytical contribution to ethnography. There, she writes that she is not after a new epistemology, but a new aesthetic (p. 191 n. 29); she seeks "to hear the possibilities that inhere in the familiar without resorting to making it strange" (p. 186 n. 5). Given her ethnographic subjects' own preoccupation with information—which they collate, assemble, photocopy, rerecord, and disseminate in hundred of documents, from small pamphlets to bulky reports—it is not surprising to find Riles also rethinking the late-modern mode of information for ethnographic methodology. As she puts it,

> contrary to an ethnographic imagination of methods as universal and data as particular, I understand the "method" to be no more general or particular than the "data" to which it is applied. To state the same point another way, the contribution of this work is its challenge to the distance between data and method in the ethnographic imagination of information. [p. 191 n. 29]

Five of the book's seven chapters illustrate this signal contribution by lingering over specific aesthetic/analytical forms. These forms include the network, or the artifacts and institutions "that internally generate the effects of their own reality by reflecting on themselves" (p. 3) and are their own raison d'etre (ch. 2). Particularly noteworthy here is the contrast between old social networks analysis with its star-shaped, outward reaching diagrams, and networkers' closed diagrams of their own networks: They do not reach out, but circle back on themselves.

Another form examined in the book is the square bracket, which, when used in document drafts, gathers "together every possible alternative formulation into a messy and very lengthy document" (p. 84, ch. 3). Text that has not been agreed on is placed in brackets; any delegate can add anything to a document so long as it is put within the brackets. Because the text within the brackets represented the space of disagreement or lack of consensus, the process of completing draft documents became a process of removing brackets: "freeing" the text and producing a "clean" document. In the preparations for the Beijing conference, networkers spent an inordinate amount of time drafting documents with an eye, not toward the referential content of the texts, but the shape of the written words on the page. Networkers focused on the frequencies of specific terms (like *women* or *gender*), the rhythm of the words and the seamless quoting and referencing of other already-agreed-on texts in their own documents (pp. 79–82).

A third form is the genealogical grid and rectilinear land parcels, examined in reference to contending land claims of a clan of part-European Fijians (ch. 4). The contribution here is to interrogate the informatics of anthropological understanding by demonstrating the ontological priority or preconstructedness of land parcels, a counterintuitive move that permits Riles to question the form of "information" assumed in cultural analysis. Following Marilyn Strathern and others, Riles seeks to highlight the linkage between academic knowledge and a mode of information in which gaining a new perspective on a problem has been taken to reveal new information, and information is therefore by definition infinite. There will always be another perspective and "knowledge," like social relations, will be "infinitely extendable" (p. 113). The problem is not that this is no longer descriptive but that it is a specifically modernist undertaking. Riles shows how, for some part-European Fijians, perspectival knowledge stops at the boundaries of land parcels, boundaries that precede other facts built up after them.

A fourth form is the "system" represented in graphic designs of organizational structures (ch. 5). Networkers "took particularly avid interest in visual depictions of network form. 'Look at the chart: it gives the links' " (p. 116). Riles pays close attention to the aesthetics of the newsletters, pamphlets and posters that networking women produce, and the recurrent pattern of "controlled heterogeneity" (p. 120) that is meant both to "transcend culture" and to "make use of 'culture' as components" in the design (p. 133). The fifth and final form Riles examines is the tabular matrix used in everything from brainstorming sessions to social scientific analysis (ch. 6). Putting things in matrix form demands that empty spaces be filled in, and the things to be filled in become the "actions" that the network must take. Spaces in the matrix are "failures" that must be met, failures that paradoxically inhere in the very design itself (p. 170).

The first and last chapters serve as introduction and provocation. The first chapter reviews the background organizing for the Beijing conference in terms that would be as familiar to UN delegates as they would social movements scholars. And there's the rub: "When the subject of study is configured according to analytical categories, devices, and practices that approximate anthropological analysis, to begin with anthropology's own categories is to doom the project to a mere replication of indigenous representations" (p. 16). There is no "outside" to the artifact like an international legal document that has already anticipated and enacted its

own exegesis. Riles's own engagement with this field subtly transformed, not her own knowledge practices, but the style and emphases with which she carried them out. She relates that on returning from the field and busying herself with the mundane affairs of university administration, she at first felt no disconnect between fieldwork and academic work. Her colleagues, however, noticed her increased attention to "matters of procedure" over "matters of substance," to "punctuation and formatting" when she read drafts of their work (pp. 16–17). The issue is one of means and ends: formatting and punctuation, in a sense, are ends for Fijian networkers—they produce a "clean" text that can be reproduced and circulated in transnational spaces and that has a certain aesthetic appeal to networkers. For academics, formatting and punctuation are supposed to be means to another end—they fade into the background to make an argument shine. Although argument is not strictly speaking beside the point for networkers, it functions in aesthetic terms, as another layer on top of other material in documents that are about repeating patterns of language rather than language's putative referentiality.

This book will be of interest to anthropologists and other scholars interested in law, bureaucracy, nongovernmental organizations, modernist aesthetics, transnational social movements, international feminism, and modern knowledge formations. It tells an extremely interesting—at times, quite humorous—story about a specific transnational issue network organized around a particular social movement and through a set of international and nongovernmental organizations. More importantly, however, it is exemplary of what a critical and reflexive engagement with modern knowledge itself can do, and it is the best demonstration thereof that I have yet encountered.

Houses Far from Home: British Colonial Space in the New Hebrides. Margaret Critchlow Rodman. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001. 247 pp.

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In *Houses Far from Home,* Margaret Critchlow Rodman constructs an anthropological history of British colonialism in the New Hebrides, now Vanuatu, by exploring its most intimate sites. Using colonial housing to "frame an ethnography of colonialism" (p. 205), she integrates architectural data with archival material and the personal stories of retired colonial officers and their family members to examine how the organization of domestic space "both expressed and shaped a colonial process" (p. 20).

The Condominium of the New Hebrides was a unique experiment in colonial rule. From 1906 to 1980, the British and French empires jointly administered the islands.

Each partner appointed a resident commissioner and court officials to oversee the affairs of its own nationals; matters of mutual concern were settled through agreement between the two partners or referred to a Joint Court. This duplication of administrative functions created an unusually large and ineffective governing apparatus. It also highlighted issues of cultural identity, social exclusivity, and the exercise of authority, each of which found expression in the colonial landscape.

Although interested in the perceptions of "people who were positioned differently in a particular colonial history" (p. 2), Rodman restricts her analysis to the British colonial experience. She explains that the wealth of information encountered in British archives, coupled with the large number of former colonial servants who wanted to be interviewed, exhausted available time and money before she could investigate the French side of the equation. The absence of a French component to her study is unfortunate, if understandable, both because the French were an integral part of the Condominium and because French colonial space and experiences appear to have differed from their British counterparts in significant ways. The lack of ni-Vanuatu perspectives likewise is regrettable, as such perspectives undoubtedly would have contributed to an understanding of how the organization of colonial space helped shape colonial processes.

The colonial houses that Rodman examines are not particularly remarkable in terms of architectural design. Dwellings built in the initial years of Condominium rule were made of precut timber shipped from Australia; later on, authorities purchased prefabricated bungalows from Sydney architectural firms. Such mass-produced housing seemingly permitted little in the way of individual aesthetic expression or use of vernacular building techniques. But Rodman is less concerned with houses' architectural features than with their "complex meanings as homes and as colonial products and processes" (p. 3). Drawing on John Noyes's discussion of colonial space in German Southwest Africa, she argues that built environments help create a "common sense" orientation toward the culturally constructed world in which people conduct their daily lives. In the New Hebrides, the construction of official residences, court buildings, and other colonial sites created a landscape that made an entire set of social and political relations seem "natural" to its inhabitants. In examining this landscape, Rodman hopes to gain insight into the "colonial mind-set that the buildings and the discourses about them represent and reinforce" (p. 3) as well as insight into the New Hebridean colonial project itself.

Rodman devotes special attention to the role that memory plays in the construction and recovery of cultural meaning. Each dwelling, she argues, is a repository of memories.

These memories are "compartmentalized" according to when people lived in a specific house and with whom the memories are shared. Rodman pieces together a house's "life history" by soliciting recollections from the various individuals who lived in it and by combing through archival records for references to these same houses and people. She then connects each house and its residents with larger colonial processes by following up on issues that emerged "dis-