

Worth a Second, or a First Look

Reviews by
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Néstor García-Canclini, **Consumers and Citizens: Multicultural Conflicts in the Process of Globalization**, Trans, George Yúdice, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001, \$22.95 (paperback).

Consumers and Citizens sums up why García-Canclini is one of the leading intellectuals in the field of culture today. He blends innovative theorizing with highly practical applications: survey research and ethnography rub up against postmodern and postcolonial concerns. The Yanqui notion that there is 'theory' and then there is 'research,' with something called 'method' hovering in-between, is blown apart.

Faye D. Ginsburg, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin, eds., **Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain**, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, \$27.50 (paperback).

For some years, ethnography has been back on the agenda of media studies, but rarely in a way that shows great understanding of how anthropologists do what they do. This collection of original essays by expert practitioners both shows how to do it, and undermines the tired old shibboleth that their discipline is mired in colonialism and essentialism.

Ian Hunter, David Saunders, and Dugald Williamson, **On Pornography: Literature, Sexuality and Obscenity Law**, London: Macmillan, 1993, \$45.00 (paperback).

This volume represents the culmination of a powerful tendency within the study of pornography that draws on Foucauldian methods. In doing so, it manages to draw us away from both Romantic and religious obsessions with tasteless antinomies like liberty and oppression, favoring in their place a measured historical approach.

Justin Lewis, **Constructing Public Opinion: How Political Elites Do What They Like and Why We Seem To Go Along With It**, New York: Columbia University Press, 2001, \$25.50 (paperback).

Those of us who are disciples of Bourdieu's famous dictum that public opinion doesn't exist need to read this, just as much as do true believers in survey research. An additional benefit is that it gives the lie to claptrap about U.S. journalists being to the left of the population. Like Canclini, Lewis is a grounded theorist, so readers learn how to conceptualize even as they learn new facts.

Aida A. Hozic, **Hollyworld: Space, Power, and Fantasy in the American Economy**, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001, \$36.99 (hardcover).

Astonishingly, a real book can actually emerge from political science. Who'd have thought it? Hozic undertakes a bravura Gramscian analysis of mercantilism and intra-class conflict in the operation of U.S. popular culture. Wonderfully researched and written, it is the best contemporary account of Hollywood.

Vincent Mosco, **The Digital Sublime: Myth, Power, and Cyberspace**, Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2004, \$13.60 (paperback).

Coming from someone often regarded as a political-economy person, this volume displays all the grace and erudition of its author, offering a *rapprochement* with cultural studies. Mosco starts from the power of cultural myths, then 'builds a bridge to political economy' in his excoriation of neoliberal phantasies about empowerment through new media, insisting on 'the mutually constitutive relationship between political economy and cultural studies' as each mounts 'a critique of the other' (6-7).

Hortense Powdermaker, **Hollywood: The Dream Factory**, Boston: Little, Brown, 1950, \$15.99 (paperback).

This is a classic ethnography of Hollywood after the War, before suburbanization, televisualization, and state intervention changed the industry. Powdermaker recognised back then that Hollywood 'is not an exact geographical area' (18). She set the scene for work that has understood it since in terms of a global division of labor.