

Animating Memory Through Song and Music

Putting a Song On Top of It: Expression and Identity on the San Carlos Apache Reservation. David Samuels. Tucson: U Arizona Press. 2005. 324 pp.

Real Country: Music and Language in Working Class Culture. Aaron A Fox. Durham: Duke U Press. 2004. 363 pp.

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Ethnographers have become ever more explicit in rejecting and re-theorizing binary oppositions of mass consumption and institutional production, and immediate interaction and local performance. A growing, ethnographically robust literature brings situated forms of expressive practice and electronically mediated forms of public culture into the same frame. Yet studies that bring together the verbal and vocal with media and political economic concerns as skillfully as these two monographs have are still relatively hard to come by.

These two works, empirically grounded in music and language, bring into ethnographic relief the interaction of mass media and extra-local circulation with intertwined expressive, performative and political aspects of reproducing social identity. In their own ways, each also confronts the misplaced taint that mass media and commodified forms of expressive culture can still elicit from some observers; they do so by chronicling the local social life and political and aesthetic inversions of "authenticity."

Interpreting Ambiguity

Foregrounding the stakes for Apache in crafting social identity with expressive forms most frequently associated with American popular culture,

Samuels foregrounds the fallacy of assuming an easy indexical relationship between a singular expressive form and a stable social identity. He argues that in the San Carlos Apache Reservation social memory is crafted through ways of musically linking present feelings with those of the past. It is in this way that Guns N' Roses, Mariah Cary or George Jones can all evoke a subjective feeling of "being Apache" and a sense of the Apache past.

This focus is made explicit in Samuel's discussion of performer and songwriter Boe Titla, and the difficulties Titla faces as an "Apache" songwriter whose music evokes local social memory in its textual references to place, but does so in the form of popular songs and with guitar and electronic instrumentation. For Samuels, that Boe Titla's songs could be described as hybrid fails to address what makes them significant in San Carlos. The question for Samuels isn't "Where does it come from" but "How do things become part of a community?" (134).

Something altogether different is going on; Samuels' bid to connect that San Carlos expressivity to broader understandings of power and social identity emerges in his discussions of ambiguity, which he identifies as crucial for a valued, cross-modal aesthetic principle in San Carlos. In the layering of distinct formal aspects, Apache produce interpretively ambiguous forms of expressive culture, and those forms are given value and meaning

in their interpretation and very appreciation as "ambiguous."

Situating Honky Tonk

Fox's fieldsite is the honky tonk, and his most immediate ethnographic object its vocal, social life. In *Real Country*, Fox notes that many studies of country music identify the genre as, in his terms, "a category of commerce in sound, image and ideology, coterminous with a rationalizing industrial enterprise of cultural production" (30). Fox, however, attends to country music's undeniable status both as commodity and as "working-class art" and a Texan discourse of the real—a form of working-class "cultural property" and expressive sociality.

This ethnographic argument frames Fox's exposition of honky tonk talk and verbal performance, and his rich evocation of the inter-animation of song, verbal art and ordinary talk form the bulk of *Real Country*. That exposition brings together performance, his interlocutors' own discourse on music and social life, and formal analysis of speech, verbal art and of course song itself, while also relying on country songs, the jukebox and country's celebrities as ethnographic agents in Lockhart.

In their pairing of individual voices and distinct performances with broad-brush interests in social identity, changing power relationships and the centrality of mass mediated cultural production in the most intimate of social locations, both *Real Country* and *Putting a Song on Top of It* are monographs with expansive ambitions and equally expansive and rewarding conclusions. Together they point to the centrality of feeling-full memory, the analytic and political significance of ethnographic attention to local claims upon (and inversions of) "the real," and the importance of music and verbal performance as expressive resources in forming North American social identity—both on the reservation and in the beer joint. ☐

The Social Life of Food

As Nations Unify and Globally Integrate

Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well. Pellegrino Artusi, Luigi Ballerini (Introduction), Murtha Baca (Translator). Toronto: U Toronto Press. 2003. 653 pp.

Appetites: Food and Sex in Post-Socialist China. Judith Farquhar. Durham: Duke U Press. 2002. 341 pp.

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First published in 1891, Pellegrino Artusi's *Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well* is both cookbook and cultural document, decidedly anthropological in its scope. Framed by Luigi Ballerini's excellent introduction to the historical contexts in which Artusi was writing, *Science in the Kitchen* offers a unique glimpse into fin-de-siècle Italy.

A former investment banker whose wealth allowed him to indulge fully his passion for food, Artusi employed two cooks who prepared the recipes he gathered from cookbooks and the wives of his friends. Artusi celebrates the diversity of regional Italian cuisines while also giving the influence of French cuisine its due. Artusi and his widely popular cookbook revived a sense of national pride in the pleasures of Italian cooking when Italy itself was being reunified, suggesting

such texts deserve to be examined alongside newspapers and other forms of print capitalism that create a sense of shared national identity among middle-class readers.

For those accustomed to the trend in American cookbooks toward specifying exact measurements, *Science in the Kitchen* can be confusing, and a certain innate knowledge of cooking is presumed. Yet his recipes and accompanying anecdotes brim over with humor and advice offering glimpses into the social life of food at the turn of the 20th century. We learn, for example, that the word for roast beef has come into the Italian from the English, and that it is ideal for dinners involving men, since men "want to sink their teeth into something solid and substantial." Artusi advises cooks not to be alarmed if a strudel resembles "a giant leech or shapeless snake," for it will still be delicious. There are also irreverent digressions, where food provides an opportunity for Artusi to comment on wider cultural events such as