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work and making the multimedia examples freely accessible online will inspire a “music ethnologist” to become engaged with this material (p. xvii). The resources provided are indeed rich and abundant, and it would be wonderful to see this wish come to fruition.

Strathern, Andrew and Pamela Stewart: *Kinship in Action: Self and Group*. Upper Saddle River (NJ): Prentice Hall, 2011. 210 + xiv pp, bibilio, indexes, photos, n.p. (paper).

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Andrew Strathern and Pamela Stewart are social anthropologists at the University of Pittsburgh. Prolific writers, these authors have wide-ranging interests and field experience, covering topics from symbolism and ritual to medical anthropology, and geographic areas from the United Kingdom to Asia and Oceania. The breadth of the authors' scholarship is reflected in their twofold goals in *Kinship in Action*: to interpret kinship through a processual lens and to explore the interplay between individuals and the kinship systems in which they participate. Strathern and Stewart should be lauded for promoting a pluralistic perspective in the study of kinship and for moving beyond entrenched debates that have for decades plagued synthetic research efforts. The greatest strength of this book also engenders its greatest weakness, however: breadth of coverage is sacrificed for depth of included case studies. This leaves two potential, but undefined, audiences for the book: undergraduate students of kinship who might use this to supplement more traditional texts; and kinship experts desiring exposure to important, but often overlooked, case studies.

Kinship in Action may be structured for use as a supplementary text for an introductory kinship course: the first chapter presents a partial overview of the anthropology of kinship as well as its foundational areas of inquiry; subsequent chapters address the life cycle of the family, cultural variation in concepts of reproduction, and the variable structures and functions of kinship; final chapters challenge traditional notions of kinship through exploration of Schneider's Euro-American “folk model” of kinship as well as new reproductive technologies; and each chapter concludes with “Questions to Consider”. The examples discussed in the book range from contemporary legal cases grappling with the rights of biological versus contractual (“social”) parents, to fictional accounts of kinship in films and novels, to the commoditisation of marriage in the context of market integration among the Telefomin of Papua New Guinea. While students are likely to benefit from the breadth and novelty of these examples, a more steam-lined structure, focusing more closely on each case's original contributions to existing literature, would assist students in unpacking the relevant points.

An instructor who is already very familiar with the anthropology of kinship might profitably make use of the case studies provided in *Kinship in Action*. The geographic emphasis on Oceania provides refreshing examples of populations with which kinship scholars may be relatively unfamiliar, including the Hagen, Duna, Pangia, Melpa,

and smaller-scale groups such as the Huauilu and Telefomin. The facts concerning these groups are numerous, reflecting the authors' extensive familiarity with and expertise in Oceania. They are, however, presented disjointedly, making it difficult to assimilate the information in the context of the stated goals of the book. For example, the chapter "Concepts in Reproduction" discusses some of the variation in beliefs and rituals surrounding conception and childbirth, including the well-known Trobriand case, as well as lesser-known cases such as the Siuai and other populations of Papua New Guinea. Their relevance to discussions of "Legal Contexts" (p. 41), "New Reproductive Technology" (p. 43), and "Adoption" (p. 46), with which they appear, could be more clearly delineated to assist the reader in attempts to merge seemingly disparate topics into a more synthetic overarching framework. In particular, the case studies could be analysed more explicitly in terms of "action" and the "self and group", themes implied by the book's title. This would do much to improve the reader's ability to grasp the authors' novel and interesting insights, which at present are often buried within truisms and facts.

The authors' discussion of the Na (aka the Mos(u)o), with whom I work, is illustrative. While discussed in some detail, the section on the Na (p. 103-7) begins abruptly, without explicit rationale for its inclusion. The section relates important features of Na society, including class structure, marital practices, and rituals. The reader gleans from this material that the Na are matrilineal and that the institution of marriage governs reproduction only among elite members of society, two aspects emphasised in the last paragraph where the authors finally reveal why they find the Na interesting. The broad overview of the Na is summarised based on one ethnographer's account (Cai Hua 2001, *A Society without Father's or Husbands: The Na of China*). While the authors speculate that "the relatively unusual features of the [Cai's] materials make it likely that variant versions exist or will emerge" (p. 107), they do not relate what those variant versions might be. Researchers of the Mosuo (including myself, Eileen Walsh, C.K. Shih, Elizabeth Hsu, Tami Blumenfeld and others) have made significant efforts to move beyond explanations of the Na as a case of "extreme matriliney" (p. 107). In addressing temporal and attitudinal changes and the apparent tensions between self and group, these researchers have engaged at various points both of the objectives of Strathern and Stewart's book. Indeed, the most recent and arguably most authoritative account of the Mosuo, C.K. Shih's *Quest for Harmony* (2010), discusses marriage (or lack thereof) as an outcome of endeavours to maintain group harmony and would have made a valuable contribution to *Kinship in Action*.

If somewhat fragmented, *Kinship in Action* succeeds nonetheless at various points in bringing together disparate perspectives under one rubric. As a biocultural anthropologist focused on the evolutionary underpinnings of human social behaviour, I appreciate the authors' holistic approach in general and their attempts to marry biological and cultural theories of human kinship in particular. While their discussion of evolutionary theories of kinship is lacking, the authors' critiques of David Schneider's anti-kinship scholarship are salient (especially pp. 132-33), as are attempts to bring into focus both belief and behaviour. I agree with Strathern and Stewart's emphasis on the "interplay of [kinship] process[es] and structure[s] in local contexts and their emergence as historical trajectories of change" (p. 152) and welcome efforts to incorporate these ideas into the anthropology of kinship.