

Regina F. Bendix, *Culture and Value: Tourism, Heritage, and Property*

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Bendix has been writing and thinking about tourism, cultural heritage, and the concept of cultural property from the perspective of a folklorist for nearly three decades. Her work is characterized by sophisticated, nuanced, and challenging explorations of core aspects of the study of culture and this volume is no exception. Comprising a concatenation of previously published articles, as well as unpublished conference presentations, *Culture and Value* presents some of the most important scholarship

on these topics in the field of folklore in an eminently readable form. Importantly, Bendix has edited some of these works, while others have been made accessible to a non-German speaking audience for the very first time. The result is a collection of provocative pieces that can be read individually in the context of an emerging research problem or read as a whole as a multi-faceted exploration of the complexities of the study, presentation, and consumption of culture.

In her introduction, Bendix presents an important theoretical observation that serves as a motivation for the volume as a whole. She proposes to examine: “the constant undercurrent of issues revolving around the (e)valuation, distinction, and individual and social economic, ideational, and scholarly value inherent [in the] interconnected” realms of tourism, heritage, and cultural property (1). She quickly traces the chronological development of cultural scholarship through three phases, beginning with “a negative, even outraged witnessing of marketed, ideologically deployed, and adulterated expressive forms,” that led to later “cultural representations as opportunities to uphold identities,” to finally “acknowledging ... efforts to claim ownership of culture as property” (1). These observations on the development of cultural scholarship inform the organization of the volume, with each of the three sections offering a series of perspectives on a loosely defined period. By emphasizing these thematic breaks as section groupings, yet resisting their boundaries in the section essays, Bendix renders these imperfect theoretical boundaries fluid, thereby ensuring that the perspectives are not unnecessarily anchored in a particular period nor informed by a slavish chronological ordering.

The first section, “Creating, Owning, and Narrating within Tourist Economies,” centers on tourism and the engagement of the tourist industry, and tourists themselves, with varying conceptions of “culture.” In four essays, she moves from the earliest conceptions of the “encounter” between the tourist/traveler and the cultures of the areas in which tourists traveled, to the consumer oriented aspects of tourist culture. In these chapters, she interrogates the role of both the tourist as consumer and the locals as caretakers or producers. In particular, she explores industry aspects of cultural production intended for consumption. The role of narration—both the “narratized experience” produced for tourist consumption and the narrative of tourists themselves emerge as a *leitmotif* throughout these essays. Importantly, Bendix does not dismiss the tourist experience as “inauthentic,” but instead notes that, “inventions...need not be decried as inauthentic, as all tradition is continuously created and recreated so as to satisfy those who partake in and of it” (19–20). The four chapters in this section also create a clear bridge to Bendix’s thorough investigation of authenticity (*In Search of Authenticity*) and can be read in concert with that important work.

The second section, “Heritage Semantics, Heritage Regimes,” dives into the semantically complex realm of heritage and the politically fraught realm of heritage politics. Bendix notes that heritage scholarship has “moved beyond anxieties of heritage endangerment and loss” (98) and now encompasses a remarkably broad domain from examinations of childhood to foodways to human rights. Yet not all considerations of heritage are positive, particularly in the context of national history. Here, Bendix recognizes the potential incompatibilities between national institutions and democracy itself, highlighting instances when democratic citizens are asked to “protect and invest in...sites” that often undermine the very premise of democratic institutions themselves (100). This section is perhaps the most theoretically rich for scholars working

on these complex problems in the Asian context and Bendix's explorations, although drawn largely from a European context, are illuminating to a wide range of heritage problems across Asia.

The third section, "Culture as Resource, Culture as Property," is based in part on Bendix's recent participation in—and ethnographic exploration of—a multi-year European project on cultural property. As such, several of these chapters could be read in concert with *Sustaining Interdisciplinary Collaboration* (Bendix, Bizer, and Noyes). Bendix characterizes the shift toward the conception of "culture as property" as creating both a challenge and an opportunity for scholars of culture "to be acknowledged as meaningful interlocutors in the interdisciplinary work of law and economics" (196). The second essay in this section is particularly interesting. A previously unpublished presentation in German, the essay presents Bendix's own observations on United Nations World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) negotiations focused on ownership of cultural property, a concept that Bendix as a folklorist has long explored.

Bendix's deceptively slender volume will be of considerable interest to students of Asian folklore, providing a clear perspective on the issues confronting largely European ethnologists and cultural institutions. These explorations may provide some insight into analogous challenges confronting folklorists whose main focus is on Asia. This latter point brings me to my one quibble with this otherwise exceptional volume: there is no meaningful mention of Asia. Consequently, the impact of Japanese colonial era cultural policies, or the efforts of various government institutions across Southeast Asia, are left out of Bendix's otherwise thorough considerations of the machinations of global organizations such as WIPO and UNESCO. Yet the absence of any mention of the long-standing Asian cultural heritage institutions, and the political and theoretical struggles that undergird those institutions, should be seen as an opportunity for Asian folklorists to explore Bendix's ideas—and the numerous cultural theorists on whose shoulders she stands—in an Asian context.

The collection is handsomely presented and very well organized. Each of the chapters is presented as a self-contained entity with its own footnotes and references, allowing chapters to be easily adopted as course readings. The volume is perfectly suited for upper division undergraduate courses on culture and tourism and would fit quite well in graduate seminars. Researchers interested in a predominantly European view of the complex challenges of understanding heritage and cultural institutions, such as museums and tourism, will find the volume extremely valuable and scholars of Asia will find the ideas as a provocative launch pad for their own investigations.

Timothy R. Tangherlini
UCLA