knowledge (that is, shared cultural information) embodied in sermons. With this as our base, we can appreciate how more abstract knowledge (tacit discursive and nondiscursive knowledge) elaborates on shared cultural meaning. This is most typically found in the variability of individual discussions of souls (Chapter Four), and among individual families as they go through different rituals including curing (Chapter Five), and death (Chapter Six).

Merrill accomplishes a number of admirable goals in *Rarámuri Souls*. In the first and second chapters, the author reintroduces the Rarámuri Indians, who are not as "drab" or unelaborated as was often maintained in earlier research. Instead, he shows that there is a dynamic philosophy at work if we look carefully and in the right place, rethinking some of our basic questions. This explains, in part, his move from the realm of socially explicit knowledge (sermons) to the more tacit knowledge of individuals.

This book is also a good general introduction to the literature on practice and social action in folklore and anthropology. In Chapter Three, concepts—like the definition of culture as processual and rooted in social action—are set out alongside easily understood ethnographic illustrations from the Rarámuri. In this fashion, Merrill skillfully moves us from a restricted concern with consensus or variation in culture (which often create a static picture of cultural knowledge), to a broader interest in how both factors work together and are reproduced among actors in culture. Finally, as ethnography, Merrill’s book is outstanding. He furthers our understanding of the Rarámuri and does so in an engaging fashion. His informants come alive in well-placed excerpts and examples.

Merrill presents a rich analysis of the individual variation inherent in the reproduction of socially shared knowledge, and in the process he constructs a dynamic picture of culture rather than a generalized or normative model of Rarámuri thought. For those interested in the Indians of Mexico, practice in anthropology and folklore, or native philosophy and knowledge, *Rarámuri Souls* is an excellent resource well worth reading.


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*Rural Mexico* is an area plagued with a high incidence of violence. The rural homicide rate runs 16 to 29 percent above the national average. *Blood Ties* examines this violence, exploring its role in community life among the Chatino of Yatepec in southern Oaxaca, Mexico. Greenberg’s goal is to enhance our understanding of violence, and to this end he uses a two-part approach. First, we follow the life history of Don Fortino from his birth in 1901 through his death in 1986. The second section documents the political economy of Yatepec history and the rise of violence.
Greenberg's combination of life history with a more general historical analysis is an effective approach to the question of violence in the life of rural Mexicans. Following Don Fortino's life takes the reader behind statistics and presents a picture of daily life that is at some points funny and at others depressing. This account of Mexico's history includes the turbulence of the revolution, the Cristero rebellion, Cardenas' reforms, and the rise of coffee plantations in the region. Fortino's account reveals the impact of capitalism on the area, positive in terms of wealth and negative in terms of violent factionalism within the community.

The second half of the book is a more general but no less passionate account of violence. Greenberg takes to task earlier approaches to the study of violence (including psychological and structuralist models). In their place he proposes a historical approach which analyzes the political economy of the region and the community's relationship to the developing national economy. A recurring theme presents the Chatino as active participants in relation to state development (Chapter 14). While not allowing themselves to be passively swallowed by the expanding capitalist economy, they are unable to foster change; thus communities like Yaitepec are forced to take the law into their own hands. The ideology of this violence (Chapter 15) acts as a false consciousness which disguises the material nature of economic relations as battles for manhood and honor. According to his Afterword, Yaitepec's future is not locked into this cycle of violence; its struggle is meeting with some success, and internal acts of violence are declining.

Blood Ties is a well-executed analysis of violence, a troubling issue for most social scientists. Greenberg has defined an approach to violence that is rooted in an appreciation of the political, historical, economic, and cultural reasons for its existence. His book is an important addition to the general ethnography of Mesoamerica as well as to the growing literature on political economy and violence.


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Menstrual taboos have long been a favorite subject of ethnographic inquiry, but in the past their study has suffered from both an ethnocentric and male-centered bias. Burdened by their own set of "menstrual taboos," ethnographers have too often assumed they knew what those of another culture meant. Blood Magic, a collection of essays by nine fieldworkers in anthropology and related disciplines, marks a welcome departure from earlier studies in a number of ways. It derives its perspective from women's studies in recognizing the need to focus on women's experiences as well as those of men, and in recognizing the