The Network Inside Out, by Annelise Riles. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001. ISBN 0-472-08832-7, xxiii + 242 pages, tables, figures, maps, photographs, orthography and abbrevations, notes, bibliography, index. Paper, US$26.95.

It feels terribly redundant trying to review a book that concludes that the present conditions of globalization and transnationalism have left no further room for analysis to expand (184). To whit: "The insights of anthropological studies of globalization often seem oddly anticipated by the subjects of transnational ethnographic enquiry themselves. . . . Anthropological analysis is reduced to restatement, to repetition, to generating reflexive modernity's 'doubles'" (5).

This award-winning ethnography attempts to resist the temptations of an anthropology struggling to come to terms with familiar, almost universal phenomena (such as bureaucratic and institutional practices) and subjects that are themselves engaged in analysis that mirrors that of social scientists. "Thick description" then becomes appropriate only in ethnographies of the unfamiliar (an increasingly scarce commodity). For author Annelise Riles, "when phenomena are too well known to be described, what is needed is not greater detail but a selective erasure thereof, as, for example, the abstractions of modern art have brought modernity itself into view" (18).

This review endeavors to honor the content of the form and the form of the content at hand by focusing on the most salient aspects of the text rather than attempting to provide an exhaustive account of it.

Riles is an associate professor at Northwestern School of Law and a research fellow with the American Bar Association. Based on fifteen months of fieldwork in Fiji and with Fiji nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) at international meetings between 1994 and 1995, her book was awarded the Certificate of Merit of the American Society for International Law in 2001. She frames her interdisciplinary interests in the following terms:

"How I might make the ending points of legal knowledge—the puzzles, frustrations, facts, and commitments the theory and practice of law entailed—beginning points for anthropological reflection and vice versa" (xii).

"Yet what is one to make of a subject, such as the international institutional practices considered in this book, that one encounters already analyzed? How might one transform this kind of ending into a beginning point of one's own?" (xiv)

Riles's beginning point is "the Network," a concept that she traces back to J A Barnes's founding of social network analysis in 1954, and one that subsequently influenced the anthropology of Gregory Bateson and the fields of cybernetics and "cyborgology" (62). For Riles, "the Network" is "a set of institutions, knowledge practices, and artifacts thereof that internally generate the effects of their own reality by reflecting on themselves. . . . Indeed, for those concerned with the intersection of modernist

epistemologies and liberal political philosophies, the Network offers a poignant case study of institutionalized utopianism, an ambition for political change through communication and information exchange, of universalism *after* cultural relativism and the 'incredulity toward the metanarrative' ([Jean-François] Lyotard [*The Postmodern Condition,*] 1984). In the Beijing Conference and the networks it spawned, we have an opportunity to explore one highly reflexive elaboration of a modernist epistemology and radical neoliberal political vision, albeit one defined by its refusal of particularity, that is, by its own universalizing claims" (3).

In *The Network Inside Out,* Riles has produced what is perhaps the first-ever ethnography of women's nongovernmental organizations in Fiji, and the first-ever study to use the case of a rural part-European family community in Fiji for comparative purposes. What makes both groups seem familiar is their simultaneous deployment of and enunciation by discourses of modernity. Women's organizations—such as (the now-defunct) PAWORNET (Pacific Women's Regional Information/Communication Network), Women in Politics, National Council of Women, and others in Fiji—have recourse (however superficial) to the tools of social science analysis, take a legalistic approach to language, and pay inordinate attention to issues of design and aesthetics in the organization of information for the purported purpose of its infinite (and ultimately liberating) expansion.

In contrast, Riles finds that members of the Whippy family (descendants of early American settler David Whippy), resident in Kasavu, Vanua Levu, challenge "the particular understanding of information that characterizes late modern social science in general and the literature on globalization and the mode of information in particular—the notion that information is potentially infinite but in actuality scarce" (94). Riles argues convincingly that in their commitment to the inherited boundaries of the family estate, and their resistance to any further accumulation of family land or the transformation of their resources into more lucrative capital (despite their urban relatives' urging), the Kasavu Whippys illustrate the possible limits on the knowable. For Kasavu Whippys, "spatial organization did not express or reflect social realities"; rather, *space ordered social relations* (106). Having to divide land among family members did not change what was known but only confirmed "the true dimensions of the whole [estate] through the remeasurement of the part" (107). The case of the Kasavu Whippys provides for Riles a sort of negative instance amid the compelling modern discourses of information "flows."

Indeed, one of the key concerns of Riles's investigation is the way that information has come to supplant capital as the organizing principle of social groups, and what this means for the possibilities of analysis.

"For social scientists, capital was an analytical category; it was a framework that could be applied to conditions in the world, not a condition in and of itself. A mode of analysis

grounded in a notion of capital, then, made analytical connections between phenomena that were not apparent prior to analysis. This is what we meant by critique. . . . In this respect, the transition to a 'mode of information' is indeed disorienting: the academic response to information is not class analysis, not even network analysis, but networking. . . . Academic analysis has become an instantiation, a making evident of academic networks" (113).

There are some exceedingly tautological moments in this work, but it is engaging nevertheless in its demonstration of fluency with a range of European and American philosophical, political, analytical, and cultural canons and concepts, and in its unnerving representation of intimacy with key figures in Pacific academic, activist, NGO, *and family* networks. What is curious in light of the last quote above is that in her preface the author pointedly disarticulates her own scholarship from the "network" of Pacific Studies, stating that her book's "contribution to the ethnography of the Pacific region lies in fragmentary resonances rather than overarching models or positions in debates" (xvi). Is this humility? Or disdain? Or, like Baudrillard's double hologram (which Riles cites [27]), is the answer that, in seeing the form of each in turn, both become real?

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Bravo for the Marshallese: Regaining Control in a Post-Nuclear, Post-Colonial World, by Holly M Barker. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning, 2004. ISBN 0-534-61326-8; xv + 172 pages, tables, figures, maps, photographs, appendix, glossary, notes, bibliography, index. US$25.95.

In Barbara Myerhoff's book *Number Our Days* (1978), Shmuel the tailor/philosopher warns her not to put pins in people, deflate them, flatten them out, and sacrifice their multidimensionality. Shmuel counsels her to "leave them be. Don't try to make them stand still for your convenience. You don't *ever* know them. Let people surprise you" (Myerhoff 1978, 41). In turning lived existence into text or film, anthropologists can never leave people be. Moreover, entextualization inevitably involves transformation (Michael Silverstein and Greg Urban, *Natural Histories of Discourse,* 1996), but in transforming performances into text it is important not to deflate and flatten people out.

Reading Holly M Barker's *Bravo for the Marshallese,* I sense the voices of Marshall Islanders—who are themselves lively and multifaceted—being flattened out by a theory that presents them unilaterally as victims of colonialism. Of course, there is no question that Marshall Islands residents, particularly those who reside in the northern atolls, have suffered severely from US nuclear testing after World War II. There is also no doubt that the consequences of those tests continue to affect Marshall Islanders today and will have substantial effects well into the future. Barker makes this point