so-called participatory and community based approaches to conservation and development.

Although entertaining, the morass of details presented in the book are not integrated into any larger analytical framework making it impossible to see the forest through the trees. Perhaps the greatest overall weakness of the book is that it does not face the unfortunate conclusion made by many of us who work in the region - that despite Costa Rica's apparent political and social advantages, the Costa Rican conservation strategy has been a failure. The fact that the model has been such a failure in Costa Rica, where it should have had the greatest chance of success, calls the model itself into question. The Costa Rican conservation model has resulted in a spatial mosaic of small, disarticulated islands of preservation (the protected areas) surrounded by vast areas of environmental degradation brought about by continued economic development initiatives that are environmentally unsound. Neither are the islands of protected areas biologically viable in the long-term. The current situation is the outcome of the basic contradiction between Costa Rica's overall development strategy and its conservation agenda - which promotes the expanded production of environmentally destructive, natural resource based commodities (e.g., bananas, coffee, a variety of non-traditional agricultural and aqua-cultural crops, and lumbering) while simultaneously delimiting islands of protected areas. Nowhere is this contradiction more apparent than in the simultaneous promotion of both upscale, mass tourism (e.g., the construction of luxury beach resorts in environmentally fragile areas of the Pacific Coast) and eco-tourism destinations (e.g., in the protected areas). One of the realities that Evans does not face is that the ideology underlying Costa Rica's conservation strategy is to preserve and conserve the environment for the tourism industry (Costa Rica's greatest source of foreign exchange) - not for the sake of the environment itself. Unless this basic contradiction is resolved, Costa Rica's environmental future will encompass only a vast sea of environmental devastation.

Finally, it would be remiss not to comment briefly on Evans' facile discussion of the current challenges to Costa Rica's conservation policy included in his final chapter. In that short, undeveloped conclusion, he identifies human population growth as the primary threat to Costa Rica's environmental future. Empirical research over the last two decades clearly has demonstrated the complex linkages between population growth and environmental destruction. My own research and that of others in this area has demonstrated that if overpopulation is the underlying cause, it is the overpopulation of environmentally unsound agricultural and tourist enterprises, the overpopulation of irresponsible corporations, and the overpopulation of tourists from the U.S. and Europe that is to blame.

Capitalism: An Ethnographic Approach, Daniel Miller, Oxford, UK: Berg Publishers, 1997, ix + 357 pp.

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Capitalism is, of course, a topic of great interest to anthropologists and other scholars. Yet our efforts in its study resemble a crowd of blind men describing an elephant by feeling its different parts (here, I speak especially of empirical research more than deductive model building). In the main, anthropologists have described those parts of capitalism having to do with

commodity production for national and world markets and its effects on social and economic relations, largely in rural areas. We have also described, to a lesser extent, work for wages and in the informal economy. These mainly address capitalism as production. Also, we study capitalism in important, indirect ways, when discussing regions, migration, urbanism, political coalitions, etc. And, as I understand it, one aim of political ecology is to do theoretically informed empirical research on the capitalism/natural systems interface.

Miller also does empirical research on capitalism, and importantly, he is feeling somewhat different parts of the elephant. In this sense, his catchy title promising an ethnographic view of "capitalism" as a whole is a bit deceptive, but this is no great criticism, because he is feeling a part that we have largely neglected and which ought to be very informative for political ecologists. In Capitalism, like his previous, and highly recommended Modernity: An Ethnographic Approach (Berg 1994), he studies consumers and consumption in Trinidad. The most important contribution made in the present book is Miller's consistent empirical investigation into consumer businesses, including soft-drink firms, advertising agencies, and shopping centers. Miller draws a key argument from Ben Fine and Ellen Leopold's The World of Consumption (Routledge 1993) that links (in a mutually causal fashion) the specific characteristics of commodities, their production, the structure of firms, the ways they are marketed, and the specific relations of consumers with these commodities. This perspective is helpful in going beyond abstract production and consumption of nameless commodities. In applying the Fine and Leopold approach, Miller emphasizes the "feedback" effects that consumers and local businesses have on the wider capitalist economy (not his phrasing).

Without an ethnographic study of capitalism, it is easy to assume that business is motivated by the pursuit of profit always -- and in the same way -- and that transnational corporations operating in small nations like Trinidad run rough-shod over local wishes in search of that profit. It is not idealizing business to see how debilitated this assumption leaves our research. Instead, Miller explores "Local 'Global'" companies (the local operations of transnationals like Nestlés) and the "Global 'Local'" companies (two substantial Trinidadian conglomerates that operate throughout the Caribbean). He shows, for example, how the need for independence of local offices from home offices of transnationals sometimes make these "Local Globals" more distinctive and nationally oriented than the Trinidadian conglomerates. The parts of the book that explore this theme are richly ethnographic and present a highly useful model for other researchers to follow.

Miller follows his work on the in-house side of marketing and advertising businesses by examining the reception of their products (largely soft drinks, and ads for them) by consumers. He seeks to overturn the stereotype of passively manipulated purchasers, bamboozled by advertisements into buying goods that they don't want, and too many of them to boot. His methods in this research are admirably ethnographic -- a careful study of how ads are actually written and produced, and another study of consumer's reactions to viewed ads. What he avoids, thankfully, is the disconnected, non ethnographic "reading" of advertising images so pervasive in cultural studies. However, I feel that he leans too far toward "consumer sovereignty" in refuting the passive dupe stereotype.

Miller's evidence comes from choices among specific options in the soft drink category. No doubt, consumers largely hold the initiative over marketers and advertisers in this narrowly conceived domain of product competition. However, as I have argued elsewhere (Carrier and Heyman, Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 1997; Heyman, Research in Economic Anthropology 1994), to understand "choice" we must delineate, historically, how consumers come to uses those types of items in the first place. The question of "how do people become consumers?" has important political ecological components, of course. I also argued that small discretionary expenditures emphasize individualistic "choice" readings of consumption, by contrast with studies of consumption than begin with the major categories of household reproduction and material provisioning (e.g., housing, energy sources, appliances, foods sources in general, etc.). I suspect Miller would not disagree, and it also should be said that Miller's

perceptive reading of the domain of consumer choice builds on a line of thought he has developed over many years about how people actively objectify themselves into social categories and cultural stances (see his Modernity book and his 1987 volume, Material Culture and Mass Consumption [Basil Blackwell]).

Trinidad underwent a very rapid boom caused by the advent of extensive oil revenue and then an equally drastic depression caused by neo-liberal so-called "structural adjustment." One of the very smart aspects of this book is Miller's distinctive critique of this process. "Pure capitalism," according to Miller, is the coercive application to vulnerable nations of abstract neoclassical economics, done in an ideological fashion oblivious to local relations. By contrast, local capitalism is richly and profoundly impure, bound up in compromises and reciprocities with society and culture, as the ethnography of Trinidadian businesses shows. This polar contrast is inadequately contextualized, since the island's active consumer capitalism developed with the income from a state-capitalist oil industry that produced a simple commodity for the global market; in this Trinidad resembles nations whose import substitution industrialization has had similar characteristics (i.e., local-transnational hybrids premised on consumer income from export sectors). The idea of "pure capitalism" is promising, however. Neo-liberal restructuring is not just global financial policing, though it certainly is that; it is the academic, unquestioned, almost theological application of neoclassical economic tautologies unbidden into people's lives. In this fanatical sense, the purity of the model has great causal force. In political ecology we are aware of the power of sacred models through the work of Roy Rappaport. Miller's arguments about "pure" versus local capitalism thus ought to interest us, if suitably contextualized in historical political economy; it is one of those fertile ideas that will stimulate research and analysis for years to come.

Capitalism reads well, conveys a lively ethnographic feel for Trinidad, grapples with important issues in original ways, and will stimulate thinking about business and consumption long into the future.

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The National Environmental Policy Act: An Agenda for the Future, by Lynton Keith Caldwell, Indiana University; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998. xx, 209 pp.

Reviewed by Diane Austin, Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.

Professor Lynton Caldwell has a long and distinguished career in environmental policy making and evaluation, and in this book he endeavors to rectify what he perceives has been the misrepresentation of the National Environmental Policy Act and its applicability in both national