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Beyond Kinship: Social and Material Reproduction  
in House Societies by Rosemary A. Joyce; Susan D.  
Gillespie; Material Culture by Henry Glassie;  
Vernacular Architecture by Henrie Glassie  
(Review)

Marshall Joseph Becker

West Chester University of Pennsylvania, mbecker@wcupa.edu

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extensive correspondence files. The result is some factual errors, which will be very disturbing to those who know the problematic history of German Volkskunde well. Only two of the most troubling will be pointed out. Jacobeit, in describing the newly reopened University of Göttingen, speaks of Will Erich Peuckert occupying the same chair of folklore that the “notorious race-ideologist Matthes Ziegler had occupied to the end of the NS regime” (p. 62). This is factually incorrect, as most German and Austrian folklorists will immediately recognize. By the end of the war Ziegler, author of “Folklore on a Racial Basis,” had dropped out of academic folklore studies to become a Protestant pastor.

The second passage that needs to be addressed is Jacobeit’s description of the first postwar meeting of German folklorists, in Jugenheim an der Bergstraße in 1951 (p. 79). He implies that the younger participants expected those attending to take a position on the perversions of the discipline during the National Socialist years, which according to Jacobeit did not take place. He speaks of a “disappointed mood among the younger participants.” He then describes a sword dance demonstration by the former Viennese SS officer and professor of folklore, Richard Wolfram, as something of a “highpoint” of the meeting. He goes on to say that his friend and student companion from Göttingen, Arnold Lühning, said that he had had enough and was leaving the meeting. The implication is that Lühning was also expecting some kind of coming to terms with the abuses of Volkskunde during the NS period and left out of disappointment. From interviews I have recently conducted with all of the surviving participants of the meeting, it is very questionable whether Richard Wolfram danced in Jugenheim. It is certain that Arnold Lühning left the meeting because there was nothing of interest for him as a budding museum man.

It seems important to point out such factual errors. There are perhaps others, but these two have been highlighted because they contribute to a misunderstanding of German folklorists’ dealing with their own discipline’s past in the first postwar years. The young people at the meeting in Jugenheim did not know NS from the non-NS folklorists, and to imply that there

was enormous displeasure with the meeting does not contribute to our understanding of the period. Even so, the book is fascinating and well worth reading. Wolfgang Jacobeit is a major figure in twentieth-century German Volkskunde, and his work will always be on reading lists in German-speaking countries.

**Beyond Kinship: Social and Material Reproduction in House Societies.** Ed. Rosemary A. Joyce and Susan D. Gillespie. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000. Pp. xii + 269, 21 figures, 2 tables, references cited, index.)

**Material Culture.** By Henry Glassie. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999. Pp. 416, 170 black-and-white photographs, 16 illustrations, bibliography, index.)

**Vernacular Architecture.** By Henrie Glassie. (Philadelphia: Material Culture; Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000. Pp. 200, 93 black-and-white and 32 color photographs, 7 illustrations, bibliography, index.)

MARSHALL JOSEPH BECKER  
*West Chester University*

The study of material culture, a major focus of research in the formative years of folklore as well as anthropology, went into decline during the 1950s. Only a few folklorists and archaeologists continued to be interested in “objects.” Tangible cultural products, those fundamental elements created by members of a society (see Elizabeth S. Chilton, “Material Meanings and Meaningful Materials: An Introduction,” in *Material Meanings: Critical Approaches to the Interpretation of Material Culture*, ed. Chilton, University of Utah Press, 1999:1–6), were seen by many scholars as a minimally productive area of research. Now, however, the early data-collecting phase of material-culture studies has blossomed into very sophisticated, problem-oriented research programs using new modes of interpretation (see Amy Gazin-Schwartz and Cornelius J. Holtorf, eds., *Archaeology and Folklore*, Theoretical Archaeology Group Series,

Routledge, 1999). Material-culture studies have matured to the point where they provide a tremendous complement to studies of every aspect of culture.

*Beyond Kinship* is a collection of papers principally selected from presentations at a 1996 symposium organized by the editors. The subtitle of the book, "Social and Material Reproduction in House Societies," emphasizes a concept explained by Clark Cunningham in his foreword. Cunningham's important work in Timor explored "the relationship between the house as a physical, symbolic, and social model of order and the system of kinship and marriage in that society" ("Order and Change in an Atoni Diarchy," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 21[1965]:359–82). To some scholars this may seem a serious stretching of predictive abilities, but the results generated by each of these contributions are impressive. Cunningham's fieldwork opened a path to serious interdisciplinary research, and that path is cleanly swept by the contributors to this volume.

Susan Gillespie's important introductory chapter, "Beyond Kinship," restates the theme of the volume with a discussion of the "growing interdisciplinary interests in material culture" (p. 2). She also reviews a related concern with the "house" as a physical as well as a social unit. The impressive findings of scholars working with all aspects of culture relating to the material "house" demonstrate the validity of the basic theory indicating that each culture is a complex and integrated system. This line of research also suggests that cross-cultural rules pertaining to the "house" may exist on some level.

Gillespie sets the stage for the contributed papers with chapter 2, "Lévi-Strauss: Maison and Société à Maisons." Gillespie offers an impressive review and analysis of Lévi-Strauss's sometimes opaque writings on this subject, and she brilliantly applies these early fundamental studies on the "house" in a modern, state-of-the-art analysis. Gillespie points out that the organizing factor of the kin group "may not be a building at all but a different object . . . [or] an abstraction . . . as a named place of origin" (p. 48). Her work relates the nature of a physical house to its associated occupants. She also points out the importance of this interaction for schol-

ars from the various disciplines whose research strategies help us to decode this meaning. Studies of objects can contribute in extraordinary ways to our understanding of social organization from a historical-processual perspective. George Peter Murdock (*Social Structure*, Macmillan, 1949) would be proud of these developments.

Alan Sandstrom's "Toponymic Groups and House Organization" uses an example from Veracruz, Mexico, to suggest that members of an entire community may perceive themselves as being of one "house" even as individual members marry and set up new residences. Similar findings appear in many of the other papers, providing another important theme for this volume. Yvonne Marshall's contribution, "Transformations of Nuu-chah-nulth Houses," amplifies these basic themes. Her study of the houses of the Northwest Coast people commonly called "*Nootka*" provides information on a century of change in the physical aspects of their society. Delineating these changes, she correlates structural alterations with demographic and economic changes that have taken place among the occupants of these houses.

In "Temples as 'Holy Houses,'" Patrick Kirch reviews the ethnographic literature from Tikopia in Polynesia as a basis to interpret his archaeological data. Archaeological and ethnographic data then are blended with evidence from historical linguistics to explore the material and cultural meaning of a Tikopian house. Kirch compares the general house form in eastern Oceania with its counterparts in the western region. He uses archaeology to reconstruct culture histories of these two distinct zones and reveals two different evolutionary trajectories.

Ruth Tringham's "The Continuous House" provides another archaeological investigation of ancient residences. She infers that Neolithic house locations in southeastern Europe related more to social meaning within the culture than to local ecology. Her inferences regarding the deliberate burning of houses provide insights into theories of "destruction levels" posited by many earlier excavators of sites in that region. Tringham's comments on variations in house use in other parts of the world may be an intellectual stretch but are important for the examination of data from different ecological and temporal contexts.

Particularly interesting to me is Susan Gillespie's paper from the symposium, "Maya 'Nested Houses': The Ritual Construction of Place." Her ideas regarding altars as a material focus for the ancestors go far beyond my own limited commentary on Maya houses and the roles of associated mortuary "shrines" (Becker, *Excavations in Residential Areas of Tikal: Groups with Shrines*, Tikal Report 21, University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, 1999). She draws on multiple lines of evidence "to examine the physical house as a microcosmic model for Maya peoples that both anchors people in place and orients their proper movements in space" (p. 137). Her observations are critical to the interpretation of function for various other types of Classic Period Maya buildings (see Becker, "Plaza Plans at Tikal: A Research Strategy for Lowland Maya Sites to Infer Social Organization and Processes of Culture Change," in *Tikal: Dynasties, Foreigners, and Affairs of State*, ed. Jeremy Sabloff, School of American Research, 2002).

Susan McKinnon's paper, "The Tanimbarese *Tavu*," suggests that the impressive carved ancestral altars (*tavu*) in an Indonesian society provide the physical link between the concept of the ancestors (the roots of the family) and the living members. The form of the house itself also reflects hierarchy. Roxana Waterson's "House, Place, and Memory in Tana Toraja (Indonesia)" also considers the meaning of the house as a material symbol of the lineage. In Tana Toraja the physical structure of the house provides continuity parallel to the biological continuity of the members of the kin group.

Rosemary Joyce's "Heirlooms and Houses: Materiality and Social Memory" concludes this impressive volume. Joyce considers how specific objects may have provided identity and meaning for the people associated with a "house." She explores possible functions for ancient Maya objects that she believes were "costume ornaments [that] were conserved over long periods of time and can appropriately be referred to as heirlooms" (p. 203). Joyce suggests that ritually deposited items may have been used by some Maya for a variety of purposes. She also notes that further attention should be directed to the shrines or altars with which "heirlooms" are often linked.

Some items found in Maya caches and burials (cf. Becker, "Burials as Caches; Caches as Burials: A New Interpretation of the Meaning of Ritual Deposits Among the Classic Period Lowland Maya," in *New Theories on the Ancient Maya*, ed. Elin C. Danien and Robert J. Sharer, University Museum Monograph 77, University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, 1992: 185–96) may indeed represent "heirlooms" that had been held by members of a lineage. But claimants to a royal lineage may have recovered and used jade and other cached or buried "heirloom" artifacts during the leveling of even more ancient buildings. Destruction of ancient buildings, particularly to create open spaces, was an aspect of architectural development common at many Maya sites even before 100 c.e. "Antique" objects also may have been secured through the deliberate looting of local tombs as well as tombs at "conquered" sites.

*Beyond Kinship* provides an impressive set of papers that must be read by everyone concerned with integrating material objects into their analyses of the complex cognitive aspects of culture. This sublime collection reflects the cutting edge of a mature discipline in which the most skilled practitioners recognize the value of material culture, such as houses and artifacts, in linking the data from a number of fields of research.

The archaeological interpretation of artifact assemblages sustained my own interest in material-culture studies during the dark decades when that line of research was less fashionable. During those years many folklorists conducted research that provided useful perspectives on subjects of interest to me. Among them was Henry Glassie. Two of Glassie's most recent works provide a counterpoint for this essay, particularly because they represent a very different approach to our understanding of material culture studies.

*Material Culture* incorporates texts or extracts from many papers and essays that Glassie has generated over the years. The volume begins with a chapter entitled "History" in which a cast of characters is described. Chapter 2, "Material Culture," opens with what appears to be an introduction to research by using a discussion of culture, rambles along to and through a section called "Method," and ends with "A Text in

Time.” Within this section one finds scattered mention of important figures in the history of material culture studies. “One Life,” that of a Turkish “master of carpet repair” (p. 87), fills the third chapter where Glassie notes that “[as] a folklorist, I am professionally committed to accuracy” (p. 88).

“The Potter’s Art” (chapter 4) includes sections on Bangladesh, Sweden, America, Turkey, and Japan, but they are far from equal in focus, length, or coverage. “Vernacular Architecture,” the subject of chapter 5, is divided into sections on “Materialization,” architectural technology, “Social Orders,” composition, decoration, complexity in time, compositional levels, “Forms and Causes,” and “History.” Also included in this chapter are sections on the American landscape plus one entitled “An Entry to History” that deals with Glassie’s work in Virginia but also includes notes on New England. These sections are followed by one called “Comparison in Ireland” in which “The United States in the Nineteenth Century” is introduced, and ends with “Pattern in Time” in which note is made of recent cultural changes in Turkey. These sections are listed here in the order in which they appear, and all are noted because this chapter provides the entire text, with minimal modification, of *Vernacular Architecture*, Glassie’s other work considered here.

The first paragraph of Glassie’s section entitled “Pattern in Time,” presented here in its entirety, seems to replicate the logic and order of this volume: “My argument is done. Architecture provides a prime resource to the one who would write a better history. I will contrive a conclusion with a summary. Our history breaks into three great periods. Its dynamic depends upon impurity” (p. 342; also *Vernacular Architecture*, p. 146).

Despite this interesting writing style and the wonderful illustrations, readers never learn of some of the simplest facts regarding the subject matter. The traditional divisions in the Turkish house, such as shown in *Material Culture* (p. 229, upper; *Vernacular Architecture* p. 19, upper), are not pursued. We never learn that the undecorated ground level is used for animals and equipment storage while the elaborately decorated upper section forms the place where people live. Glassie’s unusual narrative lacks

information relating to the numerous but minimally captioned illustrations. Bibliographic references are handled unconventionally. Some book titles are mentioned in the text along with the names of their authors. Other references, assigned to one or more pages of the text, are clustered in the “Notes” that appear before the bibliography. The bibliography is divided into two separate alphabetical lists. Works mentioned are assigned to one of the two, but the whole “is not a list of the works cited in the notes” (p. 385).

Glassie seems to have the gift of writing gab, and he’s certainly a good photographer, but I don’t know what he means when he speaks of “relocating the critical purpose of scholarly endeavor” (p. 2). I don’t see much of any scholarly method or even any focus in this volume. Is this a postmodern travelogue, with no maps of places or towns mentioned to encumber the reader? By agglomerating Irish and Turkish and Swedish subjects with the vast American horizon, Glassie has created the publisher’s perfect “market area.” These two volumes suggest the creation of a new industry. This genre appears to be a cousin to the coffeetable book or to cookbooks; books that people buy to buy, and perhaps even to own, because they satisfy something within the economy of modern complex society. How does *Material Culture* relate to scholarship? I leave this question to folklorists to study as an interesting aspect of contemporary material culture. With it they need to examine the other Glassie volume, which takes the genre to new heights.

*Vernacular Architecture* is described as “an expanded revision of the fifth chapter of Henry Glassie’s *Material Culture*, published by the Indiana University Press in 1999” (p. 4). The expansion is minimal, largely consisting of a number of photographs plus two paragraphs on pages 154–55 and notes on pages 179 and 180. Wondering who or what was the group called Material Culture that is listed as the first of two publishers of this paperback, I went to the website provided for the organization ([www.materialculture.com](http://www.materialculture.com)). It lists a store in Philadelphia dealing in “oriental carpets” as well as antique furniture, plus folk and tribal art. When I asked my students what they knew about this business they provided interesting

descriptions of what they identified as a “chain” of stores. Thus, *Vernacular Architecture* appears to be a rather well-produced glossy advertisement for a business.

In this and other works, Glassie has not lived up to the promise of his earliest research. That promise has led me repeatedly to seek out his works, with ever-increasing disappointment. For scholars interested in highly focused, scholarly studies of houses and house types we have Bernard Herman’s *Architecture and Rural Life in Central Delaware, 1700–1900* (University of Tennessee Press, 1999), a reissue of his 1987 classic. For those interested in urban growth, and a very different type of housing, I recommend Donna Rilling’s *Making Houses, Crafting Capitalism: Builders in Philadelphia, 1790–1850* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001). Rilling examines urban Philadelphia during the first six decades of our republic when the popula-

tion grew from 60,000 to 400,000. The housing of this vast population, and the complexities of early modern capitalism, are beautifully integrated in this finely crafted work.

Most important for studies of material culture is the modern, impressive volume edited by Joyce and Gillespie that is reviewed here. We also have Elizabeth Chilton’s recent volume, *Material Meanings*, so nicely summarized by Conkey (“An End Note: Reframing Materiality for Archaeology,” in *Material Meanings: Critical Approaches to the Interpretation of Material Culture*, ed. Chilton, University of Utah Press, 1999:133–41). Both show us the path toward future integrated research. Joyce and Gillespie provide us with particularly fine examples of the best of present trends, and the papers in their book alone should be sufficient to stimulate our interest and to direct our thoughts well into the future.