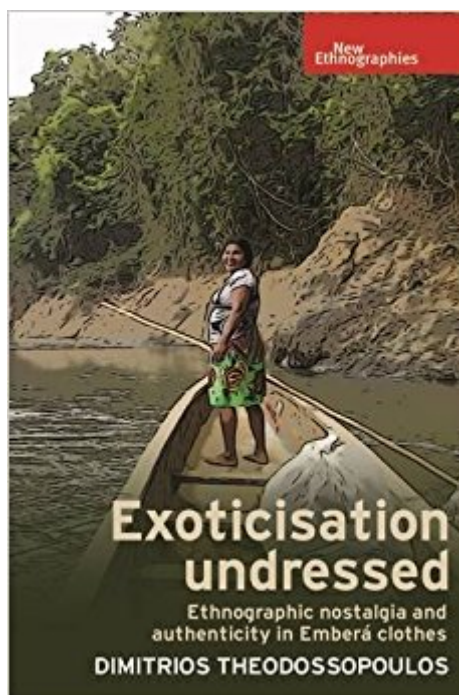




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Exoticisation Undressed: Ethnographic Nostalgia And Authenticity In Emberá Clothes (New Ethnographies Mup)



Synopsis

Exoticisation undressed is an innovative ethnography that makes visible the many layers through which our understandings of indigenous cultures are filtered and their inherent power to distort and refract understanding. The book focuses in detail on the clothing practices of the Ember  j in Panama, an Amerindian ethnic group, who have gained national and international visibility through their engagement with indigenous tourism. The very act of gaining visibility while wearing indigenous attire has encouraged among some Ember  j communities a closer identification with an indigenous identity and a more confident representational awareness. The clothes that the Ember  j wear are not simply used to convey messages, but also become constitutive of their intended messages. By wearing indigenous-and-modern clothes, the Ember  j—who are often seen by outsiders as shadows of a vanishing world—reclaim their place as citizens of a contemporary nation. Through reflexive engagement, Exoticisation undressed exposes the workings of ethnographic nostalgia and the Western quest for a singular, primordial authenticity, unravelling instead new layers of complexity that reverse and subvert exoticisation.

Book Information

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'This exemplary ethnography, a fascinating examination of the choices that people in one indigenous society make in deciding when and how to dress, illuminates the nature of cultural displays and cross-cultural encounters as well as the expectations, desires, and illusions that anthropologists, tourists, and others bring to them. Through a highly creative combination of

sidebars, drawings, personal history, and lucid prose, the author makes both theory and lived experience vivid and accessible to readers of all sorts. Anthropology comes alive in this book.' James Howe, Professor of Anthropology (Emeritus), MIT 'Only a perceptive imp with a taste for visual teasing would dare strip away the fluffy folds of anthropological convention to lay bare the abused body of exoticism and reveal complex qualities we have rarely hitherto been allowed to see in it. Theodossopoulos is that imp.' Michael Herzfeld, Ernest E. Monrad Professor of the Social Sciences, Harvard University -- .

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