

One suspects these more prevalent settings will make New Zealand “multiculturalisms” increasingly potent national ideologies, alongside or against “Treaty partnership” models. Closer attention to recent settler society and post-colonial literatures and deeper reflection on the insights of, for example, Thomas Eriksen, Richard Jenkins, Rogers

Brubaker, and Michael Billigs’s work on everyday nationness would also have improved the analysis. Nonetheless, on balance, *National Days and the Politics of Indigenous and Local Identities in Australia and New Zealand* makes a very useful contribution to our understanding of performative national representations for students and specialists alike.

## Evolutionary Linguistics by April McMahon and Robert McMahon.

Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. 326 pp.

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The Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics are well known to students of linguistics as the definitive sources on a wide range of topics. April McMahon and Robert McMahon, respectively a linguist and a biologist, have made a worthy contribution to this series, and their textbook is a useful guide for scholars who wish to become conversant in research on the evolution of the language faculty.

This is a book firmly focused on the evolution of the biological capacity for language. The first chapter is devoted to defending the position that evolutionary linguistics should treat that which is encoded in genes and nothing further. There are chapters dealing with the hominid family tree and evolution of language with respect to the vocal tract, to the brain, and to genes. The final two chapters compare saltational to gradualist accounts of the evolution of language, set out the notion of the “language-ready brain,” and plot out a possible pathway from protolanguage to full, modern language with rich syntax and compositional semantics.

This gene- and biology-based view of language evolution is coherent, but it comes at a cost. In section 1.5, entitled “Saying ‘Evolution’ without Meaning It,” the authors trenchantly stake out their view of what ought not to be included within evolutionary linguistics. They are not shy about naming names, and a series of linguistic works with the terms *evolution* or *evolutionary* in their titles is dismissed. This seems particularly unfair to William Croft, who champions a Darwinian approach to language variation based on David Hull’s generalized model of evolution (based on the conceptual triad of variation, selection, and replication; see Croft 2008); my own research in modeling the evolutionary dynamics of language change likewise falls outside the evolutionary domain (Dunn et al. 2011). This other kind of evolutionary linguistics has developed in close parallel to studies in cultural evolution. If we were to be consistent with the McMahons’ approach, then much of what is currently studied under the umbrella of “cultural evolution” would likewise be ruled inadmissible to the evolutionary sciences:

we would have to say that works such as Richerson and Boyd 2005 and McElreath and Henrich 2007 are about “cultural change,” not “cultural evolution.” Evolutionary game theory would be evolutionary when it was modeling changes in allele frequency but not when it was modeling changes in culturally transmitted norms.

This approach means that the McMahons have produced something that is not so much a linguistics text as a biology text about language. Chapter 3 does include an extended discussion of the linguistic comparative method, but the aim of this seems merely to establish the point that the inferences made within historical linguistics are limited to a time period too recent to contribute to the authors’ evolutionary linguistics. The final section of the chapter titled “The Comparative Method in Biology” (section 3.8) treats methods that have little in common with the linguistic comparative method beyond the name. The biological—or phylogenetic—comparative methods include a growing set of statistical techniques that “identify evolutionary trends by comparing the values of some variable or variables across a range of taxa” (Harvey and Pagel 1991:11). These methods are not limited to biological questions and have been used to investigate the cultural evolution of social organization (Currie et al. 2010; Fortunato et al. 2006; Jordan et al. 2009), the dispersal and diversification of language families (Bouckaert et al. 2012; Gray and Jordan 2000; Gray et al. 2009; Walker and Ribeiro 2011), and the evolution and coevolution of elements of language form and structure (Atkinson et al. 2008; Dunn et al. 2011; Jordan 2011). Due to their gene-and-biology focus, evolutionary linguistic research using phylogenetic comparative methods is neglected in the McMahons’ text.

While I am disappointed that the authors have set out to demarcate an evolutionary linguistics that does not contain a Darwinian science of language variation, this is still a useful text in its own terms. Language evolution is an intrinsically difficult topic (Christiansen and Kirby 2003), but although the influence of the famous ban by the Société de linguistique de Paris is almost certainly exaggerated (Fitch 2010:16), the rate of recent progress in this field has accelerated. Such acceleration is the result of highly interdisciplinary research

integrating diverse fields, including computational modeling, genetics, and neuroimaging and using techniques that in many cases have only recently become accessible. In this respect, the authors provide an approachable and thorough overview at an introductory level. Classroom instructors will find useful the “suggestions for further reading” and “notes for discussion” at the end of each chapter. For independent or more advanced learners, Tecumseh Fitch’s (2010) *The Evolution of Language* treats the same material in substantially more depth and is no less accessible.

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## Sacred Darkness: A Global Perspective on the Ritual Use of Caves by Holley Moyes, ed.

Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2013. 520 pp.

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There is much in *Sacred Darkness* to engage anyone interested in the ritual use of caves. It is the widest geographical and cross-cultural compilation of ritual cave use known to me and includes perspectives of archaeology, history, ethnoarchaeology, ethnohistory, and behavioral science. The volume is organized into five sections: part I devoted to the Old World (nine chapters); part II to the New World (seven chapters);

part III to individual case studies (four chapters); part IV to ethnographic and ethnohistoric studies (six chapters); and part V to new approaches (three chapters). Naturally enough in a volume of this scope, the contributions are variable in type and quality, and although there are many overlapping themes, they do not constitute a coherent whole.

The underlying rationale of the book is that the cross-cultural study of ritual cave use is valid: that is, there are universal aspects to the phenomenon that recur in widely varying times, places, and cultures. The chapters in this