American Ethnologist 1983 10(4)

A Study in Media,
re. MARCIA ASCHER
Ann Arbor: University
81. vii + 166 pp.,
$18.95 (cloth), $8.95

SUSAN A. NILES
Lafayette College

f a collaboration be-
nd a mathematician,
ning, and potential of
ecords used by the In-
ion is based on the
us published in the
al 200 that they have
arlier works. Their cur-
nce to the published
ly clear illustration, in
drawing, so that their
by the reader.
analysis with the prem-
d a base-10 counting
style and position of
ormation on the value
hey find that the com-
ment of cords give in-
record stored. Rather
us recorded the same
schers look at the com-
een quipus and try to
mathematical informa-
e strength of their ap-
ow to look at material
e do not fully under-
inds of information in-

hors in illuminating the
es are wide ranging and
f ways that mathemati-
be depicted in different
he book is divided into
urces used listed in the
o the text, along with
f difficult material.
dard methods of citing
ay be distressed to find
r pages, and the lack of
the work is a problem.
of the references and
rial does not detract
gument, and the wide
he reader to work the
nples.
es and exercises, the
d with and are then in-
amental ideas of each
is designed to be in-
out extensive mathe-
that some of the ideas
s (particularly the treat-
ng in chapter 7 and the
in chapter 8) were dif-
oite explanation of the
exercises that accom-
iseful in making the ex-

amples clear and in forcing the reader to learn to manipulate complex ideas. They are not only challenging, they are fun to do.

If there is an omission in this work, it is that the exploration of Inca mathematics and mathematical thought is not tied to real Inca examples. The authors state that they avoided hypothetical examples in the exercises "in order to emphasize that the descriptive framework is ours and in order to minimize the implication that we truly understand how the concepts were integrated within the Inca context" (p. 165). I feel that the work would have been improved by the addition of a chapter including consideration of the kinds of data sets and problems that must have been solved in Inca political mathematics. Ethnohistorical sources are full of possible examples: recording or planning the allotment of land for the Inca and for the state religion; keeping tabs on land held in different ecological zones; recording age classes and sexes for purposes of taxation; and inventorying the administrative hierarchy based on decimpartition are examples that come to mind. I would like to have seen what a mathematician would have made of these data sets and what other kinds of administrative problems might lend themselves to mathematical recording and manipulations.

The least convincing portion of the book is the exploration of Inca "insistence." The authors devote a number of pages in chapter 3 to defining what they mean by it and to discerning it from Inca archaeology. They settle on a meaning that is roughly synonymous with "principles of world view," a phrase that might have been used more economically to communicate with anthropologists, and find that:

> Cotton and wool cloth, portability, methodical, concern for spatial arrangement, symmetry, conservative, and fit, are things that characterize Inca insistence. The quipu is their quintessence . . . [Quipus] fit the ethos of the Andes, were adapted to the particular needs of a conquest state, and are its metaphor (pp. 56–57).

Although the Aschers highlight a number of concerns that were important to the Incas, their "insistence" is not well motivated by the discussion offered. I found the treatment of Inca administration and design superficial and felt that it could have been improved by reference to primary ethnohistorical sources. Readers who do not have a background in Andean studies will probably find that the chapter gives adequate introduction to the cultural context of the quipu, but specialists will be disappointed if they hope for new insight here.

It is well worth the effort to read the book and to do the exercises in each chapter. The reward is in learning to reexplore mathematics and to view not just Inca culture but our own in new ways through the fascinating examples of mathematical thought the authors provide. I would recommend the work to all Andeanists and to anyone interested in material culture. It could be read by advanced undergraduates and by nonanthropologists, as well. At the very least the reader will come away from the book with new insight into how one might look at and record material culture. More than that, one will come away seeing the world as an Inca recordkeeper might have seen it.

Indian Clothing Before Cortés: Mesoamerican Costumes from the Codices. **PATRICIA RIEFF ANAWALT. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981. xx + 232 pp., color plates, figures, charts, map, bibliography, index. $42.50 (cloth).**

SUSAN D. GILLESPIE
Illinois State University

In what at first appears to be another lavishly illustrated art book of the coffee table variety, Anawalt addresses some basic anthropological issues of interest to both ethnologists and archaeologists: To what degree do material items reflect "culture"? How can these items be used to monitor processes of culture contact and acculturation? These questions are approached by a detailed analysis of a very mundane but fundamental item of material culture: clothing.

The focus of the analysis is the Mesoamerican culture area. Six major groups are compared in terms of costume repertory: the Aztecs of the Valley of Mexico; the Tlaxcalans, also of central Mexico; the Tarascans of west Mexico; the Mixtecs of Oaxaca; the "Borgia Group" (so named from the pictorial documents used in the analysis); and the Lowland Maya of Yucatan. The results of the research reveal in detail, for the first time, both the similarities and differences among these subareas of Mesoamerica in terms of the everyday, military, and ritual attire of men and women.

As the title indicates, the study is based almost entirely on late precontact and early colonial period pictorial documents which illustrate the types of clothing worn. This restriction influenced the choice of areas to be compared since such documents exist only for these six groups. There is no attempt in this volume to deal with change in clothing through time since this is only the beginning of a larger work designed eventually to encompass 400 years of Mesoamerican costume (p. xviii).

Anawalt lays the necessary groundwork for this and future investigations by establishing an innovative and useful typology for clothing analysis. She develops five types, or principles, of garment construction with which to categorize and compare costume repertory. These are draped, slip-on, open-sewn, closed-sewn, and limb-encasing garments. Although all of these types existed in late postclassic Mesoamerica, not all were found in each of the subareas. The most basic clothing forms were simple draped garments: the loincloth, hipcloth, and cape for

men, and the wraparound skirt and *quechquemitl* (poncho) for women. The contexts for the garments, however, were not always the same among the different groups. As just one example, the *quechquemitl* was the standard female upper-body covering in most of Mesoamerica except for central Mexico, where its counterpart, the blouse *(huipilli)*, was the principal garment and the *quechquemitl* appeared only with representations of earth-goddesses. The *quechquemitl* is of further interest as an example of the rapid and pervasive influence of Spaniards on native dress, since it is most prominent in precontact Mixtec pictorial codices but had disappeared within several decades of Spanish incursions into Oaxaca.

Using her comparative approach, Anawalt sheds some light on the still undetermined provenience of an important set of ritual codices known as the Borgia Group. She demonstrates how the clothing depicted in these five documents resembles the Mixtec costume repertory more than the Aztec, while remaining distinct from both of these areas. She suggests, on the basis of a number of clothing clues, that these codices may have a Gulf Coast provenience.

Her study is basically oriented toward cross-cultural comparison within Mesoamerica, yet the function of costume within the individual subareas is not neglected. Clothing was a reflection of social structure; it was part of one's identity. Thus she suggests, for example, that the more varied Aztec dress was a function of a highly stratified society in which one's clothing was a major status marker, while the less hierarchical nature of the Tarascan state may account for its more egalitarian clothing styles.

The text is heavily illustrated, including a number of color plates, with few of the inevitable errors. Figure 2j is identified as an assistant to an Aztec judge, but the name on his *tilmatli* (cloak) identifies him as Motecuhzoma Ilhuicamina, the fifth Aztec *tlatoani* (ruler); and Figures 7f and 7g have been switched. Although the work is primarily descriptive, with only two short chapters for the discussion of conclusions and more theoretical concerns, it goes beyond the realm of the history of costume and is a contribution to the study of both pre- and post-Columbian Mesoamerica.

Sons of the Wind: The Search for Identity in Spanish American Indian Literature. **BRAULIO MUÑOZ. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1982. xiii + 321 pp., notes, bibliography, index. $27.50 (cloth), $12.95 (paper).**

JOHN K. CHANCE
University of Denver

This is a unique and thought-provoking book. It consists of an analysis of Spanish American *indigenista* novels and how they reflect the search for identity of their authors, and by extension, of the urban middle class. The focus is not on indigenous cultures or even the *indigenismo* movement per se, but on the emergence of the *mestizo* (the "New Man") as the chief symbol of Spanish American cultural unity. The author's main thesis is that by advocating an end to exploitation of the Indian through cultural assimilation, the indigenista novelists were in fact denying the Indian and affirming themselves as middle-class mestizos. From their point of view, and it seems to be the author's as well, the future lies with the mestizo. Only he can synthesize the best of both the Indian and European cultural traditions. The Indian, by contrast, has no choice but to disappear into the melting pot and join the ranks of the New Man.

The author, a Peruvian-born sociologist, attempts a "sociology of culture" via a content analysis of 44 novels about Indians from Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Guatemala, and Mexico. The book has a historical cast, for Muñoz is studying a literary genre that no longer exists. Indigenismo came into being, he states, in 1919 and ended in 1970. The last indigenista novel was written in 1962. Muñoz is therefore concerned not only with the rise of the genre, but also with its decline. Inspired first by scientific positivism and later by socialism, indigenista fiction was a kind of realistic reaction to the earlier romantic writings of the 19th century. While the romantics eulogized a noble savage in a golden past, the indigenistas depicted his exploitation at the hands of whites in the present.

The Andean novels were written by both liberals and Marxists, the former advocating a gradual approach to Indian assimilation, the latter more often espousing revolution. However, Muñoz skillfully shows that both shared a similar vision of the future: Indian culture would be extinguished and the mestizo New Man would inherit the earth. The one Guatemalan novelist discussed, Monteforte Toledo, is even more pessimistic regarding the Indian's future. In his view, charity or death are the only alternatives, and the coming of the New Man only a myth. The Mexican writers, while more sanguine about the future of the mestizo, are often preoccupied with the failure of the Mexican Revolution to solve the "Indian problem." Indians are portrayed in Mexican novels as isolated in space and time, with *mestizaje* the only antidote to their continued exploitation.

Muñoz identifies three factors that account for the decline of the indigenista novel in the 1950s and 1960s: (1) the "deculturation" of Indians resulting from massive rural-to-urban migration, (2) improvements in the Indian's socioeconomic condition, and (3) increased competition from the ethnographically more accurate sociological and anthropological literature. Partially as a result of these trends, contemporary novels now deal with the Indian in a "magicorealist" fashion, as an exploited member of mestizo society who has lost much, but not all, of his Indianness. The Indian is now part of the mestizo world, not isolated from it as he was in the indigenista novels. The latter were a product of the transition from a "tradi-