additions to an expanding corpus of English-language literature on contemporary Senegal, and on the Muridiyya in particular. The cultural, social, economic, and political activities of the Muridiyya and Senegal’s other Sufi orders are but one component of the Senegalese ‘exception’, the others being a deeply entrenched practice of democracy and a vibrant and diverse civil society. Any study of current affairs in Senegal needs to take the Muridiyya into account, and these books offer salient points of reference for the next generation of researchers.

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Bierlich’s ethnography deals with Dagbon society in northern Ghana from the perspective of medicine and money. The study’s focus is on modernity and its argument addresses the question of how the process of monetization affects society, particularly the ideas and practices surrounding morality, health, and health care.

The author carried out the bulk of his research in the area in 1990 and 1991, and did follow-up studies in 1995, 1996, and 1997. The first five chapters of the book could be read as a long and ethnographically rich introduction to the last three chapters. Those first chapters deal with: Dagbon society in general (1), kinship and personhood (2), concepts of health and illness (3), the plurality of medicines (4), and medical knowledge and practice (5).

In Chapter 6, Bierlich discusses contrasting and intertwining aspects of wealth, health, and magic. For example, he uses the example of the lottery game to draw parallels between people’s struggles with the insecurity of material well-being and with the uncertainty of health. Men’s fascination with the lottery is a case study in the response to modernity. The activities of ‘lottery teachers’ and local healers have remarkable similarities. Bierlich insists that the magic of the lotto game is not a return to pre-modern thinking but an ‘attempt to locate meaning and prosperity in a modern, postcolonial world characterized by monetary forms and global market economies’ (p. 125). Magic, in other words, is not banned by modernity but is part of it.

If the lottery is a male domain, the next chapter focuses on the female response to problems in everyday life. Men control the local medicines, but women, concerned with the practical realities of care in their families, are more interested in modern medicines that are known to be more effective against common diseases. Their preference for these medicines implies a switch from traditional morality to the market of monetary medicines. Local medicines are only given to those who respectfully beg for them (by ‘greeting’ the elders). In contrast, these new medicines can simply be bought by the women, bypassing the authority of the male elders. It is not surprising that the elders are suspicious and critical of Western medicines (and the women who purchase them) since they undermine traditional morality (read: their power). Women earning their own money now ‘emerge as the main decision makers concerning their children’s health’ (p. 139).

The final chapter, ‘The problem of money’, nuances the apparent conflict between money (and modern medicines) and traditional morality. Bierlich explains that ‘it
is not money as such that is a problem for the Dagomba, rather what money can do to personal relations. Monetary and non-monetary exchanges exist side-by-side' (p. 154). It would be more correct to speak of a deep ambivalence about money, which is particularly felt by the elders. They ‘realize that they are losing their control’ (p. 177), most tangibly in the flow of money and Western medicines, the central topics of this book.

Bierlich’s study taps into recent discussions on the commoditization and politicization of medicine and the surprise reappearance of magic and religion in modernity. Unfortunately, the meanings of these key concepts – ‘modernity’ in particular – are largely taken for granted. Modernity can mean almost anything, and what the author takes it to mean in Dagbon society remains somewhat obscure. That lack of clarity makes the reader hesitant about what the problem of money really is and how that problem relates to ‘modernity’ in Dagbon.

All in all, this book provides the reader with a fascinating insight into the intermingling of medicines, morality, gender, and inter-generational relationships in a society that is changing rapidly – in spite of the opposition by some of its most powerful members.

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Unfortunately this review has become a kind of obituary. The author of the book under review, Norwegian anthropologist Marianne Gullestad, died in March 2008 at the age of 62, barely four months after her monograph on missionary photography had appeared.

It has become a truism that twentieth-century histories – wherever on the globe they may be written – cannot be understood without considering the massive output of visual material, in particular photographs and films. Beginning rather timidly in the 1980s, research on the visual has gained considerable momentum since the 1990s. Yet, even after what has been termed the ‘pictorial turn’, missionary photographs have long been neglected. This has changed in recent years and missionary informational material has today become the object of considerable international interest. Looking at the regional distribution of research, we find that a great deal of work has been done and still is done in the Asia-Pacific region and in sub-Saharan Africa.

Access to and work with missionary photography is now greatly facilitated through projects such as the Internet Mission Photography Archive, where several physically separate collections (including the Norwegian Missionary Society’s photo collection) have been brought together into a single repository and made publicly accessible on the internet.

Always a fine observer of her own country, Gullestad undertakes an exploratory study of pictures and texts brought to Norway by the evangelical Norwegian Missionary Society (NMS) from northern Cameroon from the 1920s to the present. Gullestad analyses how ‘mission propaganda’ as she calls it – has impacted on