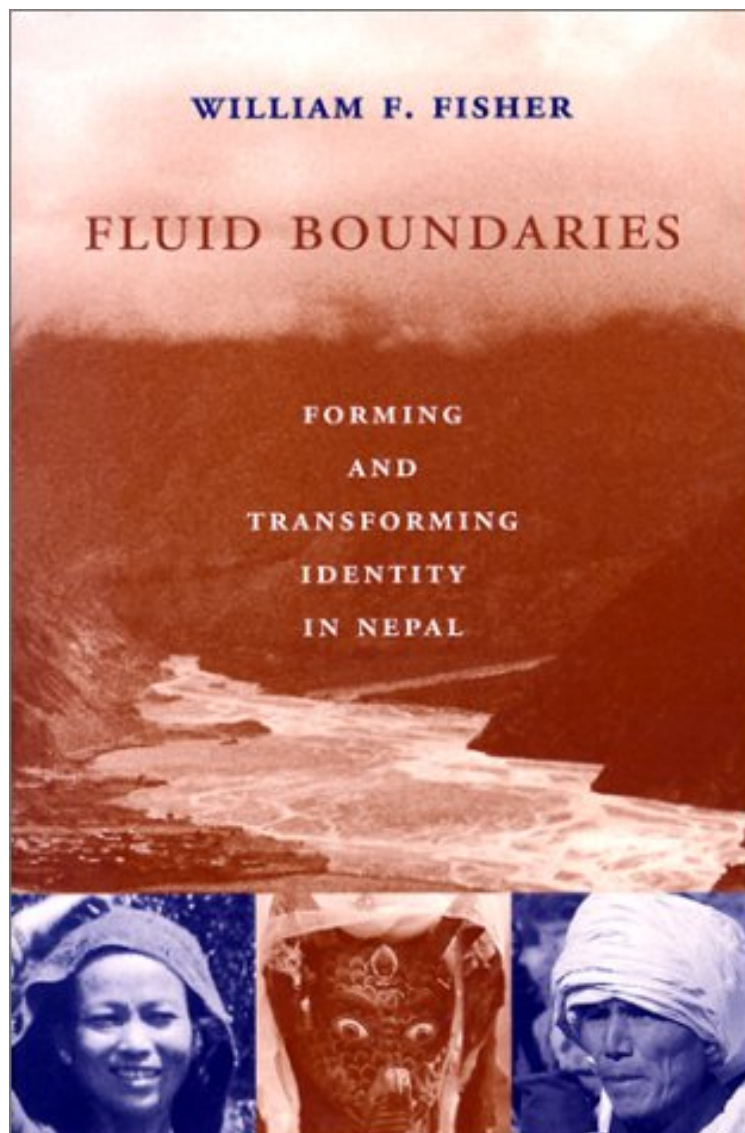


Fluid Boundaries

William Fisher

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More than an ethnography, this book clarifies one of the most important current debates in anthropology: How should

anthropologists regard culture, history, and the power process? Since the 1980s, the Thakali of Nepal have searched for an identity and a clarification of their "true" culture and history in the wake of their rise to political power and achievement of economic success. Although united in this search, the Thakali are divided as to the answers that have been proposed: the "Hinduization" of religious practices, the promotion of Tibetan Buddhism, the revival of practices associated with the Thakali shamans, and secularization. Ironically, the attempts by the Thakali to define their identity reveal that to return to tradition they must first re-create it but this process of re-creation establishes it in a way in which it has never existed. To return to "tradition" to become Thakali again is, in a way, to become Thakali for the very first time.

This authoritative account of Thakali society remains an extremely welcome addition to... the wider body of anthropological research into the political implications of the social construction of cultural identity. (Michael Wilmore, University of Adelaide, Australia *Ethnos*) *Fluid Boundaries* offers a sophisticated and intellectual evaluation... The book is an essential addition. (Mark Turin *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*) His final arguments are well made. He moves questions of ethnic identity on from quests for coherence and authenticity by actors and scholars to a matter of when and where ethnicity becomes an issue. (Ben Campbell *Social Anthropology*) About the Author William F. Fisher is associate professor of anthropology at Harvard University.