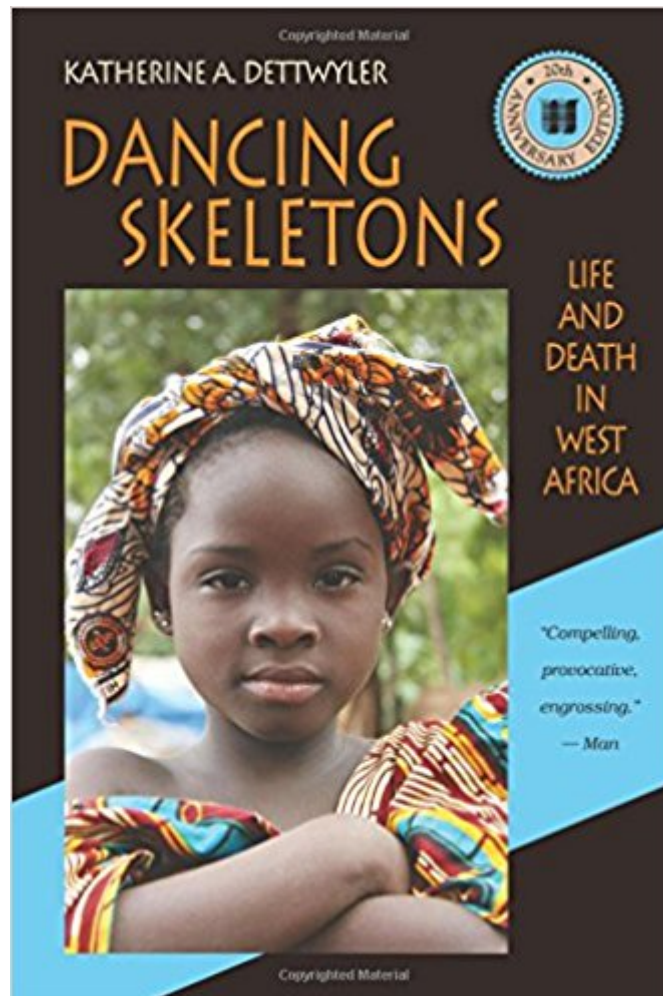




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Dancing Skeletons: Life And Death In West Africa, 20th Anniversary Edition



Synopsis

One of the most widely used ethnographies published in the last twenty years, this Margaret Mead Award winner has been used as required reading at more than 600 colleges and universities. This personal account by a biocultural anthropologist illuminates not-soon-forgotten messages involving the sobering aspects of fieldwork among malnourished children in West Africa. With nutritional anthropology at its core, *Dancing Skeletons* presents informal, engaging, and oftentimes dramatic stories that relate the author's experiences conducting research on infant feeding and health in Mali. Through fascinating vignettes and honest, vivid descriptions, Dettwyler explores such diverse topics as ethnocentrism, culture shock, population control, breastfeeding, child care, the meaning of disability and child death in different cultures, female circumcision, women's roles in patrilineal societies, the dangers of fieldwork, and facing emotionally draining realities. Readers will laugh and cry as they meet the author's friends and informants, follow her through a series of encounters with both peri-urban and rural Bambara culture, and struggle with her as she attempts to reconcile her very different roles as objective ethnographer, subjective friend, and mother in the field. The 20th Anniversary Edition includes a 13-page "Q & A with the Author" in which Dettwyler responds to typical questions she has received individually from students who have been assigned *Dancing Skeletons* as well as audience questions at lectures on various campuses. The new 23-page "Update on Mali, 2013" contains facts about economic and health conditions in Mali as well as a brief summary of the recent political unrest. Not-for-sale instructor resource material available to college and university faculty only; contact publisher directly. Title also available by Katherine Dettwyler: *Cultural Anthropology and Human Experience: The Feast of Life* (ISBN 9781577666813). Title of related interest also available from Waveland Press: Holloway, Monique and the Mango Rains: *Two Years with a Midwife in Mali* (ISBN 9781577664352). "Its vivid descriptions and the pathos that lies at the book's heart will touch many readers." *African Studies Review* "An outstanding, well-written book that should be read by students preparing to work in anthropology. It reflects what I would like to think is anthropology at its best." Mark Cohen, Distinguished Professor, SUNY Plattsburgh "... a sobering, painful look at problems of a still-poor, developing country that will be particularly instructive to international public health workers, nutrition educators, planners, and clinical nutritionists concerned with Third World problems." *Ecology of Food and Nutrition* "Dettwyler has used the reflexive style that our students love to read and that our colleagues in public health or international development would be well advised to hear." *American Anthropologist* "Katherine Dettwyler does an excellent job of weaving together the realities of fieldwork with the discipline of nutritional anthropology. This is a book that, at times, reads more like a novel than a text, making it

all the more enjoyable as an introductory text." Journal of Nutrition Education "A compelling, provocative, and engrossing book." Man "The anniversary edition has excellent recent materials on Mali to make this a much more up-to-date study for my Crosscultural Medicine course." Dominique Coulet du Gard, Western Washington University

Book Information

Paperback: 208 pages

Publisher: Waveland Press, Inc.; 20th Anniversary Edition edition (September 26, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1478607580

ISBN-13: 978-1478607588

Product Dimensions: 0.4 x 5.8 x 8.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 2.7 out of 5 stars 102 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #13,513 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Anthropology > Physical #75 in Books > Textbooks > Social Sciences > Anthropology #107 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Anthropology > Cultural

Customer Reviews

"The chapters contain moving stories and precious vignettes on the relationships established between the anthropologist, her assistants, and Malian households. They recount frustrations, arguments, humorous conversations, and offer penetrating accounts of local views on death, disease, well-being, and social proprieties. In summary, the book has two main advantages. First, it engages the reader because it is well written. Second, it offers a broad scope for discussion of academic and practical issues." --Journal of Biosocial Sciences

"The ongoing critique of ethnography has, happily, changed the genre, and today real people walk the pages of the best ethnographies. Dettwyler's *Dancing Skeletons* is surely one of the best. The text emerges as an extended meditation on applied fieldwork as a gradual melding of people and meaning. No student will leave this ethnography without both objective data and better subjective awareness of the 'is-ness' of suffering. None will go away gushing over the romance of fieldwork; yet, many will be attracted to the humanity of the applied research process." --American Journal of Human Biology

... a gem of a book on anthropological fieldwork.... This is a very personal journey that Dettwyler tells us about. Almost every page shows her interacting with her subjects, primarily interviewing mothers about infant feeding and child health, measuring children's growth, and gaining entrance to rural

village society. The author never launches into abstract theories or generalizations, but lets the informants speak for themselves." --Academic Library Book Review

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Also available by Katherine A. Dettwyler from Waveland Press: *Cultural Anthropology and Human Experience: The Feast of Life* (ISBN 9781577666813). --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Excellent read. The writer mixes a style of research ethnography with personal fieldwork. Informational and emotional read. I highly recommend.

Extremely boring, but even worse, it's completely lacking in compassion. The author and her daughter are clearly the most important people in the universe, according to what I got out of the book. Be prepared to read about mentally disabled people getting yelled at and disabled kids getting mean nicknames.

had to read this book for population health class.... only b/c I had to.. otherwise don't spend your \$ on it

I am not an anthropologist but a tourist who has visited Africa and is interested in learning more about African people. I found Katherine Dettwyler's book an excellent introduction to how real people live and deal with their lives in Africa. Dettwyler tells us how mothers and children interact, the way families view their children, what day-to-day life in rural Africa is really like. I found it

fascinating especially because Dettwyler talks honestly about her reactions to what she found. This book shouldn't be restricted to anthropology students.

I needed this book for an Anthropology class. The used price was fantastic, and it's a very interesting study even outside of my class. For anyone seeking to be enlightened on life in West Africa, this is a really good read.

I had to read this book for school did not think I would like it, but wrong it is excellent! I would read this book over and over. I recommend this book for everyone even if you are not interested in Anthropology!

don't waste your money. there are better books on this subject. The author thinks very highly of herself, even though she doesn't write well. And while I can tolerate arrogance, this author does nothing to back it up. I love the cover photo, though.

This was a positive experience, product arrived quickly and in the condition described by the seller.

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