



Dancing Skeletons: Life and Death in West Africa, 20th Anniversary Edition

Katherine A. Dettwyler

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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

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