



BOOK REVIEWS

Biosociality of Cancer: Cultural Scripts and Cultural Universals

Mathews, Holly F., Nancy J. Burke, Eirini Kampriani (eds.). 2015. *Anthropologies of Cancer in Transnational Worlds*. New York, London: Routledge. xii + 269 pp. Hb.: \$145.00. ISBN: 9781138776937.

Clemente, Ignasi. 2015. *Uncertain Futures: Communication and Culture in Childhood Cancer Treatment*. Malden, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. 248 pp. Hb.: \$99.95. ISBN: 1118909712.

Anthropologies and *Uncertain Futures* explore the same subject – the experience of cancer in a specific cultural context – yet, they are based on different approaches to cancer. First, Mathews and her colleagues explore cancer in adults, and Clemente focuses on childhood cancer. Second, Mathews and her colleagues conducted ethnographic studies within the field of medical and health anthropology; Clemente, as a linguistic anthropologist, observed children with cancer, their parents, and medical staff, as agents of communication and social interaction, using participant observation, interviews and conversation analysis. Finally, most of the twelve chapters of *Anthropologies* are focused on cancer-affected subjects (both patients and caregivers) in developing countries or immigrants living in developed countries. Field work was conducted in different locations and communities, including China, France, Brazil, India, Kenya and Puerto Rico, France, Scotland and Argentina, and the USA (Mexican and Filipino immigrants). Clemente's monographic study deals with the micro-context of a paediatric cancer unit in Catalonia, Spain. The above differences make these two volumes complementary, providing a broad perspective on the anthropology of cancer.

Cultural scripts

The Foreword to *Anthropologies* begins with a critical comment on a famous best-seller *The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer*. The Mukherjee's book is described as 'limited because it is based solely on a "Western journey" rather than one stretching to all the corners of the world' (Mathews et al. 2015: x). The authors of *Anthropologies* set out to write 'an alternative biography of cancer', because: 'Cancer has a multifaceted history and needs anthropological and ethnographic representations that offer alternative conceptualizations to biomedicine's universalizing and hegemonic tendencies' (pp. x; 8).

Focusing on trans-cultural aspects of cancer is supported by recent developments in cancer epidemiology. Globally, the incidence of cancer was 14.1 million in 2012, and it is expected to rise to 25 million in the next two decades (World Health Organization 2014). Cancer is now a relevant medical and social issue in developing countries. Two-thirds of cancer patients live in developing countries (p. 156). The Western biomedical model of cancer has a strong international influence at a time when 'cancer has become a global epidemic' (p. 1). We are witnessing a transmission of dominant medical and social cancer models into the geographically, socially or politically marginal cancer cultures.

Anthropologies questions this dominant Western medical cancer discourse by exploring inter-cultural differences. In most chapters, two opposing scripts are distinguishable. According to the "Western script", patients diagnosed with cancer are sup-

posed to make a radical change in their lifestyle, habits, social life, pursuing personal growth, ‘toward a view of cancer as beneficial trauma because it paves the way for those who experience suffering to undergo a positive transformation and become better selves’ (Bell, cf. Mathews et al. 2015: 177). In contrast, patients in developing countries see cancer as an additional disruption to their already hard living conditions, and they insist on going back to their life routine and identities of mothers, care-givers, and housewives, even before it is recommended or feasible. The Western script is patient-centred, while the non-Western script is family-centred. The Western script focuses on a total self-overhaul, while the non-Western script demands the preservation of the old self. In Aureliano’s chapter about breast cancer patients in Brazil, it is clear that

... conventional medicine’s logic of self-care goes against working class women’s logic of caring for others, which, far from being perceived as a form of subordination, is rather a means of normalization of everyday life and a demonstration of autonomy and health (p. 184).

The chapter about young Puerto Rican breast cancer patients where doctors rarely talk about the negative side effects of cancer treatments on fertility provides another example of the “clash of cancer cultures” and their respective emphases on individuals and families. Having a large family is a deep-rooted Puerto Rican value, and it is opposed to a dominant medical perspective that focuses on saving patient’s life, rather than their quality of life. The interviewed patients expressed their anger because their doctors had not discussed their options for preserving fertility. Their life philosophy does not revolve around satisfactory laboratory results. Similarly, the chapter on Mexican illegal immigrants shows them to be more fearful of losing their difficult, but hopeful life in the United States than living with untreated cancer. They are reluctant to go back to Mexico to get treatment because they might not be able to come back. Patients in India would rather spend their savings on children’s weddings or education, than on cancer treatment, because “group-sanctioned ambitions” are significant to the hierarchical “Indian self” (Dumont).

The two opposing models (Western-type survivor activism advocated by humanitarian sector and family-oriented model of support prevailing in India) continue through the post-treatment stage. The Western model is based on a new identity of “survivor” and willingness to talk about the disease and emotional experience with courage and pride, while the opposite approach is focused on the stigmatisation of cancer in a wider community, so the main strategy is to avoid talking about cancer or negative feelings related to the cancer experience. Although the first model seems to be more humane and patient-oriented by promoting “self-disclosure”, this approach may not always be beneficial in the non-Western context: ‘Talking *about* cancer is not necessarily perceived as a cathartic and therapeutic process but rather as a risky and morally dubious venture’ (p. 123).

Differences between the two cultural scripts are very prominent in the terminal stage of the disease. In the Western cultural script, death has become more shameful and tabooed than sex (Foucault 2012). According to the *sequestration* thesis (Walter, cf. Mathews 2015: 230), death is separated from everyday life by being medicalised, professionalised and de-spiritualised. Talking about death and dying is not encouraged.

Terminally ill patients in Scotland are ‘dying to be heard’, and their ‘dying is hidden, and its meaning privatized’ (Walter, cf. Mathews 2015: 230). In contrast, dying patients in Africa suffer less from existential issues compared to the “First World” patients, even as they struggle with excruciating physical pain and suffer in horrific conditions without adequate therapy. Kenyan patients are dying without adequate palliative care, often previously experiencing a series of incorrect or delayed treatments. Nevertheless, being surrounded by their social network, families and wider communities, they have better spiritual guidance in the critical stage, compared to people in affluent societies where death is professionalised.

However, cultural scripts are not homogenous. Situational diversities of childhood cancer within the “Western script” are well presented in Clemente’s study. Childhood cancer is very complex, because parents do not have an adequate cultural model for this situation (childhood cancers are rare), yet still must follow the dominant cultural model of childhood which emphasises child vulnerability while accepting that their children will go through difficult treatments. In Clemente’s study, two children died during his research. Paradoxically, a little girl aged five, who was dying from a kidney tumour, confronted death more readily than her mother. The girl wanted to talk about Jesus, crucifixion, angels, and heaven, and her mother realized that these were comforting bedtime stories for little Eli, although very upsetting for herself (Clemente 2015). This episode is contrasted with the Western cancer script of optimism and heroism that is the norm in childhood cancer treatment, and even more emphasised than in adult cancer in the context of the cultural model of childhood which emphasises children’s “futurity”, vulnerability and innocence, and the role of “biography guardians” (especially mothers) (Young 2002).

In the Western model, much focus is placed on establishing a scientific, optimistic and pro-active cancer worldview, and any kind of defeatism is not acceptable. As observed by a breast cancer survivor in Scotland, negative emotions expressed by patients are frowned upon (Mathews et al. 2015: 234). The same optimism is expected from those affected by childhood cancer (especially care-givers) and adult cancer: ‘The hero-survivor is the one who complies completely with biomedical treatments and fights against the odds to survive while maintaining a cheerful attitude’ (p. 28). A conflict between medical resistance to accept “defeat” and mother’s resistance to the continuation of suffering was evident in the case of Eli: doctors pushed for another treatment (with poor prognosis), and her mother resisted, but passively – she agreed with the doctor’s proposal, but did not appear with her daughter on the appointment day (Clemente 2015).

Cancer communication

As Manderson has observed in *Anthropologies*, we are “surprisingly imprecise” in our communication about cancer:

We distinguish between Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, multiple sclerosis and motor neuron disease rather than speaking globally of neurological conditions, for instance; we treat as discrete – and make a point of establishing the difference – between a ‘common cold’ and other respiratory

tract infections. Yet cancer is cancer at first moment of diagnosis, and in telling. The differentiation comes later, to a smaller community, when clinicians, patients, family and friends all try to make sense of its emergence, determine intervention and assess the outcome (Mathews et al. 2015: 242).

Hundreds of cancer types are lumped together, but ‘cancer’ is ‘dense with metaphor’ (Manderson 2015: 242): *battling, survivors, warriors, thrivers, fighting spirit* (p. 3), *survivorship* (p. 7), *battleground, cancer and heroics, sainthood* (p. 231), *embattlement, struggles, victories, stealth and victimhood* (p. 242). These metaphors contribute to the essentialisation of a modern Western concept of cancer that focuses on accomplishments in “cancer wars”: decreased mortality rates, experimental therapies, improved palliative care, pain management, and victory over cancer.

The main purpose of cancer communication is to handle *uncertainties* as the most prominent aspect of the cancer experience (Clemente 2015). Cancer uncertainties can be associated with the present and with the future; there are local (ongoing treatment) and overall uncertainties; finally, uncertainties vary across cancer trajectories. In dealing with multiple uncertainties, sustaining optimism and hope is the norm. Clemente’s analysis shows that communicative strategies of medical authorities and parents are used mostly for this purpose: ‘To manage these different uncertainties, patients, parents, and doctors engage in the constant work of hope and optimism, in order to maintain a sense of certainty about the future’ (p. 21). Hiding negative emotions is a communicative strategy used for that purpose by parents and encouraged by doctors.

However, there are contradictions regarding the issue of *disclosing* diagnoses and prognoses when communicating with patients. On one hand, open communication, awareness and self-disclosure are encouraged in public discourse. On the other, patients in the terminal stage are silenced, because talking about death and dying is not encouraged. Clemente’s book focuses on disclosure as an integral part of cancer communication. Clemente distinguishes between ‘disclosure countries’ and ‘non-disclosure countries’, depending on the dominant approach to “truth telling”:

Non-disclosure is located within a traditional meta-narrative of ‘social embeddedness,’ with an emphasis on social unity, sparing another suffering and taking it on oneself, supporting a good life and a ‘good’ death, and the protection of society to ensure the adaptation of the community to life’s inevitabilities. Disclosure is located within a meta-narrative of ‘autonomy-control’ with an emphasis individual autonomy, control, and sovereignty of one’s destiny (p. 8).

Although disclosure officially replaced non-disclosure in communication with adult cancer patients in the 1970s, the change of paradigm is more complex than the question of ‘truth telling’ (Clemente 2015: 7). In *Anthropologies*, doctors in Kenya opt for non-disclosure to sustain patients’ optimism and determination to follow through with the treatment. This is very similar to the disclosure model used in communication with children.

Clemente applied the *prospective approach* to explore communication: communicative strategies and interactions were monitored as they unfolded along children's cancer trajectories. Thus, in addition to employing 'situated interactional data analysis' (Clemente, 2015: 42), his research has a longitudinal character. Clemente included children as active study participants in dialogues with medical staff and parents. In his explanation of micro-discursive subtleties of communication, Clemente used a "performative" approach to communication: 'Omission, silence, and other ways of not talking do communicate something, convey specific and situated meanings' (pp. xv, 5). Regulation of negative emotions, using silence and non-verbal communication are elements of Clemente's analysis. Language and communication are defined as *action*, in contrast to the "referentialist" position that focuses on the "referential role" of language. Language is used to "construct" social reality through interaction. The research was conducted on twelve young people aged 11–18 (with different cancer diagnoses) and five children aged 3–6. Most of the detailed conversation analyses were based on young people's conversations. The book contains drawings and linguistic explanations of selected situated conversations.

There are some similarities in cancer communication with adults and children. The name of the disease is avoided to control disclosure to the patient, and also as a defence mechanism by caregivers to alleviate their own anxiety. For example, Chinese patients are dying of 'vomiting illness' or 'choking or spitting illness' (referring to stomach and oesophagus cancers, respectively) (Mathews et al. 2015: 39). Children with cancer learn very early to avoid the word "cancer":

Suddenly, Pedro asked his parents: '... because it's *cancer*?' His mother answered, 'They've told you already. But you only have it here,' pointing to her own leg. The medical team and parents never used the word 'cancer.' Instead, they used 'lesion' or 'tumor'. Pedro's mother's use of the pronoun 'it' and her pointing gesture also allowed her to talk about 'cancer' without uttering the word. Pedro never asked his doctor if he had cancer. Indeed, I never heard Pedro use the word 'cancer' again (Clemente 2015: 2).

Communication in paediatric cancer is rife with ambiguity, because it is shaped by cultural expectations about children's autonomy and agency. Despite Western societies' shift towards children's participation, children do not participate in decisions about cancer treatment. Children are 'half-members, peripheral participants, and non-persons in healthcare interactions' and there is 'concealment of information from children with cancer and other life-threatening illnesses [...] in countries where disclosure is supposedly favoured, such as the United States and the United Kingdom' (Clemente 2015: 16–7; 13). Clemente identified six strategies used in communicating diagnostic/treatment information: deception, official and planned complete non-disclosure, unofficial leakage and gathering of information, unplanned and improvised partial disclosure, regulation of negative emotions, and official and planned partial disclosure. These strategies (some of them unintentional) vary across cancer trajectories: complete non-disclosure (with a possibility of leakage) is a norm before the diagnosis, while planned partial disclosure is practised during the treatment stage. Clemente observes that, the more uncertain the

future, the tighter the control of communication, which consists mostly of optimistic deception and complete non-disclosure.

Clemente emphasises two absences as guiding principles in communicating with children: absence of disclosure and absence of certainty. Most agents understand what is not acceptable, without being told (like Pedro): ‘Successful non-disclosure, like successful avoidance, evasion, and collusion, leaves no traces.’ (p. 45). The ‘conspiracy of silence’ in cancer communication manifests as a ‘conspiracy of talk’ (p. 6). Since silence would be interpreted by the participants as a sign of bad news, they rather ‘talk after a question without necessarily answering it, or prevent sensitive questions from being asked at all ...’ (p. 6). Also, talk about the distant future and prognosis is avoided, while a focus on the ongoing treatment is preferred: ‘focusing on what can be controlled and routinized (i.e., the everyday administration of treatment in the present moment) helps reduce uncertainty’ (p. 50). However, there is no clear distinction between disclosure and non-disclosure, telling and not telling. Children are actively trying to undermine the status of being passive recipients of information.

Children’s pursuits of questions and doctor’s evasions result in long ‘cat-and-mouse game’ negotiations regarding what to talk about and how. A child asked a question, a doctor evaded an answer, the child returned with a second question, the doctor gave some piecemeal information, the child asked a third question, the doctor light-heartedly teased the child, and so forth and so on. These ‘cat-and-mouse game’ negotiations also revealed that there was no exact agreement among participants at Catalonia Hospital on the limits of what needed to be avoided; they had different understandings of what needed to be avoided, and they collaboratively negotiated it (p. 46).

Cultural universals

As we go through the chapters of these books, we become aware of different cancer cultures, cancer languages, and cancer uncertainties. At the same time, these two ethnographies show some universal anthropological features. The studies conducted in Western countries, such as France, Scotland (Mathews et al. 2015) and Spain (Clemente 2015) reveal the same desperation, resignation, and existential fear that we find in chapters about cancer experience in destitute conditions. Although the issues and struggles faced by cancer patients in the global “North” and “South” are nothing alike, a total self-disruption and existential uncertainty appear to be *cultural universals*. All cancer patients experience the so-called *biographical disruption* (the concept first used by Bury), suggesting that chronic illnesses like cancer cause ‘a threat to the individual’s established self-image, sense of agency and vision of the future’ (Mathews et al. 2015: 177).

Disruptive biographies have different manifestations in India and France, but they reflect the same anthropological invariant – fear of self and body deterioration. There is also a universal denial in dealing with biographical disruption although its manifestations are culturally specific. *Anthropologies* deals primarily with the non-Western context (chapters about Brazil and India), but Western media abounds with stories of survivors engaging in extreme endeavours that they would not even consider if they were healthy (running marathons). In less developed countries, patients tend to push their bodies in a

similar way, but for different reasons. As mentioned earlier, they tend to return to their life routine, suffering great pain and exhaustion.

The most persistent universal is related to the human horror caused by uncertainty (as shown in Clemente's work) and lack of control over the disease. All cultures search for the origin of cancer, either 'personal misdeeds' in non-Western countries or lifestyle choices and personality issues in Western countries. In both Western and non-Western cultural contexts, beliefs about the origin of cancer are manifestations of a desperate need to find the cure. Since there is still no cure, Western medicine focuses on the second-best option – prevention.

Prevention became the pivotal aspect of the modern medical approach to cancer during the 1990s when 'health became politicised' (Fitzpatrick 2000). The "tyranny of health" created a "new patient", with a high awareness of prevention and healthy lifestyles, in contrast to the old type of patients who seemed to be less anxious about longevity and health risks. Screenings are manifestations of this new perspective on health: 'the female body as an object in constant need of monitoring, evaluation and surveillance, a body for screening' (Kaufert 2000: 166–167). However, screening is not a patriarchal mechanism of women's oppression as it potentially includes everyone, depending on their family history, age group, gender, or lifestyle. Screening belongs to the *anticipatory habitus* (Mathews et al. 2015: 68). "A body for screening" is a new anthropological solution to human angst stemming from perceived lack of control over a dreadful disease, rather than an instrument of Foucauldian surveillance and control.

The limitations of Western prevention-focused cancer philosophy are clearly shown in *Anthropologies*. In Brazil, prevention is not available due to the lack of health insurance and physical access to health services in rural areas. Taking part in clinical genetic research is the only way for women at high risk of breast cancer (family history of aggressive cancer) to get access to regular check-ups. Similarly, in Kenya, prevention is almost non-existent, and late-stage diagnosis is dominant, due to lack of access to facilities, lack of medical expertise, or patients delaying examination and treatment.

While access to modern prevention techniques is unequal, prevention has a more universal anthropological meaning. It is part of the human search for cancer control. Lay and medical aetiologies of cancer focusing on "psychosomatic", "lifestyle explanations" or "moral misdeeds" similarly support the illusion that the disease is preventable.

Cancer citizenship

Another inspirational concept used in the Foreword to *Anthropologies* is *cancer citizenship* (Mathews et al. 2015). Cancer citizenship is not global, as it, to some extent overlaps with politico-geographical boundaries. For example, cancers with infectious or environmental aetiologies are more common in the developing world (Mathews et al. 2015: 249). Cancer citizenship is valued depending on cancer type. Even in developed countries, patients suffering from cancers induced by lifestyle (lung cancer, cervical cancer) are deprived of "heroism" and get less financial support than breast cancer patients, because they are held responsible for their disease (Mathews et al. 2015: 28). Finally, cancer citizenship is not limited to those diagnosed with cancer: those at risk can also be considered

“cancer citizens”. As Klawiter observes (2008: xxviii), in the case of breast cancer, there is a ‘disease continuum’ that expands to all adult women.

Cancer trajectories (the concept used by Clemente) are different in childhood cancer and adult cancer. Today, a five-year survival rate for lymphoblastic leukaemia is 80%, compared to 0% in 1960 (Clemente 2015). A child survivor and an adult survivor prospects are different: cancer emerges when child’s identity is only being formed, while in adults there is a self-reflected ‘disruptive biography’ in place. Cancer trajectories also diverge across socio-economic and geo-political lines. A complex Western-type trajectory has many stages (“at risk”, “in treatment”) and new identities (“survivor”). Most of them are non-existent in non-Western/destitute social contexts. Most patients in Kenya never get to the stage of survivorship, because they are diagnosed too late. Stages have different lengths, so diagnosing and pre-treatment may be very long in Kenya, India, and among Mexican immigrants. The social stigma of cancer also prevents the development of survivor identity, even if there is an actual survival, because patients prefer not to create a new form of identity, as mentioned in the case of India (Mathews et al. 2015).

Rabinow’s concept of *biosociality* (used by Burke in *Anthropologies*) may be useful here as an umbrella concept for emerging social forms based on technological and scientific approaches to biology (Mathews et al. 2015; Rabinow 1992). In his seminal work, Rabinow anticipated new identities based on medical technology:

There will be, for example, neurofibromatosis group who will meet to share their experiences, lobby for their disease, educate their children, redo their home environment ... These groups will have medical specialists, laboratories, narratives, traditions and a heavy panoply of pastoral keepers to help them experience, share, intervene in, and ‘understand’ their fate (Rabinow 1992: 243–244).

To become recognised as social problems, issues must compete for attention and space on the public agenda (Lantz and Booth 1998: 909). For that reason, there are struggles among different “cancer communities”. There are many stakeholders involved in the world of cancer: patients, caregivers, policy makers, cancer lobby groups, governments, NGOs, IGOs, and pharmaceutical companies. For example, Klawiter (2008) claims that the breast cancer community has become the leading cancer community as a result of biopolitical strategies and lobbying. The result was an enormous increase in funding for breast cancer research over the last decades. Breast cancer survivors not only have a new identity but also act as political actors (Klawiter 2008). The politicisation of cancer is described in the chapter about Filipino breast cancer survivors in San Francisco. The local breast cancer support group was spontaneously created within the Filipino Community Group. It was funded by the national breast cancer foundation. However, the meetings were attended not only by breast cancer survivors but also by patients suffering from other types of cancer, or other diseases or even belonging to other ethnic groups. The donor opposed this and forced separation along “biological lines”, exclusive attendance of “breast cancer survivors” and allowed only discussions related to breast cancer, not even general health, even though there were breast cancer patients with other health issues.

(Mathews et al. 2015). The policy which forced biological identity over ethnicity seemed counterproductive in a group of people with intersecting health/ethnic identities.

Childhood cancers are different from adult cancers partly because children spend time in hospitals with their families and other children. Clemente describes a micro-cancer community in a paediatric hospital unit that ‘reproduced the social geography of a small Mediterranean village’ (Clemente 2015: 65):

The waiting rooms and playrooms were the village’s public squares, the hallways the streets, the hospital school was the village’s school with one classroom for children of all ages, and patients’ hospital rooms were private dwellings. Whenever a villager returns from an outside stay, he or she goes around the village paying visits to the houses of relatives and friends, checking who is also at home, inquiring about their well-being and also being updated about the latest news – and gossip – of the village (Clemente 2015: 65).

Children who died were remembered as members of a small “cancer village”. However, different cancer trajectories may cause distance between patients in remission and relapsed patients (Clemente 2015).

Gender is not the main topic of these two books, but its role is evident throughout most chapters. Clemente has noted that paediatric cancer is ‘largely a woman’s world’ (Clemente 2015: 41). Mothers were the predominant care-givers in the hospital, and medical staff were predominantly women (Clemente 2015). Other studies have shown the same pattern. Young and colleagues (2002) have found that majority of care-givers are mothers: they feel the obligation of *proximity*, the need to be physically close to the child with cancer. Gender bias is also evident in *Anthropologies*: most chapters focus on female cancer patients and caregivers. There are few chapters dealing with male cancer patients, but there again, the focus was on women as caregivers. The most discussed subject in *Anthropologies* is breast cancer, which is almost completely a gender specific disease. In *Afterwords*, Manderson says that half of all the chapters in *Anthropologies* are about breast cancer (Mathews et al. 2015: 243).

These two volumes bring to light some of the marginalised aspects of the cancer experience in the global North as well as South. The authors of *Anthropologies* have revealed the “subaltern” world of cancer experience and its variations across countries, but also within the “Western cancer world” (illegal Mexican immigrants in Arizona or Filipino community in San Francisco). Likewise, Clemente emphasises ‘intracultural diversity and dynamism, as well as contextual and individual variation’ of cancer (Clemente 2015: 7). The authors of both books demonstrated methodological advantages of anthropological approach for better understanding of universal issues of death, pain, physical deterioration, and social and emotional turbulence caused by cancer. In their efforts, the authors were mostly successful in playing the *cat-and-mouse game* with “the emperor of all maladies”.

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Michaela Schäuble. 2014. *Narrating Victimhood. Gender, Religion and the Making of Place in Post-War Croatia*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books. 392 p. Hb.: \$120.00/£75.00. ISBN: 9781782382607.

The book opens with a vivid description of how Michaela Schäuble, the author, and Marko, one of her interlocutors, gazed at the scenery of the central Dalmatian hinterland, in Croatia, through a telescope. Subtly inviting the readers to join, the prose in this book makes it clear that Schäuble is both an anthropologist and a filmmaker. Reading her rich ethnographic descriptions of Dalmatia, a rural, impoverished, marginal region in Croatia, characterised by ‘a stony, infertile soil and heavily fragmented landholdings’ (p. 3), often feels like following a camera’s movement through a scene.

This film-like gaze of the book is succinctly present in the *Preface*, titled *Ways of knowing and looking*, which discusses two ways of interacting with the environment employed by Marko and the author: a volunteer in the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s, Marko found comfort in the detached view offered by a telescope; an anthropologist, Schäuble personally interacted with the location to become acquainted with it. Yet, it would be wrong to assume that Marko was detached from this place, while Schäuble was embedded in it. To Marko, the landscape ‘meant rootedness and offered a source of calm, whereas to me [it] aroused no such feeling’ (p. xii). His way of looking was infused with ‘historical, biographical, commemorative, emotional and imaginative knowledges’ (p. xii) of this place, while the author had yet to establish a personalised relationship with it. Schäuble suggests that anthropological learning takes place precisely in such movements ‘between proximity and distance’ (p. xiv), by attempting to understand who is attached to a place, and how.

Narrating Victimhood ethnographically explores precisely this issue – how a place is produced in a particular way, what practices make one attached to it, and what role gender, nationalism, and religion play in the process of place-making. The dry and mountainous landscape of Dalmatia forms not just a background of the ethnographic descriptions in this book – it provokes analysis and occasionally it functions as a character on its own. *Chapter One* offers a historical outline of Dalmatian history and an ethnographic analysis of how mythical national history is transformed into a lived experience during a local knight’s tournament, Sinjska Alka. *Chapter Two* follows the cult of the Marian apparition and the annual pilgrimage to the Marian shrine in the town of Sinj, from the socialist Yugoslav era to today. It also outlines the story of a neighbouring village that has never become a recognised pilgrimage site, although its inhabitants claim it as a Marian apparition site. *Chapter Three* follows how landscape is produced through nationalist ritual commemorations and how it becomes redefined through a focus on the memorialisation of massacre victims ‘that had previously been concealed under Tito’s regime’ (p.17). *Chapter Four* discusses links between masculinity, militarisation, and nationalism, suggesting that hegemonic masculinities in the region are ‘mobilized as a resource against overbearing external influences and global change’ (p. 252) and, thus, easily expressed through the idioms of self-defence and self-sacrifice. *Chapter Five* examines how the Dalmatian region, and Croatia as a country, became repositioned as

belonging to the Mediterranean (rather than to the Balkans) and in what way local and international geopolitical markers – including Europe, Balkans, Mediterranean – are reflected and evoked in the self-understanding of the Dalmatians.

Most scholars and residents of the Balkans will be well-versed in the repertoire of the connections that Schäuble's interlocutors established between militarised masculinity, suffering femininity, religious veneration, self-victimisation, national martyrs, nationalist myths, and so forth. It seems as if the book was written primarily for an audience unfamiliar with the Balkans, Croatia, or Dalmatia. Still, readers may find it surprising how carefully the author portrays the voices of her interlocutors in a compassionate and non-judgmental, yet critical manner. Schäuble refuses to understand her interlocutors solely through the prism of 'radical nationalist, racist, sexist or homophobic positions' (p. 14) that they often held, aiming to respect and empathise with them, 'while at the same time critically challenging their trope of victimization and strongly disagreeing with their nationalist and at times openly fascist stance' (p. 15). This is a difficult balance to keep for anthropologists, who much more easily and much more often portray the voices of the marginalised groups whose political views they do share. Some readers may find the author was not sufficiently critical enough towards her interlocutors; others that the criticism was too sharp. In any case, Schäuble's approach may be informative for all those who intend to conduct ethnographic research in the West, with the economically and/or culturally marginalised communities during the Trump and post-Brexit years.

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Starn, Orin (ed.). 2015. *Writing Culture and the Life of Anthropology*. Durham, London: Duke University Press. 268 pp. Pb.: \$24.95. ISBN: 9780822358732.

Creatively starting with a quotation from Eminem, who speaks against thinking and talking about the past too much, Orin Starn seems to edit a book that dwells in the past as he issued with *Writing Culture and the Life of Anthropology* an anthology, which refers to the famous book *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* from 1986 and the developments in anthropology since its publication. The contributor James Clifford, noting sentimentally ‘So much has changed in these twenty-five years,’ (p. 27) and later George E. Marcus writing about his personal starting moment of *Writing Culture* when James Clifford came to his department presenting an early version of his essay, *On Ethnographic Authority* even reinforces that impression. However, that honouring of the past leads the reader on a wrong path, because browsing more intensively through the book one realises that it is more about the discipline today reflected in the eye of what has changed in the previous 25 years within and beyond. These changes opened up new fields for anthropological research and let the insights of *Writing Culture* be implemented more radical than ever imaginable.

John L. Jackson Jr. for example explores in his contribution *Ethnography is, Ethnography Ain't* how digitalisation impacts the authority of the researchers and their ethnographic subjects using the term ‘ethnographic sincerity’ (p.165): Traditionally, the researcher could say anything about his field ‘back home’ without his research subjects being able to comment on it. Nowadays, not only can talks of researchers given about their fields be accessed online, but also the researchers ‘backstage (at home) continues to shrink into ethnographic view’ (p.166).

At the same time, ethnographic subjects started to speak for and about themselves and about the researcher as well. These changes cause a fundamental transition of the relations between ethnographers and the subjects of their fields and as Jackson puts it, it might save ‘the discipline from what others prophesy as its pending irrelevance’ (p.168).

However, not only external influences have brought a change to anthropology: the discipline itself changed fundamentally as for example more and more researchers put their home country in the focus of their research while others move on to new topics, such as biotechnology, advertising and law. Regarding possible future developments within the discipline, the editor Orin Starn points out to well-sold anthropological books like David Graeber’s *Debt*, which in contrast to the *Writing Cultures*, calla for ‘multiplicity, heterogeneity, and the limits of metanarratives ... do not shy from big claims about the world’ (p. 20). This and many other new turns leave the reader motivated to take a closer look at the articles following Starns introduction to understand from anthropologists like James Clifford, George E. Marcus, Anne Allison and many more, from which we can still learn from *Writing Culture* in a so-called “post-*Writing Culture* era”.

The “new” papers of the original contributors to *Writing Culture* give an interesting insight into the process of their retroactive appraisal of their own works: James Clifford for example emphasises how *Writing Culture* was one part of a bigger change rather than the change agent itself. He points out how historical he feels rereading the book, as

there is no mentioning of the internet or globalisation in it at all. Most importantly one can learn from Clifford's paper how *Writing Culture* is embedded in the political context of its time (pp. 25–34).

In the following chapter, George E. Marcus moves on from the reflection of what has changed since *Writing Culture* to introducing 'discursive forms of collaborative thinking' (p. 39) that have developed since then. Ethnographic research projects are nowadays shaped by conditions like the researchers' interest to spread their findings among a wider public or collaboration in fieldwork becoming increasingly compulsory. These new conditions are met by projects that work with dynamic archiving or studios and labs, examples that are more explicitly explained by Marcus in his article.

However, not only anthropologists somehow (famously) entangled with *Writing Culture* have their say: Anne Allison, who received her doctorate in 1986, gives with her work on precarity in Japan a brilliant example of a new research field and style with her so-called "mobile ethnography". At the same time, like Kathleen Stewart who also works on precarity (not in Japan but rather in her New England hometown), she experiments with different ethnographic writing styles typical for the post-*Writing Culture* era.

As a closing chapter and another example for a new development after *Writing Culture*, Hugh Raffle's ethnography of stone exemplifies that anthropologists do not necessarily have to work on humankind. Or as Starn puts it: '... dogs, magnetic resonance imaging, chickens, space rockets, and genetically engineered mice become the objects of a post-anthropocentric anthropology that probes the history and politics of our entanglements with other life forms.' (p. 12).

As can be seen, anthropology has come a long way since the start of the famous *Writing Culture*. And even if *Writing Culture* was criticised for its lacking analysis of race, class and gender and many other reasons, it cannot be denied how important *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* was back in the 1980s and how it still has a significant impact on anthropological research and writing, even if so many new fields and styles of ethnographic practice have developed since then.

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Maddrell, Avril, Alan Terry, and Tim Gale (eds.) (2015). *Sacred Mobilities: Journeys of Belief and Belonging*. London, New York: Routledge. 226 pp. Hb.: \$85.34/£67.99. ISBN: 978-1-4724-2007-7.

Drawing on the ‘New Mobilities Paradigm’ (Sheller & Urry 2006), the editors Tim Gale, Avril Maddrell, and Alan Terry use the notion of “sacred mobilities” as an umbrella concept for wide variety of sacred mobilities whether they are grounded in religion, self-spirituality or secular passions (p. 4). The editors consider mobility/ies as more than a concept:

[it] is a post-disciplinary paradigm that integrates leisure and tourism, transport and migration, embodied practices and performance, with the potential for new ways of seeing and thinking about these things and links between them. It is broadly concerned with the mobile practices (for example walking, running, driving, cycling), spaces (roads, railways, airports, cities, the internet), and subject positions (tourists, commuter, migrant, worker, refugee), and mobility at a variety of scales – from the global to the local (p. 7).

This wide framing of (more than a concept) *Sacred Mobilities* is reflected in the chapters of volume that covers a variety of practices, rituals, performances but are mostly focused on spiritual and secular, i.e. not institutionalised religious contexts. This volume demonstrates, as the editors highlight, that the notion of the sacred has become stretched and re-defined and goes beyond institutionalised religion. It is a continuing debate on interpretations of secular and sacred and the distinction between pilgrims and tourists that started with Mircea Eliade and Victor Turner. Since the 1990s, and the change of the perspective on pilgrimage, researchers have become aware of the fact that global changes and the massive expansion of the travel and tourism industry have impacted pilgrimage (see Coleman & Eade 2004; Reader 2013; Lloyd 1998). The interweaving of cultural, social, economic and political institutions and processes has created complex mixtures of elements, which are being described by hybrid etic categories such as pilgrimage tourism, religious tourism, spiritual pilgrimage, and secular pilgrimage. The concept of *Sacred Mobilities* is an example of this alternative approach. This etic concept encourages us to look beyond the narrow definitions of sacred, but different practices still need to be observed in their specific contexts, which include the emic understanding of the sacred (Eade & Katić 2017).

The volume is divided into three sections: 1) *Sacred-secular and the Secular-sacred*, 2) *Tracing Historical Footprints*, and 3) *Sacred Journey: Home, Family and Nation*. The volume ends with an *Afterword* by Tim Edensor.

In *Chapter Two*, by Nick Hopkins, Clifford Stevenson, Shail Shankar, Kavita Pandey, Sammyh Khan and Shruti Tewari, authors study the Hindu pilgrimage of Mela and investigate whether attending the Mela impacted the well-being of the pilgrims. Their analyses of survey data suggest that those who had undertaken the pilgrimage report better well-being and fewer symptoms of ill-health.

In *Chapter Three*, David Crouch looks beyond formal religion and argues that

the sacred resides within us regardless of what we believe in (or not). He discusses the relation between performance and space and considers meanings surrounding sacred, journeying, and journeys. He argues that feelings of immanence are not confined to institutional labelling.

In *Chapter Four*, James Thurgill provides an auto-ethnographic account of neo-Pagan ritual that took place at the Ankerwycke Yew in the Middlesex village of Wraysbury, UK, on the occasion of Halloween 2011. The chapter is focused on forming a discourse around enchantment, magic (that he distinguishes from magic as a form of entertainment), place and movement as inseparable from the performance of the sacred in nature-based worship and practice.

In *Chapter Five*, editors together with Simon Arlidge, write about annual TT (Tourist Trophy) motorcycle races in the Isle of Man. TT is represented and experienced as a sports pilgrimage, so the authors analyse the extent to which the TT is discursively constructed and performatively experienced as a sacred journey. They conclude that even though TT is not the equivalent of a religious obligation, the races themselves are represented and marketed by the sacred rhetoric and many spectators attribute them sacred qualities.

In *Chapter Six*, Rob Irving considers how places are shaped by myths and legends to become legend landscapes. His main focus is on Avebury area in Wiltshire that attracts New Age pilgrims.

In *Chapter Seven*, Pamela Richardson through George Fox biography and his travels in North West England explores the origin of a pilgrimage in an area known as “the 1652 Country”.

In *Chapter Eight* Belen Castro Fernandez discusses the beginnings of the The Way of St James. The special focus is on political aspects, initially under the Franco dictatorship, and into heritage/cultural tourism that culminated in the last decades of the 20th century.

In *Chapter Nine* Nina Vollenbröker studies the Overland Trails of 19th-century America. The chapter demonstrates that mobility does not necessarily result in the loss of rootedness. The emplacement continues to be important regardless of living a mobile life.

In *Chapter Ten* Katy Beinart writes about a 26-day journey from Antwerp to Cape Town by container ship in 2009. Accompanied by her sister Rebecca, an artist, Beinart was seeking to retrace a journey first undertaken by her Jewish great-grandfather and great-grandmother escaping persecution in the early 1900s. She investigates the transformational effects of such a journey making links between heritage, tourism, pilgrimage, mobilities and performative practice. She argues that the liminality of the journey provides a space for transformation and it that way parallels with sacred journeys.

In *Chapter Eleven*, Suha Shakkour uses MacCannell process of site sacralisation to discuss how the appropriated houses of Palestinians can be seen as sacralised sites that represent the personal and collective experiences of the exile. For many Palestinians, visiting their houses is important undertaking that fulfils personal and filial duties.

In the *Afterword*, Tim Edensor argues that ‘the chapters in this book persuasively testify to the sheer diversity of contemporary mobile practices that are organised around visiting valued sites and moving along cherished pathways’ (p. 201). He once more high-

lights the fact that one cannot draw a distinction between tourism and pilgrimage and that these and similar practices are constantly blurring the boundaries between the sacred and the profane.

At the end of the volume, the reader returns to the opening discussion. This volume demonstrates one more time that we are beyond distinctions and labelling pilgrims as someone involved in the quest for meaning while defining tourists as pleasure-seeking. From these diverse and in-depth, sometimes personal, analyses of different journeys and experiences it is clear that we have to take more than a representational perspective in observing and interpreting the mobilities that contemporary humans engage in. This kind of research requires a methodological reorientation to personal experience, auto-ethnography and affect in order to gain an emic understanding of journeys, practices and performances as well as places and landscapes as many of the chapters in this volume demonstrate. This reviewer has to single out the introductory chapter that brilliantly summarises the development, interpretations, and re-interpretations of the main concepts important for this volume, later discussed in more details in other chapters. This reviewer will personally recommend this volume to his students on pilgrimage course in order to introduce them, in a short and informing manner, to a decades-long discussion.

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Thomason, Sarah. G. 2015. *Endangered Languages. An Introduction. Part of Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. xiii + 229 pp. Pb.: \$34.99. ISBN: 9780521684538.

Endangered Languages offers a succinct introduction to the topic, accessible to a wide academic and lay audience. Expert jargon is capitalised, with a glossary of terms included and suggestions for further reading. The book's ease of reading makes it useful for academics in other disciplines – including social and linguistic anthropologists – who might work in contexts where such issues emerge in the field. The later chapters also offer an introductory guide for linguists concerning various issues that emerge when conducting linguistic fieldwork.

Language endangerment entails a threat to preserving and/or maintaining existing linguistic diversity, which a significant number of linguists and social scientists have an instinctive desire to preserve, some viewing linguistic and/or cultural diversity as inherently good. In this vein, the author explicitly states her view in the opening pages (p. 2) that 'the loss of any language is a disaster.' The author's sympathies in this respect deeply frame the book's orientation and focus, although importantly other positions are discussed, for instance in the fourth chapter (*Would the world be better off without linguistic diversity?*) and in a brief discussion of situations in which language loss might not be a disaster for a given community.

Chapter One offers an introduction to the topic, including definitions of when a language might be considered endangered.

Chapter Two considers several possible routes to endangerment, such as conquest, economic pressures, the impact of a melting pot ideology, language politics, speaker attitudes and language standardisation.

Chapter Three offers five short case studies that deal with different aspects of the slide into dormancy or endangerment and the sociolinguistic processes, such as "attrition" ('the net loss of linguistic structure and stylistic richness') and "tip" ('the switch from a slow, gradual decline to the sudden collapse of a language') which accompany this process.

Chapter Four discusses language loss as cultural loss. This reviewer finds this chapter problematic in taking an approach similar to "salvage anthropology", wherein social reality is divided up into "peoples", each with a culture – this view has been critiqued and debated extensively in the post-Yugoslav anthropological literature given the connections between the promotion of nation-state ideologies and political violence in the recent wars, but this critique is nevertheless a minority view held in Anglo-American social anthropology, where the existence of nations – from the analyst's point of view – frequently continues to be taken for granted. Indeed, the author's insights working on a Montana reservation may have led to a different relationship to such categories.

Chapter Five moves on to consider "what science loses", examining how knowledge of social groups and their movements can be lost along with a language. Arguments include a discussion of the possible kinds of linguistic structures (or indeed human possibilities) which that may be lost when languages die before being documented, along with

forms of cognition and categories specific to a language. Finally, cultural knowledge e.g. taxonomies of medicinal plants used might also be lost. I found the arguments in this chapter – and indeed the *linguistic* case for preserving “endangered languages” – stronger.

Chapter Six reveals the author’s strengths and insights through a focus on the methodological aspects of working with endangered languages. The possible form the research process might take is considered: topics ranging from dictionary making to field sessions, as well as ethical issues, practical questions of how to conduct fieldwork, who to work with, what kind of questions to ask, how to structure your time in the field etc. The author also includes some of her own reflections on how she has approached fieldwork differently over the years in line with changing research interests and disciplinary developments. The final chapter describes revitalization efforts, including factors contributing to their success, what – importantly – might be considered realistic goals, and what might be gained even if the language revitalization efforts are unsuccessful in reaching their intended goals.

The book’s strength lies in the author drawing on her extensive experiences as a linguist conducting field research in contexts ranging from 1960s Yugoslavia, to a long-standing engagement from the early 1980s working with the Salish-Pend d’Oreille language on a reservation in Montana, USA. These descriptions – and valuable discussions of issues such as psychological stress when conducting fieldwork – were particularly vivid. The author’s comments regarding her own experiences of learning foreign languages and living in unfamiliar locations, such as ‘having a different personality’ when speaking German, were also enriching and easy for the reader to relate to.

One key weakness of the book, namely the linguistic focus of her training entailed that “coverage of endangered cultures is unfortunately shallow” is acknowledged. The relative lack of focus on the sociological and/or cultural implications at stake in such work would have been a meaningful complement, particularly given the ways in which arguments acquire a different force and meaning as they travel across contexts, as described in relation to this reviewer’s concerns with *Chapter Four*. Indeed, the sociological implications of language revitalization movements – which differ widely in their relation to prevalent language ideologies and conservative, liberal or leftist political orientations for example, are relatively little discussed. As a primarily linguistic introduction to the topic, however, the book clearly has much to offer both readers experienced in dealing with this topic and those new to the subject.

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Ingold, Tim. 2015. *The Life of Lines*. London, New York: Routledge. xi + 172 pp. Pb.: \$49.95. ISBN: 9780415576864.

Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Aberdeen, UK, Tim Ingold's recent book *The Life of Lines* deals with a huge number of topics. *The Life of Lines* could be seen as a consequent resumption of Ingold's previous works and fields of interest. These fields consist especially of linealogy and meteorology but also of art, architecture, philosophy, psychology and biology; all regarded through anthropological glasses. In general, Ingold is interested in the human-environmental relationship. However, a first glance at the book opens a question: What is the matter with these lines?

Ingold labels himself a linealogist. The main argument of the book is, that life is following lines or as the author put it: 'The thing about things, however, is that they occur- that is, they carry on along their lines' (p. 16). Not only things or objects wander along lines, but also the human being processes along them. It seems that Ingold has created a concept of lines and knots and blobs to find answers to questions like: What is life about? What is human? How do humans live and learn? Is there a general ontology of the process of being in the world? What is then anthropology about? Ingold might say: it is all about lines. He discovers lines in walking, weaving, observing, singing, storytelling, drawing and writing – in nearly all human activities. The lines, blobs, and knots and their concepts appear – so to say – everywhere in the world. The author constructs this idea in three parts and 30 short chapters in his book.

The first part, *Knotting*, begins by describing *what* we talk about *when* we talk about lines. It explains what lines, knots, and blobs are and where you can find them in nature and social life. After that, Ingold points out that he interprets being in the world as a constant process in an interactive manner. At this point, this reviewer would like to emphasise *Chapter Ten*, entitled *Knowledge*, where the author discusses cognitive learning involving Kantian ideas in a creative way. He concludes: 'Thus the ground of knowing - or, if we must use the term, of cognition - is not an internal neutral substrate that *resembles* the ground outside but *is itself* the very ground we walk, where earth and sky are tempered the on-going production of life' (pp. 48–9).

In the second part, *Weathering* the idea of linealogy is connected to meteorology. This is when Ingold criticises the conventional linealogy as well as scientific meteorology. He thinks that both are premised to strong boundaries. On the contrary, Ingold prefers a limitless understanding of linealogy and meteorology in which lines wander along a course that is not straight. Linealogy and meteorology are finally described as two interconnected endless processes. In this part, the author also challenges established concepts in anthropology, for instance the distinction between artefacts and landscapes in the material world. Ingold negotiates this distinction and he escapes the boundaries of materiality through considering the air as an important parameter. Considering the air as the frame for landscapes and artefacts would lead to the conclusion that '[...] weather and mood are not just analogous but, more fundamentally, one and the same' (p. 72).

Finally, in the last part entitled *Humaning* the author asks what it means to be human. Ingold introduces by saying that to human is a verb and further on: 'This is a world

not of anthropomorphism but of *anthropogenesis*' (p. 124, italics original). Anthropogenesis is his central term to describe living as a deed that belongs to no one but life itself. It is stressed that there are neither boundaries nor fixed traces or threads that life is following. Humans are always in the state of becoming human, hence there is no conclusion: 'Human, wherever and however they live, are always humaning, creating themselves as they go along' (p. 140). Ingold adds that humans wind along lines that correspond. This correspondence can be found in between the lines of life. He points out that human life is social life. Finally, he criticises current anthropological methods. He wishes anthropology to not objectify other human beings but to be open to interactive, participative learning.

Throughout the book, Tim Ingold uses a great variety of images from the fields of biology, chemistry, physics, art, architecture, meteorology and more to illustrate his ideas. His style of writing is florid and poetic. Moreover, he wildly and widely reaches out to authors from Kant over Durkheim to Marx to support his ideas about the world. Sometimes, it is hard to identify the common thread in his arguments, even though he is constantly referring to the concept of lines. Ingold's intention to not only explain how humans live their lives, but also to explain the universe appears to be of great consequence in some chapters, but he often neglects to give details. Nevertheless, this reviewer finds Ingold's perspective on knowledge very interesting: for him, knowledge is generated in the interrelation with people. For anthropology as such, Ingold concludes that: 'For like people everywhere and at all times, we are both observers and participants' (p. 157). This dialectical approach connected to the question of the influence of humans on the earth is a rich topic.

The Life of Lines is an interesting and diverse lecture that touches many topics, which inspires the reader to read more of Ingold's work.

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Kim, Ok Kwang (eds.). 2015. *Re-orienting Cuisine: East Asian Foodways in the Twenty- First Century*. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books. 310 pp. Hb.: £63.00. ISBN: 9781782385622.

East Asia is world famous with its bright and vast variety of food. This is the central aspect of Kwang Ok Kim's edited volume of articles *Re-orienting Cuisine: East Asian Foodways in the Twenty- First Century*. The book consists of fourteen chapters that are divided into three sections: *National and Local Food in the (Re)Making*, *Food Practice across Cultural Boundaries and Health Safety*, and *Food Consumption*. The research was mostly done in China, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Thailand.

The first section consists of four studies done in Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, and China. These articles provide information on local traditions, the way they are presented today or the way they are formed. The article on Wudang Daoist tea culture (Jean DeBernardi), which describes a long history and tradition in keeping and promoting the Chinese cuisine original and special in the country as well as abroad, is linked to the article on Korean royal court cuisine authored by Moon that examines the reappearance of royal court cuisine, which is based on one person's memories and implemented by a local restaurant. An interesting analysis of traditions of food consumption in Taiwan and Malaysia is made by Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao and Khay-Thiong Lim. They are comparing the histories of these countries and the way military occupation has treated and influenced the local traditions. In the *Rice Cuisine and Cultural Practice in Contemporary Korean Dietary Life*, Kwang Ok Kim in gives insight into the role of rice in Korean foodways.

The second section, *Food Practice across Cultural Boundaries*, provides an ethnographic analysis of foods and cuisines outside of the societies of their "origin". In one of the six chapters of this section, Kyung-Koo Han compares and contrasts Korean, Japanese and Chinese noodles and gives a great insight into Korean noodle consumption traditions. *Cultural Nostalgia and Global Imagination: Japanese Cuisine in Taiwan* by David Y.H. Wu describes Japanese cuisine and traditions and how they interact with local traditions. Sangmee Bak gives insights into Indian restaurants in Korea and analyses several cases. A great conclusion to this section is the article on foodways in Thailand by Michael Herzfeld, which explains how food reflects and makes the order of society and its rules.

The articles are all rich in description of the area, its traditions of food consumption and the problems the cultures face in terms of food since the studies are all done in one area. The book gives clear picture of 21st century situation in East Asian food culture and traditions. However, articles on Russia and Bulgaria (*The Visible and the Invisible: Intimate Engagements with Russia's Culinary East* and *Experiencing the 'West' Trough the 'East' in the Margins of Europe: Chinese Food Consumption Practices in Postcolonial Bulgaria*) seem somehow not fitting to the volume as a whole. Above all, the articles each and in their own way provide interesting facts about East Asian food in Bulgaria and Russia and explain how they are treated by locals and their symbolism in these countries starting from the 1990s until today. Given that most of the articles are analysing situations in East Asia itself, they do not add value to understanding East Asian cuisine.

The last section, *Health, safety and Food Consumption*, consists of four chapters, with studies done in China and Korea. The first of these is on well-being in Korea and how it is related to food. Young-Kyun Yang explains how the Koreans understand the term itself and how it influences their eating habits, including the consumption of very popular Chinese cuisine. The last three articles are on China. Sidney C. H. Cheung examines the popularity of crayfish in China. The article by Jakob A. Klein provides a case study in Kunming, China and examines the consumption of ecologically certified food. Yunxiang Yan gives takes the reader through the detailed analysis on food safety in China and the modernisation that has influenced the food industry.

Overall, the book takes the reader through rich ethnographic accounts on foodways in East Asia and enables the forming of a unified understanding of this part of the world. *Re-orienting Cuisine* is a highly insightful book on East Asia's food traditions and enables the reader to experience East Asia in a very exciting way.

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Simoni, Valerio. 2015. *Tourism and Informal Encounters in Cuba* (Foreword by Nelson Graburn). Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books. xvi+266 pp. Hb.: \$95.00/£60.00. ISBN: 9781782389484.

Tourism and Informal Encounters in Cuba by Valerio Simoni published by Berghahn Books' series *New Directions in Anthropology*, is a recommended read for all with an interest in the anthropology of tourism, or those who want to be more informed about "hot" topics in the field. Moreover, this book will also be well received by a different audience, whether scholars who are established readers in the field, or others who are at the beginning of a journey through the area of tourism. Another attraction is the foreword written by Nelson Graburn, one of the discipline's most published and insightful authors.

Simoni has divided his book into two main sections, each consisting of four chapters. In the *Introduction*, he gives a short account of how the book is arranged, and previews each chapter for potential readers. Each chapter has a short conclusion helping the reader to recapitulate and prepare for the next. These minor details make the book accessible, so even if you must stop reading at some point, you can easily return to it whenever you like without losing the gist.

In the first section, *Introduction. Relating through Tourism*, Simoni takes the reader on a journey, giving his views on tourism. It is accessible to anyone who wants to research or write on the phenomenon of tourism. Additionally, from the introduction, the reader discovers that research was conducted from 2005 to 2011. While the author discusses his research strategies and questions his own position, it is clear that others may benefit from his work. One of the dilemmas that he attempts to develop further in this area is how the perception of an anthropologist is created, and how it is renegotiated between the researcher and his interlocutors.

In the first part of the book, Simoni deals with the historical and political context of Cuba and tourism in Cuba, which are central to an understanding of how the *jinterismo* emerged as part of the informal economy. The foci of Simoni's analysis are human encounters, or rather, encounters between tourists and hosts, through which different practices, discussions, material considerations and effects are conveyed. The author recounts his interlocutors' experiences first hand, and most of the writing is auto-ethnographic. Simoni gives the reader a window into the world of encounters between tourists and hosts, capturing the vibrancy of situations using inspiring anecdotes. In this inspiring ethnographic account, he manages to find a place for professional tourism brokers, experienced entrepreneurs, hustlers, prostitutes or ordinary Cubans, or better said he finds a place for his stories. The focus is on stories told and lived through, which become an indispensable part of holiday experiences. One such experience described is that of buying Cuban cigars on the black market, where not only an exchange of commodities takes place, but also a deeper experience, including notions of generosity, reciprocity and mutual help and hospitality. This experience complements and differentiates the destination and experience of the destination as a whole. The narrative which introduces the story and explains step-by-step the intertwined relationships between tourist and host, keeps the reader's attention and leaves him with the impression of having just lived the whole experience himself.

The narratives are vivid, covering contradictory, interesting discussions of important issues, such as the difference between tourists and travellers. Since there is no consensus in the profession regarding this, it is interesting to witness it from another point of view.

Market exchanges, hospitality, friendship, festivities, seduction, and sexual relations are the key notions that Simoni discusses in the second part of his book. It is obvious that these concepts are perceived differently by Cubans and tourists. ‘This is how things are done in Cuba’ is a motto that encourages people simply to adapt and go along with all the ‘cultural idiosyncrasies of this special island, experiencing them wholeheartedly, without even trying to understand the perspective of the locals’, concludes Simoni (p. 209).

We might be justified in suspecting the author’s basic intention, as there is a room for a discussion on notions of friendship, reciprocity and hospitality, love and partnership, and market and commerce, in the context of Cuban tourism, or to be more specific, in the context of informal encounters as discussed in Simoni’s book. His in-depth approach and diverse ethnography seek to show all the complexities, ambiguities and transformative potential that arise from such encounters. In the end, he succeeds, delivering a “must read” book in the field of the anthropology of tourism.

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