

BOOK REVIEWS

Fassin, Didier. 2012. *Humanitarian Reason. A Moral History of the Present*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press. xvi + 336pp. ISBN: 9780520271173.

The world of today seems to be perceived as steeped in all kinds of crisis—moral, political, economic, ecological and humanitarian—and as an uncertain place increasingly experienced through notions of risk, deficiency, suffering and injustice. Concomitantly, people understand themselves and their prospects in life through ideas of managing risk. Increasing numbers of individuals and institutions across the globe are organising themselves systematically to provide help in the aftermaths of great natural or man-made disasters. Overcoming one's own precarious situations and, through acts of solidarity and compassion, helping others in similar situations seems to be held up not merely as a moral but also a political imperative. But what does it mean to be moved by other people's predicaments, and to feel obliged and entitled to offer them help in the 21st century? How do the ideas and practices of humanitarian action exert themselves? Can humanitarian actions deliver justice? What does it mean to live and work under various forms of humanitarian governments?

Didier Fassin's *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present*, aims to offer some answers to these important questions. Fassin's book is a precise and rich depiction of the moral landscape charted by contemporary humanitarian ideas, practices and policies. It analyses how the global order of humanitarianism works in situations of crisis—how it effectively and affectively deals with humanitarian actors, both aid workers (medical specialists, humanitarian bureaucrats, armed forces, etc.) and those that aid workers are trying to help, i.e. victims of poverty, homelessness, unemployment, exile, natural disasters, famines, epidemics and war.

Nine nuanced ethnographic case studies situated in France, South Africa, Venezuela, Palestine, and Iraq analyse a range of social contexts tainted and structured by emotions of shame, empathy, frustration, consciousness of the tenuous and by different struggles for justice. The first part of the book is devoted to a detailed political analysis of a specific French relationship with humanitarianism – a relationship shown to be morally and altruistically inspired, politically ambiguous and deeply paradoxical. Fassin looks at various institutional sites and social settings where public morality regarding the management of crisis is being constituted and rehearsed. The book thus contextualises situations where the workings of humanitarian government are most palpable. We read about how the government has set up “listening centres” aiming to reach the underprivileged of the country; how it helps the economically disadvantaged through allocating governmental resources; how it calibrates immigrant status and rights to individuals' physical and mental health statuses, and even sometimes creates special extra-legal structures, such as asylum centres and “waiting zones” to more easily deal with asylum seekers. The second part of the book traces the dissemination of principles of humanitarian government around the world: ethnographies here again dissect various categories of morality and help as applied to, for example, the politics of victimhood of AIDS orphans in South Africa, disaster victims in Venezuela or traumatised adolescents in Palestine.

Analysing various narrative, medical, corporeal, military and bureaucratic renderings of humanitarianism, this book has a stake in the enrichment and complexification of humanitarianism as a concept. Fassin questions the wider reasons that have given form to certain kinds of emotional responses to humanitarian interventions, as well as to their practical effects. The book's central insistence is that humanitarian reason occupies a key position in the contemporary moral order. Moral sentiments have become an essential force in contemporary politics, whose discourses and practices are nourished and legitimised by humanitarian morality. Fassin sets on to depict and analyse various strategies through which people in everyday situations attempt to produce, provoke and mobilise emotions of empathy and the moral sentiments required for a humanitarian action. It is in this tension between compassion and repression that the researcher seizes and locates the morality being articulated together with politics.

Fassin demonstrates something more than the political deployment of emotion, exploring how the empathy towards others that results in humanitarian work belongs to a constructed, politicised, and morally charged order. Humanitarian reasoning and its practices are never disinterested or unprejudiced. Carefully but revealingly, the book documents all kinds of moral, ideological, and bureaucratic contortions as these warp and structure humanitarian interventions.

The book thus questions the often-elicited fantasy of a global moral community that humanitarianism is said to support, and points to the expectations built in the notions that empathy and solidarity have redeeming powers (p. xii). In an analytical fashion that does not minimise the altruistic engagement or reduce the charitable efforts of the individuals, organisations and governments involved in the care of injured, threatened, or jeopardised, the book delves into the tense, unequal, unstable and ambiguous relationships between the help providers and the sufferers. The collection again and again insists that it is problematic to evoke so fluently, in such tragic *mises-en-scènes*, those places where western generosity and altruism is celebrated for the sake of its effect on the poor.

Humanitarian Reason is an extraordinary accomplishment – scrupulous, attentive, and well thought-out. The book further intervenes in a most timely way into the causes and consequences of the often disappointing modern history of peace-building. Carefully examining the moral, juridical, ideological, and economic conditions that allowed military and legal interventions to be understood as humanitarian aid actions, the book challenges the already difficult relationship between humanitarian moral categorisations and their associated political judgements. These complex relationships become even more excruciated, putting in question the conventional attitude of seeing humanitarian intervention as beneficial.

This book should be an essential reading for any anthropologist and social scientist dealing with the issues of humanitarianism or the aftermath of conflict or cultural trauma. Equally, it will be a seminal reading for anyone reflecting on problems faced in medical anthropology, the anthropology of bureaucracy, and engaged anthropology.

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Anderson, Astrid 2011. *Landscapes of Relations and Belonging. Body, Place and Politics in Wogeo, Papua New Guinea (Person, Space and Memory in the Contemporary Pacific Series, Volume 3)*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books. 324 pp. Hb.: \$95.00 / €55.00. ISBN: 9781845457754.

A walk around Wogeo island introduces readers to the important places that recur in daily interactions and myths. The author offers a new perspective on the island's society, relating her Wogeo teachers' ideas about their past in the form of myths and cultural knowledge that have contributed to make their island entity. She not only focuses on place as the essential element in the social relations of belonging, through maintenance of bodies, leadership and house structures; but she also updates Hogbin's ethnographic writings from 50 years earlier on which her own ethnographic overview is based. Her use of a phenomenological approach to social mapping places this ethnography firmly within a new genre of Melanesian ethnography.

Anderson brings to light the world of the Wogeo by focusing on landscape images that they use in ordering the flow of their sociality, both practically and metaphorically. Everyday practices are explained in terms of connections and disconnections between the beings and entities in the world, as well as through myths and important cultural figures. Place is a corollary of belonging. Pathways through the space, both real and metaphorical, lead to further understanding of how the land and sea encompass Wogeo thinking about belonging, and distinguish them from their neighbours. The Wogeo, she suggests, welcome Hogbin's and her writings, which will provide guidance to young people in a changing world of *Kastom*.

The author has sought out the subtleties of her main concepts by considering the channels of relationships between the landscape and social relations. As people move around the island, and as she herself visited villages beyond Dab where she was based, they closely follow cultural prescriptions about maintaining their bodies. They carry "baskets" of knowledge as that indicate different types of knowledge for which each person is respected, some of which indicate leaders (*koakoale*) (p.153) (the author uses the local term throughout for which she gives the gloss 'chief' only in the Glossary). For some, a "true" leader should have the right matrilineal identity, whereas other leadership offices derive their power from bodies of knowledge drawn from the spatial pathways of history, both terrestrial and metaphysical. House structures, particularly the rafters, embody many aspects of belonging to Wogeo society.

Looking after one's body was a subject the author heard referred to frequently, as one pathway of relationships that features in proper adherence to *Kastom*. Direct physical contact between bodies, both human and non-human, may be regarded as "dangerous" with sexual fluids, saliva, smell and "germs", as well as breath and spoken words as part of the flow of substances, some for good, some contributing to negative outcomes, including death (p. 101). The references to disease are closely linked to the power of magic, where failure to follow proper pathways may be used to explain negative outcomes.

Matrilineality that features strongly (as matri-moieties) in Hogbin's earlier analysis of gender in Wogeo, is, for Anderson, only one set of pathways and bodies of knowledge that people utilise all the time, but must be kept hidden from public discourse (p. 10), and thus barely acknowledged to the outsider. Matrilineally transferred essence is associated with the constitution of persons, embodiment, associated with particular knowledge, and named houses.

But matrilineal associations (*tina*) are only one of a ‘multitude of alternatives [...] in relation to other aspects of a person’s identity and history’ (p.10). The use of the term *tina* for a matrilineage as one sub-division of the moieties identifies those of “one body”, that is identifying together, but not to be spoken of openly because of collective ownership of sorcery.

Matrilineages own the named houses on the island that are associated with bodies of knowledge and titles, but the house as built structure does not contain a matrilineage. Ideally people fill the houses primarily according to the history of the places and not because of matrilineal belonging.

This alternative to descent structure theory which dominated anthropology in Hogbin’s era indicates how we have oversimplified social relations by reducing all the variations of relationships to female or male lines of descent. We have used it to encompass affiliation, residence rules, inheritance pathways etc. By unravelling Wogeo knowledge, Anderson has revealed a different base to the intricacy of their social relations. As one outcome, we need to address kin terms more widely to encompass other bodies of knowledge; the concepts of mother and father need expanding from our earlier reductive exercises. The term *tina* for mother has strong resonances of Austronesian kin terms found across Polynesia, not just for its biological filiations, but for the ties to place and key practices of everyday living, as Anderson indicates.

Anderson makes a major clarification of one aspect of matrilineality, namely the complex relations between a house and the people associated with it, that takes us far beyond “residence rules”.

‘The social units that are most relevant and visible in daily life in Wogeo are based on shared belonging to a place, and names, titles, land rights, and certain corpuses of knowledge are conceptualised as belonging to, and embedded in, the place’ (p. 183).

Houses in Wogeo are much more than the actual built structure. The histories of a place are embodied in the rafters of named houses in the villages. Each rafter is connected to certain pieces of land, thereby reflecting the histories of the people who have held rights in them and in the land associated with them. Both the rafters and the land are known as *ro*. Understanding the roof structure of a house thus becomes a way of understanding the utilisation of agricultural land. Many aspects of the social history of belonging are encapsulated in the rafters, particularly naming. The rafters exist as a body of knowledge which Wogeo people use to explain the house and its associations as an integral part of the social landscape.

Anderson has taken us through several “journeys” as we explore the world of the Wogeo. Through her use of place as the anchor point the reader is led to understand how belonging to this society is intimately tied to place, whether village, or house, or Wogeo island as a social landscape. Many “pathways” are involved. Her own use of phenomenology provides one such “way”, an alternative to Hogbin’s, yet building on his cultural knowledge; she indicates throughout the text how her thinking about Wogeo society has been influenced by ideas of anthropologists working in neighbouring Melanesian societies.

The product is a crisp yet complex formulation of her perspective as she strives to stay true to the details that Wogeo advocates shared with her. The responses of those Wogeo and other Pacific peoples who read this ethnography will be watched with interest.

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Heinonen, Paula. 2011. *Youth Gangs and Street Children. Culture, Nurture and Masculinity in Ethiopia*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books. 186 pp. Hb: \$70.00 / £42.00. ISBN: 9780857450982.

Paula Heinonen's *Youth Gangs and Street Children* distils Paula Heinonen's six years' (1995–2001) of fieldwork in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa. The monograph explores the gendered world order of Ethiopian culture, childhood and *streetism*, the term for a way of life bound by its own set of rules for children who work and/or live on the streets. Heinonen argues that this term addresses cultural issues specific to Ethiopian street children. She challenges the general assumption that street children operate outside an adult framework by drawing attention to children in Ethiopia who have a meaningful adult presence in their lives despite the street being their main source of socialisation and economic activity. The author provides ethnographic examples to demonstrate that these children are indeed still very much connected to their poverty-ridden parents and particularly their mothers. She also chronicles what happens when no adult guidance is in place, as in the case of the youth gangs she follows over the course of several years. These children (*borcos*) have severed ties with their families for good, using domestic physical or sexual abuse as justification, and they are often too ashamed to return home. Heinonen argues that it is exactly this culturally constructed sense of shame and pride or *yilunta* in Amharic (although it has equivalents in most Ethiopian languages) that is at the core of all societal undertakings and extends into the lives of street children.

The book offers a good sense of the current socio-political system in Ethiopia, with its numerous political changes, and the specific impact of communism on the development of governmental structures. From the point of view of streetism, especially enlightening is the discussion of the *kebele* system, which offers housing at rent-controlled prices to selected members while leaving those outside the system without even a government issued identity card. Given the large influx of migrants from the countryside, where most Ethiopians still reside, into Addis Ababa, the consequence has been housing shortages and hordes of unregistered people in the capital, fuelling streetism kind of life.

The author shows that the patriarchal world order offers an essential code of conduct for the street children, who are inculcated into the same belief system as the rest of the Ethiopian society. Keeping up appearances and saving face is important for adults and children alike. In the case of boys, there is a strong emphasis on the ritual affirmation of their maleness, which leads to both physical and sexual violence, including child-to-child rape, one of the most sensitive topics of the book. In the case of girls, their femaleness is affirmed by acting as docile and obedient daughters to their parents or as "wives" to the gang members, but, as the author shows, not all girls and women confirm to this, which in turn results in gender-based violence, both physical and sexual. Disciplining children both at home and in school, takes form of a corporal punishment and often equals child-abuse, but is not portrayed as solely the problem of the impoverished, as even the street children from wealthier backgrounds in her sample had left home because of severe abuse.

All in all, it is the combination of the cultural (*yilunta* and the patriarchal world view) and the socio-historic (the peculiar housing and registration system that extends

into the fields of health and education) that the author argues are among the main causes for the never-ending cycle of abuse and poverty that lead children to streetism. Throughout the book, Heinonen points out that neither the state nor the non-governmental sector provides adequate support for those living and/or working on the streets. Despite popular conceptions, the author insists that street children, including members of youth gangs, are not criminals, but rather they represent the failures of a system that perpetuates poverty and inequality. She is vehement that being part of a gang does not necessarily lead to a criminal future, but rather a destitute one.

Youth Gangs and Street Children is a well-researched and insightful monograph. The author's relatively long period of field work enables her to follow-up on the longer term fates of the informants. Heinonen has taken great care to gather and categorise her data and to distil it down to its essence. It is not, however, the kind of book that provides copious amounts of ethnographic data from which readers can draw their own conclusions. The analysis does have a personal and at times emotional tone to it, but it is nonetheless well-reasoned and investigative. Moreover, there is none of the cultural relativism that is present in much of the anthropological work on children. Childhood is presented as a universal concept, albeit culturally mediated, in the tradition of the 20th century children's rights movement in which children are primarily perceived as victims. This renders the monograph a rich source for those interested in children's rights. Although there is a detailed methodology section, more reflection on how the author may have been perceived by her informants (as, for example, a native, a foreigner, a friend, a mother-figure) would have allowed readers to better evaluate her working relationship with those informants. The book does provide a great deal of insight into the complicated ways in which urban poverty is perpetuated in the developing world. However, more analysis of the impact of political instability and regime change would be helpful. The reflection on the differences between the street children who have meaningful ties to their families and those who do not, is certainly a powerful and enlightening aspect of the book.

Finally, the monograph serves as an abundant source for those interested in gender, especially for understanding the real-life strategies employed by Ethiopian women and children to survive in a predominantly patriarchal society, and especially for following the way maleness is constructed.

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Fischer, Johan. 2011. *The Halal Frontier. Muslim Consumers in a Globalized Market.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan. 202 pp. Pb.: £17.99. ISBN: 9780230114180.

The book explores complex and multi-layered dimensions of transnational and local aspects of economic practices regarding marketing and consumption of *Halal* food among middle-class Malay Muslims in Britain. This book attempts to provide an insight that how religious interpretation, market economy, state interventions and consumption practices create a complex phenomenon in everyday social life that defines the process of identity construction among Malay Muslims in London. The book not only explores the fusion and fissions among the Muslim consumers of Halal in London, but also narrates the ambiguity and lack of secular disciplining of “religious markets and food” practices that British public in general is exposed to. The author uncovers how globalisation of religious market is giving birth to ‘political food’ among increasing Muslim consumers in Muslim societies as well as among Muslim diaspora. In his views, Halal food provides the space for diasporas to perform “politics at distance”. The author did his fieldwork with middle-class Malay Muslims in London with to see the reflections that Malaysian state presents a unique example among the Muslim countries that regulate, interpret, trade, control and produce the consumption practices and market for *Halal* food, for local as well as global Muslim consumers.

The author maintains the direct relationship between the nationalisation of Islam by the Malaysian state and the standardisation of Halal in the local and international markets. Islamic reformism and state patronisation of it have created the venues from where Halal was made accessible and in a way compulsory for Malay middle-classes. Halal also became a space for Malaysian state to introduce standards for Muslim world by satisfying middle-class consumer’s sense of taste and aspirations towards “ethical food intake”. The nature and type of food consumption makes social class a performative category as people cook and serve Halal and national food to guests and foreigners at their homes. The increase in the number of Muslim customers under global capitalism has evoked the contestation over the Durkheimian concepts of sacred and profane in their daily lives at Malaysia and elsewhere. Malaysians in Britain are predominantly Malays because of Malaysia’s state policy of providing privileges, opportunities and benefits to Malays more than Chinese and Indian ethnic minorities in business, education and jobs etc. The writer interviewed and collected data from middle-class young Malays who arrived at London in the previous two or three decades. The contestation over the control and definition of what is Halal or who can certify Halal products are common debates observable at all public forums, whether official or unofficial. The obvious proponents of these debates of standardising public consumption of Halal are religious scholars and activists who are in close association, both professionally and socially, of Muslim entrepreneurs and businessmen while the potential opponent is the secular state. The process of globalisation of Halal finds London as potentially conducive space for introduction and clientele. While the state is silent over the issue of Halal recognition, the reason is not only state’s claim to be secular, but at the same time, there is a disagreement among Muslims over the authentic definition of

what is Halal. There are competing bodies and personal narratives embedded in sectarian interpretations, which claim the authority to define and interpret what is Halal. Malay people on the other hand, do have a set definition of Halal that is told by Malaysian state through national curriculum. But in a cosmopolitan environment like London, the issue of defining Halal is an open debate among Arabs viewing themselves as gatekeepers of Islam, Pakistanis having a demographic advantage among British Muslims and Malaysians with a state sponsorship over defining Halal while other Muslim ethnic groups having their own economic and social reservations over the issue. There is a mixed feeling among Malay consumers about logos of Halal food items available in various stores. For most of the consumers in London, the Halal logo alone is not enough attraction to buy anything. The Halal has created an urban landscape of its own in London through discursive practice as well as market visibility. However, the domesticated intake of Halal food items by Malay consumers is an indicator of a lack of total satisfaction on the present Halal urban landscapes. Another aspect about increased consumption of Halal food in London is that people perceive it as clean, hygienic and pure food.

The author infers that the state's secularism in Britain shows its authoritative and regulative presence on issues related to public expressions of morality like the veiling of Muslims women in some ways, but it is silent over the issues of public consumption like the intake of Halal. However, the writer informs reader about international marketing of Halal by another state like Malaysia, but misses the demand and aspiration of some European state to control it. The book does not talk about the anti-Halal movement in London by animal rights groups and debates on compulsory stunning. Malays are negligible in numbers among the Muslim population in London. Other diasporic communities, such as Pakistanis, Arabs, Bangladeshis, Africans and Indian Muslims, who are part of Halal markets not only as consumers but also as sellers and traders, have more potential to provide a better and in-depth picture of Halal consumption patterns in London than the diaspora Malays. However, as the writer has tried to link the Malaysian state's venture capitalism advancements and its reflection among people's behaviour, the selection of Malays as research informants makes more sense, as other Muslims communities do not have this nationalist context while consuming Halal.

The book as a whole provides a valuable ethnographic insights to the reader about national politics of Malaysia and its link with the quest for consuming Halal among Malays in London, diasporic identity construction patterns, capitalism's co-option of Muslims markets and middle classes by making relevant adjustments, and an analysis of narratives and discourses that channels the ideals of "distinction" and "taste" among Muslim middle classes by advocating type of moral consumption and ethical life styles while living in global society and economy that operates on the principals of "sinful" Western capitalism.

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Fox, Katy. 2011. *Peasants into European Farmers? EU Integration in the Carpathian Mountains in Romania*. Zürich and Berlin: Lit Verlag. 360 pp. Pb.: €34.90. ISBN: 9783643801074.

The European Union enlargement and associated agricultural projects have opened a new field of research for rural and agricultural anthropology. New member states turned out to be the ideal context to explore how the EU's agricultural projects interact with local farming structures, and what their implications for rural livelihoods are on the margins of EU. However, it is obvious that examining farmers' adjustments and the perception of agricultural restructuring in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe have not been addressed in detail. That is why particular case studies, such as Katy Fox's *Peasants into European Farmers? EU Integration in the Carpathian Mountains in Romania*, offer important insight into the process of reshaping the livelihoods of farmers and semi-subsistence producers in a globalised world. Based on eighteen months of fieldwork in Southern Carpathian Mountains of Romania, Fox analyses how the EU's Common Agricultural Policy was deployed in the first year after Romania's membership in EU (2007) and discusses how this process influenced the life possibilities of Romanian villagers, in particular those who perceive themselves as semi-subsistence "peasants". The study reveals the new regulatory framework for agriculture and focuses on the way CAP managed to marginalise farming families, through their exclusion from the decision-making process. Hence, CAP clearly supported the intensification of production by favouring commercial farms. Drawing on the extremely well-written ethnography, Fox describes the different strategies of survival deployed by villagers who were not able to conform to the new CAP demands. Her emphasis is on the significant obstacles for peasants' participation in the agricultural projects.

The book begins with situation of the Romanian, otherwise highly polarised, agriculture in the global context and an introduction of the theoretical framework: the author advocates "pragmatist materialism" and relays on the analytical concepts of value, personhood and hope as tools to illustrate the processes of change in rural Romania. Through the adoption of Walter Benjamin's concept of "constellation", the first chapter provides a detailed historical background to Romanian peasantry. It also deals with Romania's complex and ambivalent relationship with its past and Europe, which influences the peasants' and the elite's narratives of "progress". Fox argues that the 'present constellation mobilised a utopian future of equalisation in the European "household"', thus in the second chapter she invites us to think critically about what EU projects and especially CAP imply. In particular, she exposes the gap between the imagined aspirations and the actual effects of the EU projects. Therefore, this chapter sheds light on the different, problematic aspects of CAP and among them Fox especially criticises the dominance of models of personhood that neoliberal projects enforce. The main goal of Romanian agricultural policy is to reduce subsistence holdings and turn them into commercial and specialised farms. That consequently calls small farmers to step out of the game in which they cannot compete. Thus, it is obvious that CAP produces special hierarchies, in Romania it was also obvious that CAP implementation institutions were still inefficient, placing the blame for the failures of agricultural reforms on the peasants, who were regarded as inadequate, immature and unwilling to change.

The following chapters introduce us to a variety of topics on everyday life of Romanian peasants that are based on the impressive ethnographic descriptions: among other things Fox examines women's work, their hope in uncertain times and process of (re) making households; the way people produce their (although limited) space for resistance to biosecurity, through the avoidance of EU regulation by continuing to keep, sell and slaughter animals in "traditional" ways; problems with implementing EU's Direct Payments policy; the transformation of the Romanian agri-food system and the implication of the branding processes as well as the failures of EU's certification schemes. The final chapters discuss resistance or "manoeuvres" evident in transhumance and cheese production. At the end, changes in fruit and alcohol production are presented, where Fox reflects on the perceptions of personhood and state in new social order. It was common that disappointed peasants pointed to the inadequacies of state; however, villagers' perception varied according to their own success in the new post-socialist world.

It is important to note that Fox moves away from "transitology" that dominated post-socialist studies in the West, however she does not remain blind to the fact that 'transition' is still alive as a native category that people use to express and conceptualise their "progress". After all, as she claims, political projects are not a list of administrative or technical rules but they tend to produce new social order and have an impact on the ways people imagine their future and themselves, even in the case when they feel quite alienated from them. Although she places small farmers/peasants in the centre of her research, the book gives quite a balanced overview of the different ways transformations are experienced by various actors (local elites, policy-makers, CEOs of private companies etc.), which is a truly important step that enables us to move away from uncritical glorification of the marginalised groups and gives broader perspective on the topic of agricultural changes in the Balkans, without losing its critical edge when analysing neoliberal projects. In addition, it is valuable that she highlights deeply asymmetrical power relations between "old" and "new" Europe, which are evident in EU policy regarding the agricultural development in the Balkans. This is an important issue that certainly needs further exploration and it would give even more strength to this well-researched and theoretically strong book. Fox's analysis of peasant's unsuccessful "integration" in the EU is therefore an extremely valuable contribution to an emergent field of study, and it would be of great interest to all the scholars and students interested in agricultural anthropology, family farming, developmental strategies, resistance and hope in rural societies.

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Ahearn, Laura M. 2011. *Living Language: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology (Primers in Anthropology)*. Malden and Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. xvi+368 pp. Hb.: £55.00 / €66.00. ISBN: 9781405124409.

Laura Ahearn's book *Living Language* is intended as primer for undergraduate students and those unfamiliar with linguistic anthropology. The book appears suitable to the chosen audience: the degree of difficulty is somewhere in between the introduction of Salzman and the classic Foley (which is intended for graduates). The number of illustrations and graphs is limited, making the book a text-driven study volume. It covers a great deal of ground in an accessible manner.

The book is divided into three parts with four chapters each, followed by end-notes, references and an index. The first part, entitled 'Language: Some Basic Questions,' introduces the field of anthropological linguistics, doing so through a mix of theory and practical examples. The first chapter explains that words live "socially charged lives", i.e. language is embedded in social practice and social practice likewise is mediated by language. Thus, the primary tenet of linguistic anthropology is immediately disclosed. Four key terms are offered to guide the reader through the rest of the book: multi-functionality, language ideologies, practice and indexicality. The following chapter provides real-life examples of research questions in the field and discusses data collection methods, analysis processes, and common ethical issues. The third and fourth chapter give more flesh to the tenet that language reflects and constructs social practice, by zooming in on language acquisition in different cultures and the relation between language, thought and culture. The works of Boas, Sapir and Whorf on the intertwined nature of language and thought are carefully discussed as well as contemporary research proving some Whorfian effects, in e.g. the conception of space.

The second part, 'Communities of Speakers, Hearers, Readers and Writers,' examines the role of language in the formation of communities and the influence of the communities' practices on verbal behaviour. Chapter 5 questions the notion of "speech community" and presents alternatives such as "speech network" and "community of practice". Chapter 6 presents some facets of multilingualism in a "globalised" context, arguing that both the micro-level practices of individuals and the macro-level ideologies of a society need to be taken into account to understand multi-lingual behaviour. Chapter 7 introduces research on literacy practices and the interface between spoken and written language. Next to the famous research of Heath on how literacy practices in three different American communities influence children's school performance, the chapter includes modern-day research on love-letter writing in Nepal and instant messaging. Chapter 8 focuses on the performance side of language, offering three approaches to study the role of speech in enacting social events: performance as opposed to "mere" competence; performativity (i.e. speech act theory); and performance as interaction between verbal artists and their audience who together create meaning and identity through their actions.

The third part, called 'Language, Power and Social differentiation,' looks at language as an index of identity and social inequality. Chapter 9 on language and gender is a balanced overview of patterns of language use in relation to the social concept of gender

and gendered ideologies. Chapter 10 on race and ethnicity raises the legendary American Ebonics controversy and comments on forms of overt and covert racist talk. Chapter 11 is a short introduction to endangered languages, discussing the extent of language extinction and what it means to talk about “death” in the case of languages. The final chapter concludes the whole book, drawing together various strands from the previous sections to explain that language is closely connected to issues of power and agency. How people use language and think about language use both reflects and shapes social norms, inequalities in relations and cultural identities, whether these are debated or taken for granted.

Overall, this reviewer finds the book balanced, appreciable and well written. There is some minor discontent (probably because of the linguistic background of this reviewer), since linguistics usually is taken as Chomskian. This stance is on the one hand understandable since Chomsky has dominated the field for some decades, but on the other hand, it leaves little room for acknowledging the contribution of early field linguists to anthropology, or the emergent field of documentary linguistics, which places language back in its social context. It explicitly seeks to profit from an interdisciplinary approach to language as it is used in a community (see e.g. Widlok (2005) and the key volume of Gippert et al.).

Additionally, in a number of places, the author presents theories and discussions as “daunting”, “challenging” and “difficult”, which will stimulate some readers to persevere, but may leave others with a feeling of inadequacy. Sometimes, the debates seem to be more central than the actual anthropological research (the section on the New Literary Studies approach seems to be included for the sake of the argument (ch. 7) and the notion of chiasm (ch. 8) is not central to the discussion). Worse, the author qualifies her own account of a certain critique as probably obscuring (p. 168). If so, then why include it? It is the task of the author to illuminate, not mystify, theoretical discourse – which, it must be emphasised, she does admirably throughout the book.

Lastly, the author uses her own fieldwork in Nepal as example in several places, even to illustrate her “mistakes” made during fieldwork. Research on new technologies and developments is incorporated as well (examples include internet, and schooling for girls in Nepal). This gives the book a fresh, honest and up-to-date taste. This reviewer also liked the use of the four key terms introduced in the first chapter to shed light on the topics presented in subsequent chapters, creating a sense of coherence and teaching how to look at various issues from an anthropological point of view. Next to the four key notions, Ahearn gradually introduces other pertinent anthropological concepts such as emergence and hegemony, thus enabling (or as the anthropologist says, socialising) students to understand (and hopefully participate in) anthropological discourse.

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Connerton, Paul. 2011. *The Spirit of Mourning: History, Memory and the Body*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 190 pp. Pb.: £17.99. ISBN: 9781107648838.

After Connerton's previous books *How Society Remembers* and *How Modernity Forgets*, the present volume still delights with the author's distinctive eloquence, analytic intelligence and a new broad scope of historical, social and cultural perspectives. In his new book, Connerton continues to explore the already familiar grounds of social and cultural memory, and introduces new facets to his study, concentrating on the inscription of memory within human bodies, and its incorporation into institutions, histories and traditions.

Connerton divides his book in two parts. The first three chapters examine the relationship between narrative and cultural memory, and the four subsequent chapters focus on the relationship between the body and cultural memory.

In the first chapter, 'The birth of histories from the spirit of mourning,' Connerton explores the two hardly separable categories of narratives – legitimation and mourning. His argument of general intertwinement of these two categories rests upon various examples of how people generate histories from the sense of loss and mourning. The analysis of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* sets the stage for viewing the process of historical change as an endless succession of vengeance. The author moves on to the description of the memorial dance floor in Charleston, then turns to the Jewish historiography, genocide, and the examples of cultural bereavement as well as the culture of public apology. Connerton infers that lacking bereavement customs people resort to histories as remedies against the unbearable experiences of grief, loss and mourning.

The second chapter, 'The seven types of forgetting,' represents a structural rationalisation of the constructive and coercive practices of forgetting. Prescribed forgetting, forgetting for the sake of creating a new identity, and annulment as a response to a sheer excess of information, are the successful or constructive types of forgetting which enhance social bonds. The paradox of imposed forgetting, according to The author, lies in the fact that 'the requirement to forget ends in reinforcing memory' (p. 41). Here, he highlights the practices of repressive erasure, structural amnesia, planned obsolescence and humiliated silence.

The third chapter, 'Silences,' introduces a plurality of silences and distinguishes between intentional silence and imposed silencing. Connerton traces the former in an array of religious rituals, arts, public speeches, music and psychoanalysis. The latter comes into play when remembering becomes dangerous. Imposed silencing is exemplified by book burning, censorship, denied relief of expressing grief publicly, physical coercion and, finally, by death.

The fourth chapter, 'Spatial orientation,' opens the second part of the book with the body and bodily practices in the centre of the discussion, bringing in the relation between the body and cultural memory. Connerton starts with the representation of binary classifications as categorical mappings of body topography, exposing them as a system of mnemonic devices, the focus of which is both in the body and in the world surrounding the body. Pointing at the flaws of the rhetoric of the art of memory, he rather concentrates on

humanity's libidinal, or affective, input in topography. His argues that the art of memory is preserved by a system of places within the body, not by special landmarks.

The fifth chapter, 'Tradition as conversation and tradition as bodily re-enactment,' continues to explore the body as a receptacle of history, which is carried in people, thus, allowing a tradition to act upon them. The tradition, therefore, signifies mentality or principles of social life, rather than simply "handing down". In this chapter, Connerton analyses Gadamer's hermeneutics and discusses his model of knowledge, understanding, questioning and cultural reproduction. The author's criticism of Gadamer's model lies in the claim that understanding and tradition do not rely on "opening and keeping open" of questions, but rather on their occlusion (p. 122). From here Connerton concludes that tradition is more of bodily re-enactment than a conversation through dialogues with texts of the past.

The next chapter, 'Tattoos, masks, skin,' contains an overview of masks, their uses and their connection to power in different societies. It also provides multiple examples of practices of bodily alterations such as tattoos and scarifications. Drawing from linguistic utterances of referring to the skin as metaphor for the person, Connerton suggests that bodily decorations function as a form of powerful mnemonic code. He traces the difference between skin signs as marks of honour and as marks of shame. After examining numerous examples, Connerton concludes that tattoos are powerful memory codes both for the group and for the individual. They are driven by the same principles as the places of memory, with the only difference being that these places of memory are found not in the buildings, objects or environment, but upon the flesh.

In the last chapter, 'Bodily projection,' the author extends his thesis by introducing the bodily projection onto the habitats in which we live. He focuses on empathic, mimetic and cosmic projections, which show that architecture, public spaces, social and natural environments can be interpreted as expressions and consequences of bodily memory which foregoes them.

There is much more to Connerton's book than I have been able to explicate in the short space of a book review. In general, in *The Spirit of Mourning*, he successfully elucidates that 'culture happens as and in the lived body' (p. ix). This book is definitely worth reading and it is of great use to researchers and students in anthropology.

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