

WYNN, PETER KIRBY (ed.). *Boundless Worlds: An Anthropological Approach to Movement*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2009. Pp. 232. ISBN: 978-1-84545-538-5.

Since the groundbreaking work by Setha Low and her contemporaries in the 1990s, 'space' has become an anthropological buzzword. Nevertheless, after more than a decade, we are still processing our theoretical and empirical approaches to spatiality, and pondering the multiple ways the discourses of spatiality and movement could be applied. Wonder no more. *Boundless Worlds* offers prime moments of spatial ethnography, and although slightly uneven, the book's best chapters are true gems from prominent anthropologists. If they are the yardstick, anthropological discourse of space and place is finally coming of age.

Peter Wynn Kirby opens the volume by pointing out that while the recent interest in globalization has generated numerous research branches, such as the study of migration, transnationalism and social movements, human-scale experiences and their consequent social dynamics have often been neglected. This book aims to fill this gap and tackle some of the limitations of the spatial discourse by studying movement, territories, boundaries and networks.

Several chapters challenge the popular, dichotomous, often reductionist and disembodied 'Cartesian' notions of space and place. In his chapter, Tim Ingold offers a salutary reminder of how places do not always neatly fit spaces. Ingold is interested in how movement defines places: "lives are led not inside places but through, around and from them, from and to places elsewhere" (p. 33). His impressive analysis of knowledge, as well as the fluidity and boundedness of human movement, takes the reader to surprising frontiers—to the very edge where scientific knowledge is produced and beyond—and the chapter leaves the reader stimulated, if slightly rattled.

Boundaries are central in the subsequent chapters by Bernard Michael, Richard Clarke and Martin Mills. Michael examines the mapping of North India's borders during the Anglo-Gorkha War (1814–1816). Yet, although the chapter is carefully researched and it supports Kirby's initial point on the importance of boundaries and their maintenance between societies (p. 212), in its style and content the chapter seems oddly out of place.

Territory becomes the focal point in some of the book's superlative writings. These include Richards Clarke's haunting 'Embodying Spaces of Violence', in which he discusses the spatial narratives of Israeli soldiers in the Palestinian territory war zones. The author leans on Pierre Bourdieu's concepts and examines the inherently violent nature of the Israeli occupation and the dehumanizing influence it has on the perpetrators from the perspectives of body and space. He demonstrates convincingly the mechanics of occupation as well as how war becomes part of the 'habitus of avoidance' for the young, frightened soldiers.

War is followed by peace in the next chapter as Martin Mills takes a spatial viewpoint on the mission of Tibetan Buddhist movements, and their commitment to the globally vastly popular notion of World Peace. Mills illustrates continuities between the present World Peace ideology and the earlier, theocratic governance forces that prevailed over Tibet, and asks whether the World Peace ideology is, in fact, a form of spiritual colonialism. He suggests caution in "assuming that Buddhist religious practices and Christian religious practice must necessarily be designed to 'do the same thing'" (p. 108) as Tibetan understandings differ greatly from Western ones. Whereas Western definitions of religious

and political identities commonly lead to dichotomized “oversensitivity to difference” (p. 113), Tibetan notions seem to lack such polarization.

Human-scale experience is vital in Carlos Mondragón’s analysis of Melanesia’s Torres islanders’ understandings of their place and belonging. Here the Oceanic context is vital: it underlies the people’s sense of space as well as the carefully etched social and physical boundaries within the islands. In the following chapter, by contrast, Morten Axel Pedersen discusses how the nomadic Duxa from northern Mongolia show total irreverence toward boundaries—as long as the routes through the landscape are ritually followed and affirmed, they remain remarkably unconcerned. Pedersen analyzes the connections the Duxa draw between landscape and the spirits they regard as its owners. He applies Bruno Latour’s actor-network theory in a manner valuable for all readers interested in the links between physical environment, sociality and spirituality. Pedersen’s analysis concludes with two universal models of spatial perception: sedentary landscapes made of clear-cut, finite and homogenous spaces, and nomadic landscapes consisting of infinite networks of places.

After these contrasting, yet complementary ethnographies, an equally enthralling chapter follows as Peter Winn Kirby’s discusses toxins in a Japanese city. Kirby considers the lives of people who inhabit the vicinity of a metropolitan waste facility and hold little political capital. Environmental and social pollution appear side by side in community relations, which change in the face of an invisible outside threat. This chapter explains not only conceptions of pollution and purity in today’s urban Japanese society, but also the sensitive nature of social boundaries in general.

In the chapter ‘Making Space in Finland’s New Economy’, Eeva Berglund offers a sharp analysis of the networking practices of globalizing economies. She examines spatial practices related to a forest in Kainuu, and simultaneously critiques the frenzied chase after innovation and creativity embedded in prevalent public Finnish liturgies. Although at times theoretically vague, and slightly attached to such hyphenated buzzwords as ‘space-times’, ‘hyper-mobility’ and ‘global-speak’, Berglund boldly dissects the fashionable rhetoric promoting the national drive towards global success as the only worthwhile goal. She aims to “discern the ways in which the rhetoric of flow and connectedness obscures a reality of control and constraint” (p. 193), and links the Finnish passion (or obsession) for mapping to the making of spaces and meanings in a forest in both the public sphere and at a personal level. She further examines the local spatial practice of ‘moving in nature’ in the light of the changing Forest State and emerging global networks. The result, guided by Berglund’s artful pen, is an original perspective on globalizing rural Finland.

This impressive collection has one unfortunate deficiency: a lack of illustrations. Although a visual appendix with Christian Grou and Tapio Snellman’s photographic movement studies is included, only three of the ten chapters utilize the power of images. At times the reader has difficulties envisaging the complicated spatial settings that the authors describe. Then again, this is a persistent problem in anthropological writings on space—it also applies to Low’s seminal *The Anthropology of Space and Place* (2003)—which has to date not been resolved. Many anthropologists would certainly benefit from a more courageous approach to maps, illustrations and diagrams.

Kirby states that the chapters “comprise a concerted and coherent attempt to interrogate (largely ‘Western’) occupations and manipulations of space against the backdrop of how people actually move through, exist in, conceive of, and represent these spaces in their

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everyday lives in varied social contexts” (p. 5). The collection succeeds well with this aim. It brings stirring ideas to those of us who constantly use spatial thinking as a cornerstone of our anthropological work, thus illustrating the multiple possibilities of this approach. Almost all the articles fit neatly together, and the authors have evidently studied each other’s chapters as they frequently refer to one another. Careful editorial choices receive their final touch by the thoughtful concluding remarks. This inspiring collection of multifaceted anthropological research yields what every editor aspires to producing: the whole is more than just the sum of its parts.

REFERENCES:

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Low, Setha M. and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga (eds) 2003. *The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell.

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