

**Malefyt, Timothy De Waal and Robert J. Morais. 2012. *Advertising and Anthropology: Ethnographic Practice and Cultural Perspectives*. London, New York: Berg / Bloomsbury Publishing. 186pp. Pb.: £17.99. ISBN: 9780857852021.**

Malefyt and Morais' work is one of a handful of books in recent years to show the non-academic, non-philanthropic applications of anthropological methods and knowledge. At the beginning of the book, they state their purpose and, despite covering a wide range of issues, they do not waver from it: 'This book is written by anthropologists for anthropologists and others who are interested in advertising and related industries such as marketing, marketing research, and design' (p. 3).

Both authors consider themselves what they term 'observer participants' rather than the classic anthropological 'participant observer'. At first, this distinction hardly seems necessary, but the explanation given by the authors is a revelation. They contend that what they do is more akin to pure participation and that they gain a more detailed, more in-depth knowledge because of subject immersion. They do an excellent job of referencing how traditional academic anthropologists are doing the same type of work in an outstanding example of methodological harmony in aspects of the field.

The book is divided into four parts: *Introduction*; *Toward an Understanding of Advertising Agencies*; *Applying Anthropology in Advertising Agencies*; and *Conclusion*. Each section is constructed of chapters that give solid, well-reasoned examples and insights based on the authors' unique experiences as both anthropologists and advertising professionals. This duality of backgrounds and experience is a central theme in the book. The authors at times specifically address the straddling of two worlds, one academic and the other corporate. Both highlight how they contribute to academic conferences and journals, but also maintain a portfolio of clients in their respective companies. This duality is of paramount importance for a few reasons. First, the methods that all anthropology students learned in college are critical to the activities described in the book, but there must be flexibility in methods given the restrictions of the corporate world. Companies do not have 12–24 months to dedicate to ethnographic fieldwork to support the development of an advertising campaign. The authors make a strong case for developing a skill set that includes ethnographic work, but also includes focus-group type methods, something unused for the most part in academic anthropology.

In considering other methods and highlighting the need for anthropologists to embrace new methods and refine older ones, there is a weakness in this book as it does not reference or discuss the work of some anthropologists who have already advocated and developed faster methods for academic fieldwork. This is an intriguing difference from earlier in the book, where the need for total immersion was referenced back to changes in academic field practice. In areas in which the authors address time and budget constraints in corporate work and the need to truncate ethnography and/or embrace alternate methods like the focus group, they fail to highlight the work of anthropologists like W. Penn Handwerker, whose *Quick Ethnography: A Guide to Rapid Multi-method Research* came out in 2001 and is a remarkable work with great relevance to the issues tackled in both advertising and business anthropology.

While this book is a substantial contribution to the field of applied anthropology, and each chapter gives valuable insights, perhaps the most important and engaging chapter seven, titled *Advertising, Automobiles, and the Branding of Luxury*. This chapter gives two excellent examples, both obviously involving automobiles, of a success and a failure in establishing a brand identity for a vehicle and how anthropology can be used to establish a successful campaign or repair a disastrous effort. This chapter is an excellent case study that could easily be the basis for a week's worth of class discussion and analysis.

Malefyt and Morais have made a significant contribution to applied anthropology with this work. It joins the works of others, like Jordan's *Business Anthropology*, in building the methods and reputation for anthropology in the non-academic arena. The authors highlight this early in the book, by exploring how in recent years jobs for anthropologists in private sector corporations have grown, while there is a distinct atrophy of positions in traditional academic environments. Malefyt and Morais are right to criticise that academic anthropologists are not informing students of the possibilities for non-academic employment. This reviewer believes that books like this one, coupled with courses built around the increasing volume of published applied anthropology books and articles, is the impetus needed to expose students to the non-academic applications of the field and to do what comes naturally to all anthropologists—study people no matter where they are.

DON ARP, JR.  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln (USA)