

Ange, Olivia and David Berliner (ed.) 2015. *Anthropology and Nostalgia*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books. 235 pp. Hb.: \$120.00/£75.00. ISBN: 9781782384533.

What are we talking about when we write about nostalgia from an anthropological perspective? According to David Berliner (one of the editors of this volume), one of the possibilities could be to treat nostalgia as ‘a set of publicly displayed discourses, practises, and emotions, where the ancient is somehow glorified and considered lost forever, without necessarily implying the experience of first-hand memories’ (p. 21). In this volume, the editors, Olivia Ange and David Berliner, and other contributors ‘explore the fabric of nostalgia, by addressing its place, interactions, agents, institutions, objects, rituals, politics, codes, critical moments, gestures, banal temporalities, and media. They investigate nostalgic feelings, discourses and practices in the fields of heritage and tourism, exile and diasporas, economic exchange and consumerism, politics, and nationalism’ (p. 2).

Nostalgia could be the next anthropological “looking glass” that helps us to interpret all sorts of practices, discourses, feelings, and ideas. I myself have recently used nostalgia as an analytic framework in my research of military pilgrimage in Bosnia. Although the editors urge us not to make nostalgia the next “catchy phrase”, the fact is that nostalgia is very useful and interesting, while simultaneously remaining under-researched and insufficiently discussed and problematised.

The volume consists of nine chapters, an introduction, and an afterword. Much has been written about different aspects of, and from various perspectives on nostalgia: Gediminas Lankauskas writes about an experiential immersive theme park located in a former KGB bunker in the vicinity of Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital, where visitors participate in “surviving” KGB interrogations, torture sessions, medical examinations, etc. Maya Nadkarni and Olga Shevchenko, drawing on examples from Hungary and Russia, examine the different logic that undergirds the nostalgic cultural practices in these two post-socialist countries. Chris Hann continues this story by focusing on Hungary on two levels: the macro-contours of Hungarian history and the micro-level with the village of Tazlar. Jonathan Bach contributes to the investigation of *Ostalgie*, one more form of nostalgia that could be further discussed. He focuses on the material dimension of nostalgia for the vanished republics of Central and Eastern Europe with emphasis on the GDR and objects from everyday life that became interesting for collectors, private museums, and on the market. Joseph Levy and Inaki Olazabal explore the symbolic reference to the key of the house of the Sephardi heritage as a metaphor for the lost country of Spanish Jews. Olivia Ange, co-editor of the volume, explores narrative performativity in the ethnographic context of barter fairs in Argentinean Andes, where the local agents lament the current erosion of the ideal complementarity that tied highland and lowland peasants. In the last chapter, Petra Rethmann is interested in particular Marxist-oriented understandings that produce left-wing nostalgia.

Some of the chapters described above deserve a special mention: already mentioned chapter by co-editor David Berliner that proposes an interesting approach to nostalgia is distinguishing two postures: “endonostalgia”, nostalgia for the past one has lived personally, and “exo-nostalgia”, discourses about loss detached from direct experience (p. 21).

Another very interesting chapter is a chapter by Rebecca Bryant. Writing about the Turkish Cypriot past, she focuses on forgetting in relation to nostalgia, rather than memory that other chapters discuss. She argues that nostalgia's basic function is to essentialise, portray to us some imagined essence that has been lost, and it represents a longing for a simplified representation of ourselves (p. 156). Moreover, according to Bryant, nostalgia results from those historical circumstances in which loss of identity is incorporated into the identity itself. That is why for her nostalgia has a closer relationship to forgetfulness than to memory (p. 172).

The last text is the afterword by William Cunningham Bissell, who warns us again that we are talking here about 'plural practice with a multiplicity of meanings that have to be carefully explored and analysed in specific sociocultural contexts' (p. 218). Moreover, nostalgia as a term is polysemantic and possibly lacks clear analytic purchase (p. 219). I have highlighted these few chapters because they clearly show the complexity of this topic.

If one draws out some of the main points from these chapters as well as others of this volume, one can see that nostalgia is obviously multi-layered, multi-vocal, multi-local, and thus it is hard to know what it means and how to define it. Could it be a concept that covers all the practices and discourses that we find in this volume (and beyond), or do we need to have more focused forms of nostalgia such as *Post-socialist nostalgia* (Todorova & Gille 2010) and *Titostalgia* (Velikonja 2008)? Could we even call these and similar "things" nostalgia? In his monograph *Yearnings in the Meantime* (2015), Stef Jansen does not even use the term nostalgia to define feelings and ideas similar to nostalgia: he calls them "yearnings". Do we even need nostalgia, and is nostalgia what our informants actually feel, and/or think they feel?

After reading and re-reading all these chapters, I have many more questions than answers. What this volume clearly shows is that if we want to use nostalgia as an analytical concept, we need to discuss it further. Perhaps the opening of all these questions (I am sure others would find different ones) are the main value of this volume. Every other and any similar work about nostalgia or work that will try to use nostalgia as an analytic concept will have to take this volume as a starting point. Moreover, even those who do not research practices and discourses that could be framed as nostalgic should also read the volume, I am sure that it will give them plenty to think about and maybe inspire some fresh ideas.

What I particularly like about this volume is the diversity of approaches to this concept in the making and how they managed to show us the complexity of it. The volume opens a whole spectrum of possible applications of the concept in different contexts such as memory, heritage, and tourism, just to mention a few contemporary hot topics that could benefit from this.

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