

**Coutin, Susan Bibler. 2016. *Exiled Home. Salvadoran Transnational Youth in the Aftermath of Violence (Global Insecurities Series)*. Durham, London: Duke University Press. xiii + 270 pp. Pb.: \$24.95. ISBN: 9780822361633.**

Susan Coutin's ethnography deals with former Salvadoran child migrants who came to the United States in and around the time of the Salvadoran Civil War from 1980 to 1992, thus labelled by her as 1.5-generation migrants. Coutin conducted multi-sited research, interviewing both migrants in the U.S., particularly Los Angeles, as well as returnees and deportees in El Salvador. One of the leading concepts applied by Coutin to explain and analyse the different stories, histories and lives of the 1.5-generation Salvadoran migrants is that of 're/membering', a strategy to cope with the dismemberment that the migrants experience originally caused by the civil war, followed by emigration and migration politics. In this context dismemberment has more than one definition: Besides the meaning of breaking apart bodies, nations, families and communities, it also refers to the denial of history and memory. On the other hand, her concept of Re/membering is described as follows: 'to negotiate ... *membership* within the United States and El Salvador, while also deepening *memory* of Salvadoran social history, political violence, and immigrant experiences' (p. 3).

Firstly, Coutin starts to describe the various forms of violence that the 1.5-generation had and has to endure, linking them to the corresponding dismemberments. The violence of the civil war in El Salvador, causing death, injuries and displacement, thus dismembering the people, families and the nation of El Salvador, was transformed into the violence of emigration as people became exiled from their home. Coming to and living in the United States, the violence of emigration continued, coming into effect in immigration laws, which prohibited movement and denied legal status. One form of dismemberment is, as noted above, the lack of remembrance of stories and history. Although the war did dismember physically, it also dismembered migrants psychically, resulting in the blurred and varying memories of the wartime and the time in El Salvador. The silence in the families of 1.5-generation migrants and the U.S. immigration policy take their part in keeping the silence, by that dismembering the migrants and denying their experiences.

In the next chapter, Coutin describes the lives of 1.5-generation migrants as "living in the gap" between the United States and El Salvador, as well as between law and illegality. Many interviewees described their identity and lives as living between worlds or in multiple worlds, referring to their connections to both El Salvador and the United States. She analyses this 'living in the gap', the establishment of a reality to live in through their transformation of schools, neighbourhoods and own families as one form of re/membering to deal with the disjuncture between families, communities and nations.

Next, Coutin uses student activists, student groups, and creative collectives to show some examples of activism as a method of re/membering to overcome dismemberment. While most activists use strategic identification with American values to present themselves as US citizens, the poets and writers are more interested in discovering their history and Salvadoran culture and attempt to create own literature instead of merely researching it. Both methods are ways of coping with the dismemberment and insecurity about ones' legal status.

As mentioned above, Coutin conducted multi-sited research, as the biographies of the 1.5-generation Salvadoran migrants exhibit great variety, especially regarding their legal status. Due to the US American involvement in the Salvadoran Civil War, the refugees of this time were not granted asylum, but were treated as economic migrants instead, which continues to affect their status and struggle for acceptance. Coutin not only refers to the Salvadoran migrants in the US but also takes into account the stories of the deported 1.5 generation. Feeling foreign in El Salvador, where they are discriminated and criminalised, the deportees still feel American and construct their concept of identity. They call upon their knowledge, childhood, language skills or memories to present themselves as US citizens. By analysing their biographies, Coutin shows once more, how nation-state boundaries as well as categories like legal and illegal, are constructed. She focuses on this approach and shows how people are ‘made deportable’ by immigration legislation, using violence to remove them from their home, family, friends, and status. Her account vividly shows the desperation of the deportees as well as their urgent wish to return to the United States, which they see as their exiled homes. Deportation is thus a dismemberment breaking apart families and communities, which the deportees try to overcome by re/membering, reconnecting their presents and pasts, aiming to recreate their U.S. lives in El Salvador.

In the concluding chapter, the author revisits the relationship of the migrants with both nations and focuses on the different biographies. Even though the legal status and, accordingly, the biographies vary massively, the relationship with the United States and El Salvador remains ambivalent. Usually, the migrants felt a relationship to both of the nations they were part of, and thus labelled themselves, for example, as a “US citizen from El Salvador” or “Salvadoran from LA”. The author concludes her book by suggesting several policies for the U.S. that could improve the precarious situation of the Salvadoran transnational youth.

Coutin’s very catchy yet reflexive and professional style of writing carries the reader along the routes and lives of the Salvadoran transnational youth, trying to find their place in the U.S., El Salvador, and the gap in between. Furthermore, the stories of her interviewees illustrate how nations, boundaries and identities are only constructions used to dismember and criminalise people.

The author has long been involved in the work with and for Salvadoran migrants, and this book not only offers a brief analysis but also gives an insight into her work and engagement. Each chapter opens and closes with a personal episode of the author, in connection with her research and general involvement in the Salvadoran diaspora. Moreover, she uses these personal episodes to give a platform for Salvadoran activists and artists who deal with their past and Salvadoran history, thus again applying the strategy of re/membering. According to Coutin, many interviewees take their participation in her research as a form of protest and re/membering, which is why her ethnography cannot be understood without the concept itself. To take her ethnography one step further, Coutin extends her concept of re/membering to broader analytical purposes and concludes that her ethnography in particular, but also ethnography, in general, are a way of re/membering. Both combine past and present and attempt to bridge the gap created by violence.

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**Brandišauskas, Donatas. 2016. *Leaving Footprints in the Taiga. Luck, Spirits and Ambivalence among the Siberian Orochen Reindeer Herders and Hunters*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books. 305 pp. Hb.: \$120.00/£85.00. ISBN: 9781785332388**

*Leaving Footprints in the Taiga* is a substantial piece of writing because of its scientific complexity, describing in detail the life and beliefs of Zabaikal'ia's reindeer herders and its richness in language and descriptions that would excite not only a professional of the field but also the general public. The book is based on research conducted by the author, Donatas Brandišauskas, who lived with Orochen hunters and reindeer herders in the east of Lake Baikal, in the Tungokochen District of Zabaikal Province for seventeen months (2004-2005, 2010 and 2011). As Brandišauskas was accepted by the Orochen people and, over time, not considered alien, he could gain deep knowledge of the Orochen people's way of life: this knowledge he has given to us in the nine chapters of his book. Throughout the chapters, the main element is luck, one of the most important components of the Orochen people's life to be successful in hunting and being a reindeer herder.

The first chapter introduces the reader to the field site, describes the people the author lived with, the way people live in this post-Soviet period, and how people's lives are influenced by government decisions. Although the author introduces the reader to basic elements from the Soviet era, one would benefit from having a broader understanding of the regime to understand what Brandišauskas is writing about. Part of this chapter is devoted to the author's observations of his personal experience, how he needs to adapt and learn new skills to gain the trust of the Orochen and to live their way.

The second chapter concentrates on introducing the book's main ideas, providing insights into concepts such as luck, strength, soul, mastery, movement, sharing, animals, malevolent spirits, master spirits, and living places. In this chapter, we can start to learn in detail about the complex process of gaining luck, which is a crucial element of Orochen lives. It involves extensive knowledge of animals, spirits, and places that Orochen use to behave and do things in a certain way so that their luck is not given away or is gained in case of being lost. The author highlights that the gaining luck is not only about good relationships with the spirits, but it involves a person's behaviour, relations with other people, and attitude towards nature.

The next chapter is on the Orochen people's inner relationships, as well as the tradition of sharing and trusting and how it influences one's chances of gaining luck. The author explains cases of autonomous and cooperative working; they are based on people's previous experiences doing things together or alone and how it has influenced their luck. Brandišauskas recounts details, such as ways of sharing information about hunting, the results of it, the reindeer and even everyday activities, such as buying food, giving examples from the family he lived with and his own experience during the field work.

The fourth chapter describes the movements of reindeer herders and hunters and how they are linked to catching luck. Brandišauskas describes his own experience of learning to walk in the taiga and compares and explains the differences from the Orochen way of walking, presenting it as a critical skill that is not only about the physical ability but also about the knowledge of nature; it shows a person's competence in hunting and herding.

The fifth chapter describes the rules for creating campsites and how hunters and

herders catch their luck in hunting. This chapter is about the way the relationship between the hunter and animal has changed from existing together to becoming competitors, and how vital the skills of tracking and reading the footprints of animals are. Brandišauskas writes on hunters' and herders' ability to adapt every step on their path according to their awareness of both wild and domestic animals and spirits around them.

The sixth chapter is devoted to weather, how the knowledge of it and the skills to predict it helps in gaining luck. Brandišauskas describes different traditional ways of predicting the weather using fire, or by observing nature, as well as how people adjust to these observations. Another part of this chapter is on the calendar, how the Orochen measure time, how fluid it is, depending on events happening in nature or with animals indicating the change of seasons instead of following months.

The seventh chapter describes in detail the hunting and herding process and how it is influenced by a shortage of land in the post-Soviet period. Brandišauskas illustrates the Orochens' interaction with domestic animals – reindeer and dogs; he explains the role of these animals in the Orochens' lives. Since reindeer herding is a basic Orochen activities, the reindeer are described in detail, as are the importance of the different types of reindeer, their roles in the herd, and the attitudes of herders towards them. Furthermore, this chapter gives a glimpse of the differences of wild animals in the eyes of hunters, which of the animals are huntable and which are not and what the reasons are for that.

The eighth chapter is on how wealth and well-being are connected to the use of the landscape. Brandišauskas describes several rock art sites and the beliefs connected with them, the cosmology involved, and the shamans who are interpreting them. He writes on the rituals that are performed at these places, how new ones are founded, and how they become significant sources of luck and well-being for the Orochen of Tungokochen.

The last chapter contains the author's conclusions and a summary of the ideas he has presented in the book; he compares his research ideas to those in other similar field works, dating back to 19<sup>th</sup> century (Brandišauskas refers to different research studies throughout the book, which makes it more valuable because readers can see how things have changed or not over time).

This is a book worth reading since it gives a glimpse of how people live in remote places and how they are looking for knowledge in the traditions and the ways of the lives of their ancestors to build their own, to recover from the Soviet control.

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