

**Nahm, Sheena and Cortney Hughes Rinker (eds.) 2016. *Applied Anthropology: Unexpected Spaces, Topics, and Methods*. London, New York: Routledge. 180 pp. Pb.: £26.99. ISBN: 9781138914520**

Where can I find a job with a degree in anthropology? This is a common question among graduates who are already familiar with the fact that even a Ph.D. degree does not assure them a job in academia. As explained in the introductory chapter of *Applied Anthropology*, edited by Sheena Nahm and Cortney Hughes Rinker, academic jobs have become rare in the last decades. In the 1970s, for example, three quarters of anthropologists in the US who completed their doctoral degree gained employment in academia. By the 1990s, the situation was quite different. The percentage of graduates taking academic jobs dropped to slightly more than one third. However, today anthropology is not in decline. On the contrary, projections show that by 2022 the employment field for anthropologists will increase by 19 per cent, which is, as the introductory chapter explains, faster than the average projection of other occupations. Moreover, the expectations of some experts are even greater. In 2014, the Irish newspaper *Independent* published an article by Sarah Starck about the top fifty jobs of the future – and anthropology was in the second place. ‘The study of people can take you into almost any career path, anywhere in the world, including education, healthcare, museum curation, social work, international development, government, organisational psychology, non-profit management, marketing, publishing and forensics,’ (2014) she explains. This edited volume opens the door to fields outside academia, as mentioned in the article, and provides an excellent overview of various unexpected opportunities, possibilities, activities, and jobs in which anthropologists can find their place.

The book is divided into three clusters of chapters, which present new and unexpected ways of thinking about spaces, topics, and methods. The first cluster explores unusual spaces where anthropologists might not traditionally expect to find a job. Jo Aiken, who has worked with the NASA space agency, focuses her chapter on “otherworldly anthropology” and presents findings of ethnographic research which attempted to explore, among other topics, perceptions of privacy among astronauts living and working in space during their long-duration missions. What does anthropology have to do with space missions? As explained by Aiken, it can provide relevant resources for collecting findings about being human in outer space. The author argues that ethnography is especially important and a useful tool for obtaining ‘an insider’s perspective and holistic viewpoint on the life of the space explorer’ (p. 18). Due to new space missions headed to Mars and other planets, this kind of study could offer a wealth of opportunities in the future. Deborah A. Murphy presents a different kind of unexpected space – one of military service members in rehabilitation. Her work is based on the perception that abilities and disabilities of people in special medical centres are socio-culturally constructed and environmentally influenced. She studies the narratives of people spending time in these facilities and explains how they interpret their illnesses and injuries.

The second cluster of chapters presents unusual topics that could raise the question of what anthropology even is. Chelsey Dyer presents her first-person story about a job hunt in the non-profit industry after graduation. Through her journey in two non-profit organisations, she describes what the use of a degree in anthropology is and how an anthropologist can

use her knowledge and skills outside “traditional” settings. The chapter provides brilliant guidance for young graduates who have to build a new career and frame their own mission within non-academic institutions. As advised by Dyer, the main advantage of anthropologists outside academia could be creative and analytical thinking, which can contribute to developing innovative solutions. In the next chapter, Michael Scroggins presents his involvement in FAIR Money, a collective with a mission ‘to find effective ethical alternatives to crippling consumer debt’ (p. 66). As explained by Scroggins, the participation of anthropologists can be instrumental in such institutions due to their ability to provide fresh and deep insights. Jonathan L. Zilberg focuses on serendipity in the research field and, more specifically, within his own personal and professional life in Indonesia. Even though anthropologists often have a clear goal in front of them, the “wind of change” can lead them to new and unexpected territories in their own careers and unexpected outcomes of their studies, which can be beneficial from professional and personal perspectives. In the following two chapters of this section, Lauren Miller Griffith shows how her anthropological training has helped solve educational problems. She highlights the fact that the anthropological approach can be instrumental in bridging the gap between different groups in an educational institution. In addition, the chapter successfully dispels the myth that some people are born teachers, and others are not. As explained, teaching is a skill like any other and can be refined by practice – and application. The final chapter of this section, written by Courtney Hughes Rinker, delves into end-of-life care in Muslim communities. It shows how Islamic beliefs work with the prevailing end-of-life approaches, which often put technologies and medicine at the front and human beliefs at the back. The chapter clearly shows there is, in fact, “no one-size-fits-all” way of providing an appropriate end-of-life care. Therefore, anthropological approaches focused on understanding individuals within socio-culturally complex systems can be useful for providing culture-specific and people-centred solutions to important ethical and medical questions.

The third part of the book reveals some unexpected methods that can be used by anthropologists in applied frameworks. Sheena Nahm examines how an exploration of alternative forms of ethnography can appear in practice. She draws from her own experience in non-profit organisations and presents how ‘time converges with the unexpected to create productive ways of integrating an anthropological approach’ (p. 125). Allison E. Fish attempts to bring together anthropology and yoga and explains how intellectual property claims about traditional types of yoga can be researched and understood through anthropological lenses.

In the final part of the book, we first read a practically oriented chapter, appropriately titled *Surviving Academia 2.0*, in which both editors of the volume reflect on their own “hybrid” careers between the academic and applied worlds. The chapter provides useful tips and suggestions for people who remain “betwixt and between” for a longer time and gives advice on how to straddle the liminal status. Finally, we get to a more theoretical conclusion, prepared by Susan Trencher, who reflects on the volume through her own academic career and non-academic experience. She explains that, at present, when university knowledge is (unfortunately) being turned into an economic commodity, we should prepare for a new future of anthropology and help defend and strengthen its “classical” meaning and social relevance outside academia.

This book is, at first glance, a diverse collection of different authors, themes, and approaches, which does not promise to be ground breaking or enlightening. However, a more detailed reading shows that the book, in fact, manages to present in a coherent and innovative way the contemporary relevance of anthropology in the profit and non-profit sectors and provides a fresh perspective on the value of anthropological methods outside academia and “traditional” research institutions. It can be especially useful for students and graduates who have to face the reality that academic institutions are overcrowded and will have to carve their own path in the industry, governmental sector, NGOs – or in some other, often unexpected spaces and contexts.

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