

sistent concerns about the human brain and the understanding of nature and culture in everyday life.

As one can quickly tell by a survey of the titles of chapters in the collection, “nature” and its contestation is a dominant strategy of the collected authors, commonsense for a collection subtitled “Beyond Nature & Nurture.” Unfortunately, “nurture” fails to receive similar scrutiny, and “culture” is more often used as an explanatory device than deeply interrogated for its logics. Moving beyond its stated themes, there are spectres other than the nature–nurture debate that haunt this text, and it is worth focussing on these to expose the lingering effects that dominant anthropological ontologies have on contemporary anthropology across the subdisciplines. René Descartes or Cartesianism appear in a handful of the essays, sometimes named, other times used as a ghostly point of critique. Mind–body dualism might offer another rallying point for anthropologists across the subdisciplines, as where it appears in *Complexities*, it is often argued against. That being said, very little of the philosophical literature that struggles against Cartesianism is engaged with; instead, the contributors rely on their empirical data to overcome mind–body predicaments. In so doing, the contributors fail to take seriously how ideological (and counterfactual) most of the debates they are entering into are, and how the popular predispositions that are being worked against will hold despite logical or empirical evidence to support them.

Complexities shows that the subdisciplines can work together, and that there are debates that still unite anthropologists regardless of training. The nature–nurture debate is only the tip of the iceberg in this respect, and one can hope that anthropologists will engage with other public debates. Given the proper political motivations, *Complexities* provides a model for how pan-disciplinary journals like *American Anthropologist* and *Current Anthropology* could be refigured for engagement with these debates; *Complexities* reads like a primer in pan-disciplinary praxis. There are more and less successful contributions, but the project itself is a refreshing one, and demonstrates that anthropology need not be side-lined (or marginalize itself) in current politics, both within the academy and at large.

Film Review / Revue de film

Charlotta Copcutt, Anna Weitz, and Anna Klara Åhrén, *Can't Do It in Europe*. Distributed by First Run Icarus Films, 2005.

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Advertising literature for the film *Can't Do It in Europe* suggests that it “portrays this new phenomenon of “reality tourism,” whereby American or European travellers seek out real-life experiences as exciting tourist “adventures.” The real

life that is sought out in this documentary is the silver mines in Potosi, Bolivia. According to the Lonely Planet Guide, quoted in the film, in these mines you can, “witness working conditions that should have gone out in the Middle Ages.” The camera follows tourists and tour guides as they prepare for the trip down a Potosi mine—a process which involves both dressing in protective boots, clothing and hard hats, and purchasing coca leaves, dynamite or soft drinks for the miners. It then goes down into the mine, and finally follows the exit of relieved tourists to the surface, and their ceremonial explosion of a piece of dynamite—an episode which makes them all look rather appropriately naïve. The film builds its narratives through interviews by the off-camera filmmakers with tourists, miners, former miners, local tour guides, tour company owners and city development officers about various dimensions of this touristic experience.

Tourists’ attitudes to the Potosi mine excursion vary from being disinterested and dismissive, to nervously self conscious at their desire to partake of the experience, to those who truly enjoyed going down the mine, to those joyously enamoured by the fact that they survived the trip, impatient to run off and “grab a couple of *cervezas*”; to those who express horror and disgust at the working conditions of the miners. One tourist says that he expects “to learn a lot,” but what exactly he might learn is unclear. Another says upon his exit from the mine that it is, “the Third World at its greatest”—again causing one to ponder. Exactly how does this experience make that world “great”? The film’s title, which is uttered by a tourist at the end of the film, would seem to capture the essence of what is relevant here: this experience provides the fuel for an impressive tale to demonstrate the exotic character and “awesomeness” of one’s travels upon one’s return home. As such, it has the potential to garner significant social capital. Its “extreme” characteristics startle even the savvy (maybe slightly bored) individual whose has travelled a lot, as one tourist in the film characterizes those who seek out this experience.

Is this “realist tourism”? One tourist enjoyed the fact that those in the mine were “real people,” as if somehow all the others encountered in Bolivia (and elsewhere in the Third World, one presumes) were somehow not. Are they “real” because their labours can be imagined to situate them somehow in a time and place, comfortably not coeval with the “modern,” maybe even the postmodern, world of the tourist? The sweat, labour and heavy toll this work takes on the bodies and health of the miners is real, but for the tourists it remains only an abstract experience, even if for a fleeting visit their bodies endured the filthy, cramped and claustrophobic mine environment. Theirs was largely passive experience. Some it appeared “played” at the backbreaking labour of pushing the ore carts up to the mine opening. The tourist experience in the Potosi mines, staged or not, is entirely contrived, highlighting that “realist tourism” remains something that exists only in the tourist mind.

In a manner reminiscent of the locals in Dennis O’Rourke’s 1988 landmark film *Cannibal Tours* (which follows a group of

tourists on a luxury cruise up the Sepik River in Papua New Guinea), a range of Potosi residents are the other voices heard in the film. One miner states with a certain degree of pathos, "we do not understand why you come to see us." He continues to ponder why tourists find it of interest to watch the miners working in extremely arduous and dangerous conditions in an effort to simply support their families. For while the subject of the tourist gaze, the miners receive no direct benefit from being the main attraction, apart from the modest gifts the tourists give them. Rather it is the local hotels owners, tour guides, restaurants, bus companies and internet café owners who profit most directly. Interviews with one tour guide highlighted the local tensions that emerge between those who work with tourists (and thus are presumed to be rich by local standards), and those who constitute "the main attraction." As a tour guide, rather than a miner, he had found steady wages and relief from the grueling labour of the mines, work which had permanently damaged his father's health. A discussion emerges in the film about whether it would be appropriate to set up a "staged mine" for the tourists to visit. It would be less dangerous for all concerned; the miners would not be disrupted by the tourists coming into the mine (they are paid per load they take out of the mine and cannot afford to waste much time talking to tourists); and it could possibly have less of a "zoo-like" character, something not lost on local tourism operators. Consensus, however, falls down on the view that the tourists do not want to see something that is not "real," and it

is their desires which must be met. Potosi's Director of Development sees a robust future in the development of tourism in his city, and is strongly resistant to the idea of any kind of staged attraction. Such commentaries highlight the intricacies and realities of the social landscapes which are the backdrop for this and every other tourism development strategy, even if they are something driven by energies at the local level.

Can't Do It in Europe will be a useful film in a range of classroom situations. Accessible to those first being introduced to anthropology, it is also provocative and engaging for senior students able to address more fully themes of postcolonialism, the tourist gaze, authenticity, commodification, globalization and discourses of Orientalism and "imperialist nostalgia." Few films have come along which deal imaginatively and engagingly with such subject matters and the complexities of their manifestation in a tourism context since *Cannibal Tours*. While technically less sophisticated, *Can't Do It in Europe* is a worthy contribution to this genre. It focusses on the backpack traveller, the type of tourist many students claim to be. Naïve presumptions about the virtues of travel and a desire to "see real life" as it exists or existed in distant times and places are boldly challenged in this film. It should be ordered for your film collection.