

den die relevanten Themengebiete und Problemstellungen von den beitragenden Autoren mehr als angemessen diskutiert, doch lässt die bloße Ansammlung ihrer absolut lesenswerten Beiträge eine übergreifende Systematik oder zumindest den erkennbaren Versuch einer systematischen Gliederung durch die Herausgeber vermissen. Trotz allem liefern Brulotte und Di Giovine mit “Edible Identities” ein facettenreiches Buch, das mit der expliziten Diskussion des “Heritage”-Themas anhand detailreicher ethnografischer Fallbeispiele einen anregenden und sehr zu empfehlenden Beitrag zum Thema “Essen und Identität” leistet.

Sebastian Schellhaas

Bull, Michael, and Jon P. Mitchell (eds.): *Ritual, Performance, and the Senses*. London: Bloomsbury, 2015. 208 pp. ISBN 978-0-8578-5473-5. Price: € 65.68

The book under review explores potential intersections between cognitive anthropology, the anthropology of the senses, and performance theory in the study of ritual practice. The book is the fruit of a Wenner Gren sponsored workshop held in the University of Sussex, in 2011, and, as warned by the editors’ introduction, its aim is not to propose a metatheoretical synthesis, but to present a problem. Whereas Robert Turner, Greg Downey, Jon P. Mitchell, and Phillip B. Zarrilli are prone to highlight the contributions cognitive sciences may have to current debates on performance and the senses, David Howes is skeptic about their commensurability. Trevor H. J. Marchand, Richard Schechner, and Zoila Mendoza do not address the volume’s question directly, providing the reader with rich study cases from specific theoretical angles. The book is highly recommendable to anthropologist working on all fields, as it assembles a number of state-of-the-art works on ritual analysis and proposes a timely debate.

Mitchell’s chapter focuses on the case of Angelik, a Catholic mystic from Malta, who became widely known in the local public sphere for a series of aural, visual, and tactile experiences with “Our Lady of Immaculate Conception.” Mitchell reflects on the time-honored question of “apparently irrational beliefs”, and avoids both cultural relativism and the post-representational alternative provided by the so-called “ontological turn.” He argues that “ontological relativism” (16) advances an interesting critique of the divide between naturalism and constructivism by organizing difference not as interpretative plurality but as a plurality of self-referential “worlds.” He also contends that ontology is less effective when it comes to showing *how* these worlds come about, calling attention instead to the centrality of mimesis and performativity to Angelik’s Maltese Catholic sensescape. Mimesis is defined as “representational immanence, rather than deferral” (18), which includes embodied experiences and the “media of presence” attached to them, such as icons and statues of saints. Mitchell evokes the “cognitive basis of mimetic action” (19) through notions like the “mirror neuron” and the “mimetic controller,” adding to the cognitivist perspective an important sense of dynamism while arguing that Catholic mimetic chains become generative only through a performative feedback loop.

Turner tackles more explicitly the cognitive aspects evoked by Mitchell by defining brains as moral-physiological apparatuses endowed with an inherent plasticity, which helps him explain why ritual action can literally shape them. The chapter is extremely useful for anthropologists who, like myself, have no expertise in this field, as it introduces the reader to neuroanthropological approaches to the various operations and faculties mobilized during ritual practice, such as habits, memory, and performance flow. In this sense, repetition generates “associations” between neurons by firing them as a pattern; memory becomes sedimented through “editing operations, driven by specific brain areas, which embody the concepts we call attention, emotion, desire, and motivation” (35); and ritual performance incites experiential flows associated to a moral state of *communitas*.

Downey examines the somatic role of repetition in prayer through an ethnographic analysis of his Catholic grandmother’s prayerful routines. His empirical focus on everyday contemplative practices departs from the dominant version of religious experience used in cognitivist circles: ecstatic supernatural encounters (46). This is relevant information, since most religious practitioners are not likely to be mystical virtuosi, like Angelik, but people coping with doubt and seeking moral consistency (60) through technologies of devotion like the rosary. Downey avoids arguments about the “over-excitation of the temporal lobe” (48), focusing instead on the materiality of the “extended mind” through theories of enskilment. He also reclaims the value of a functionalist approach to religion while addressing three phenomena: “variation in brain functions, cognitive decline in aging, and diverse strategies for emotional self-management” (47).

Zarrilli’s contribution is strategic in expanding the book’s conceptual debates beyond religion. Based in his long-termed personal experience with theater, mediation, and martial arts, the chapter reflects through phenomenology and cognitive science on the techniques of “perceptual apprenticeship” (Downey) mobilized by these traditions. Zarrilli is especially concerned with how these techniques heighten awareness about the senses, including an “awareness of awareness” that leads the “body-mind” beyond the Self. Key to these states of optimal experience is the hinge-like nature of attention, which “reaches out into the environment as well as ‘out’ within one’s own bodymind” (128).

Marchand, Schechner, and Mendoza’s contributions exemplify the value of in-depth ethnographic reconstitutions of historical modalities of place-making and sensorial regimes. They also cohere empirically around religious pilgrimages. Schechner provides a detailed reconstitution of the one-month pilgrimage of Ramlila, at Ramnagar, India. He shows how these performances reconfigure time and space, as the Ramnagar territory incarnates “a model of mytho-poetic India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka” (90) found in 16th-century textual sources. Mendoza focuses on the Andean pilgrimage of the *Senōr de Qoyllorit’i*. By approaching the rhythmic encompassment of walking, dancing, and music-making during the event through an emic account of the indigenous sensorium, she problematizes

anthropology's linguistic and visual bias while stressing both the entanglements between aural and visual sensations and the primacy of kinesthetic experience. Marchand's analysis of the pilgrimage to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher is as an interesting warning about a too tight equation between the senses and place-making. The dazzling flow of visitors and the hypersensitive environment it generates paradoxically prevent pilgrims from "dwelling" in the site's sacredness. Pilgrims often postpone such deeper emotional connection by engaging retrospectively with audio-visual registers of their visit. Although the notion of distraction-through-saturation testifies to more general predicaments of modern sensorial regimes Marchand concludes with an insightful reflection on the intrinsic role of absence in Abrahamic spiritualities, according to the "fall of man" prototype.

Howes highlights how the expression "to sense the world" is inevitably ambiguous, meaning "to register it through the senses and imbue those registrations with significance" (153). Such ambiguity is problematically solved by both naturalist and linguist paradigms, the first reducing the senses to an "acultural network of neurons" (165), the latter abstracting meanings from their material conditions. Phenomena like religious experience require, therefore, a more complex notion of mediation, broad enough to include norms, meaningful beliefs, but also material forms like embodied techniques, artifacts, and technologies. Howes finds this alternative in Birgit Meyer's notion of "sensational forms," the authoritative media whereby religious subjects incarnate the transcendental immanently and relationally. He explores their variability across a number of cases: how a Papua New Guinean ritual mobilizes sound stimuli as "experience without an object" (Tuzin), how icons operate as "performative objects" among Eastern Christians (Pentcheva), how Quakers engage with language-as-synesthesia by "speaking in the Light" (Bauman), and how Pentecostals develop a tactile relation with charismatic immediacy (de Witte). Howes sees such ongoing hybridism of historical meaning and embodied forms as incommensurable with the cognitivist assumption that "all religious behavior, past and present, Western and non-Western, can be 'explained' by reference to a twenty-first century Western model of the brain" (165).

Howes' criticism could be countered by Bull and Downey's defense of the "plastic brain" and the "extended mind." Their non-mentalist naturalism serves as a warning about how sociocultural anthropologists' aversion for cognitive explanations is often predicated on outdated notions of nature and causality. But Howes makes a relevant point about history and reflexivity. It means that cognitive anthropologists might also have to engage more seriously with the conditions of possibility of their own methodological stance. Are they "explaining" religion, thus inevitably encompassing religious truth regimes with scientific ones? And how does this relate to ongoing debates in sociocultural circles about the normative entanglement between the secular and the religious? How does their theory of the mind-brain as morally porous relate to the prescriptive moral physiologies of tradi-

tions like Christianity (M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory. A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*. Cambridge 2008) and Islam (C. Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape. Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics*. New York 2006)? And what are the political entailments of axioms like "neurons that fire together, wire together" (W. Connolly, *Neuropolitics. Thinking, Culture, Speed*. Minneapolis 2002)? Even though "Ritual, Performance, and the Senses" does not address questions of reflexivity frontally, it provides a productive entry into debates that will probably shape the future of our discipline as it moves beyond the constraints of a "science of culture."

Bruno Reinhardt

Callison, Candis: *How Climate Change Comes to Matter. The Communal Life of Facts*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014. 316 pp. ISBN 978-0-8223-5787-2. Price: £ 16.99

Climate change research in anthropology is sometimes critiqued for rarely advancing theory or adding methodological innovation to the discipline. Candis Callison's monograph, "How Climate Change Comes to Matter. The Communal Life of Facts" sweeps away this critique entirely. Here Callison gives us an ethnography of climate change squarely within a theoretical tradition that draws upon and pushes Wittgenstein's ideas of use, action, and context and the link between these processes and the grammar we use to describe them, conceived of here as *vernaculars* of climate change – or more precisely vernaculars of "climate change ... *in the world*" (12). She also fully engages and tests Marcus and Fischer's conception of the multisited ethnography, "tacking" back and forth between Inuit publics and Inuit political actors, climate change scientists and journalists, Evangelicals involved in Creation Care, and a conglomeration of corporate actors concerned about climate risk. The result is a spectacularly woven together set of chapters confronting the question of how climate change is made meaningful in different contexts and with different logics and resulting actions. Callison suggests that in order for any individual or group to fully engage in climate change, in order to *act*, that they must overcome the double bind of climate change. Namely, that they must maintain fidelity to an amalgamation of "facts," which exist within a scientific framework insistent on objectivity and personal distance, and then translate these "facts" into something that is personal, meaningful, and socially coherent. Through this framework, Callison enlivens her topic – providing insight and nuance into the heterogeneity within the groups she investigates while simultaneously comparing and contrasting *what climate change comes to mean* between groups.

Callison begins with a theoretical and methodological orientation in the introduction (1–38). She positions her work between anthropology, media studies, and scientific and technology studies. In this chapter, she problematizes the idea that knowledge begets action and locates climate change as an example of the limits of scientific *information* as a sufficient cause for engagement. To get to action, Callison argues, "[i]t [climate change] must promiscuous-