

I should add here an important point about my own positioning as an Israeli anthropologist who wrote extensively on the Israeli military and its military occupation of Palestine. I became acquainted with Abufarha's work a few years ago when I helped organise a small workshop at my home university about the possibilities of a two or one-state solution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. I see two important points that connect our works and offer an important contribution to the anthropology of violence. The first point is that violence is always an interactive activity and therefore there is a crucial need to understand the two sides as active, autonomous agents. Works such as Abufaraha's book along with other ethnographies of Palestinian resistance – such as those written by Avram Bornstein, Iris-Jean Klein, or Julie Peteet – contribute greatly to this perspective. The second point is that too much of the recent anthropological work on violence has focused on victims and their experiences. What Abufarha's ethnography brings to this literature is the focus on the logics by which perpetrators are motivated and act. It is here that his ethnography breaks new ground and I look forward to more of his work in the future.

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Carrithers, Michael (ed.). 2009. *Culture, rhetoric and the vicissitudes of life*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books. 184 pp. Hb.: \$70.00/£45.00. ISBN 978 1 84545 429 6.

What does the notion of rhetoric do to, and for, the concept of culture? The explanation of cultures too often left aside the key issue of individual agency that seems, by definition, typical of the so-called 'rhetorical situation': the will to make things happen, the human urge to persuade others to act. This collection of papers wisely starts with the assumption that this human need to move others – and be moved oneself – through discourse has a

foundational character. 'Rhetoric' would not then be the idealised performance cultivated by the ancient rhetor in public venues. The notion suits well the petty details of one's daily life (loves, routines, memories, encounters, conversations), as it equally suits responses to great emergencies and epochal crises (disease, death, war, massacre). At the end, we find people doing things with words in order to adjust the expectations of their sociocultural milieu to the predicaments they experience.

This book is a fine collection of essays illuminating situated uses of narratives, images and tropes that are not contemplated as 'explanations' but as cultural resources mobilised to impart meaning and order when facing concrete circumstances. Events are in themselves also 'rhetoric' – made up of the same 'patency-cum-agency' material. The volume is the second in the Berghahn series by the Rhetoric Culture Project (coordinated by I. Strecker, S. Tyler and R. Hariman). While the essays in *Culture & Rhetoric*, the first volume in the series, concentrated on general issues regarding the culture/rhetoric chiasm, those presented here are ethnographically informed, underlining the vulnerability of human life and the reactions of moral imagination to it. For 'human beings are constantly vulnerable to accident and the unforeseen, and wield rhetoric and culture against those accidents in order to render intelligible and operable what may at first seem incomprehensible' (Carrithers, p. 10). Culture is thus regarded as both repertoire and resource (more than structure, cause or *tradium*); language, mainly as use and performance rather than grammar, code, norm or literal meaning. Sociality, historicity, addressivity – and I must add, resilience – are our basic conditions as 'interactive and dialogical animals' (p. 11).

The book contains an introduction and nine articles. In the introductory pages Michael Carrithers outlines the relations between 'culture', 'rhetoric' and 'vicissitudes of life'. What follows is a great variety of excellent analyses going beyond the disciplinary boundaries of anthropology. The

adversities dealt with vary in scale, location and character, including a mother's death, political exile, an unwanted sexual advance, the aftermath of the Holocaust, the 9/11 World Trade Center massacre, the slaughter of infested animals. The ethnographic evidence is hardly of an 'ethnography of speaking' nature; it rather comes from a variety of historical, literary and media texts. Jein Nienkamp, for instance, documents the Vygotskian notion of 'internal rhetoric' by quoting extensively from diaries. Carrithers comments on the German concept of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* or 'overcoming the past' by paying detailed historical attention to written documents in post-war Germany. Stevan Weine recreates the 'diffuse' and 'polyphonical' in the testimony of Bosnian exiles in Chicago by creating a surrogate narrator to condense their many voices and stories. Megan Biesele confronts her own experience facing oncological communication comparatively with Ju/'hoan San (Bushman) healing performance. The other papers by Brigitte Nerlich, F.G. Bailey, Ellen Basso and Ralph Cintron are equally based on ethnographic, media, anecdotal and literary sources.

The final essay by James Fernandez concludes with a critical review of the 'play of tropes' in several contemporary tropological approaches to culture. Fernandez contrasts T.O. Beidelman's ethnographies of Kaguru folk narrative, the ambiguities of cognitive linguistics concerning the neurobiological foundations of master metaphors (such as the Strict Father Model and the Great Chain of Being), the anthropological critiques of such neural reductionisms and the efforts in moral imagination by humanist-inspired evolutionary biologists to relate Darwinian evolutionism to a holistic and responsible ethics of social interaction with the environment. Is it not by irony that we are led to discover the play of tropes behind every tropology?

The collection's approach combines a paradigmatic focus on metaphors, tropes and cultural semantics with a more syntagmatic concern for performance, storytelling and

narrative schemata. These resources (stories vs metaphors, *histories vs worlds*) are, of course, complementary in practice. But I think such analytically illuminating opposition deserves further, more systematic exploration.

A mild criticism: despite its origins in conferences held in Mainz (Germany), this volume keeps a definite Anglophone accent. The rich French, Russian, Scandinavian and Hispanic traditions in discourse analysis, although quoted, seem not to participate in this academic dialogue. However this book is a welcome contribution and the project it belongs to offers one of the most important shifts in European anthropology in the coming decade. Together with Megan Biesele, I believe that 'social anthropology is nothing if not combined with rhetorical awareness' (p. 69). What we eventually learn from this poetics of human resilience is people's ultimate ability to find sense in disgrace, to build hope from sorrow. In this poetics for living, a kind of mission for anthropology can be found too: to contribute, as rhetor-anthropologists, to joy in the world.

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Casper, Monica J. and Lisa Jean Moore. 2009. *Missing bodies. The politics of visibility*. New York and London: New York University Press. 223 pp. Pb: €17.59. ISBN: 978 0 81471 678 6.

The increasing visibility of the body in American society is paradoxically concomitant with the invisibility of manifold 'bodies conspicuously missing in action' (p. 3). This observation constitutes the root of the book's problematic, a different approach to 'corporeity': 'exploring how certain places, spaces, policies, and practices in contemporary society [...] exhibit and celebrate some bodies while erasing and denying others' (p. 3). States, not content with making live and letting die, grant social visibility as well.