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Sara Delamont. *Appetites and Identities: An Introduction to the Social Anthropology of Western Europe.* London and New York: Routledge, 1995. x + 254 pp. $51.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-415-06254-1; $170.00 (library), ISBN 978-0-415-06253-4.

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This book over-simplifies anthropology and presents a rather static and old-fashioned picture of the discipline. I read social anthropology, and have recently been doing research on social anthropologists, so I know that the way the discipline is presented here will be resented by scholars in the tradition. I have done this deliberately, cold-bloodedly, and ruthlessly. For fifteen years I have been teaching anthropological materials to modern language students who have no social science training, and have discovered that they find the books and journals of social anthropology mystifying. They are perplexed by material I set them to read, repulsed by the technical vocabulary and the theoretical assumptions, puzzled by the data collection methods and convinced that their personal experiences in Spain or Italy are more "up to date." This book is for them.

If anthropologists find it useful–either in its own terms or as a shining example of how the discipline can be betrayed by an ignorant outsider–that is a bonus (p. ix-x).

I am happy to report that the author has succeeded. This book is clearly written for that minority of British undergraduate students of modern languages, and perhaps European Studies, who have had no prior social science training, and I am certain that it presents a version of the social anthropology of Western and Southern Europe which is in no way mystifying to them, principally because it is a watered-down version of a type of social anthropology that is largely outdated. As such, it is not entirely without merit, for it provides good summaries of many anthropological accounts of local European society, and it is written in a pleasant and engaging style which will help to immerse new undergraduates, or secondary school students, in some of the locales, methods and research interests of social anthropologists. But because of its almost complete avoidance of the theoretical concerns of social and cultural anthropologists since the 1980s, its lack of any in-depth social and political contextualization of ethnographic research and writing, its dependence on many dated, mostly Mediterranean-based ethnographic accounts published as monographs, and its failed attempt to relate the social anthropology of Europe to the wider processes of European Union integration, the author of this book also succeeds in attaining her 'bonus' at the expense of her anthropological audience, who I predict will resent this ignorant betrayal of decades of anthropological research and theorising throughout Europe. In short, this is a mediocre introduction to the social anthropology of Europe precisely because it attempts to lower the discipline to a level at which the author and her students (if we are to believe her assessment of their reactions to her versions of social anthropology) are not repulsed, perplexed, and puzzled by social anthropology, a level which is so simplistic, uninformed, naive and antagonistic that it would be a wonder if they were not either bored or bemused by the archaic nature of the social anthropology they are learning.

In the first chapter of *Appetites and Identities*, the author sets out her reasons for writing the book, its organisation and themes, and a review of the key issues of social anthropology "which have to be grasped before the rest of the volume makes sense" (p. 2). These issues are cultural relativism, data collection, "going native," the history or development of anthropological research in Europe, and the difficulties in doing research in Europe. I think it is safe to say that the author recognises that these issues are key ones in social anthropology anywhere, and, with the exception of the historical overview of research in Europe, are basically about the problems of conducting ethnographic research and are not peculiar to Europe. What is puzzling here is why these are the five key issues which are necessary to understand this book, because although these issues are necessary conditions for understanding the anthropology of Europe, they are not sufficient ones. Part of the answer can be found in the author's wish to write a textbook which is useful to her students. But left unanswered is why she has declined to

discuss such key concepts and issues (among others) as culture, ethnographic writing and reflexivity, sexism, local, regional and state relations, and community studies, in ways which might usefully place the history of the anthropology of Europe within the historical development of anglophone anthropology in general.

Delamont is aware of some of the ramifications of the way she has organised this book, and includes in the first chapter a caveat for anthropologists:

This book simplifies the anthropology of Europe, in that it leaves out some of the most theoretically stretching debates, and some of the fascinating details ... and treats the texts of anthropologists in an unproblematic way. A course for anthropology students would necessarily have to encompass the theories important in the subject ... and treat the texts as socially constructed ... Students studying 'French Language and Society' courses neither need nor want, nor have the social science background, to follow such debates, which are simply ignored in this volume (pp. 2-3).

I can write no clearer reason than this as to why this book is unsuitable for use in anthropology courses, and why it will prove unsatisfactory for the general anthropological readership. The author's caveat leads to interesting questions about the nature of university teaching and the lecturer's role in deciding curriculum in terms of students' previous training and knowledge, and what they need and want to learn. Teaching the social anthropology of Europe without full discussions of the history, methods, theories, and dilemmas of professional anthropology today and in the past is simply not teaching the social anthropology of Europe.

So what was this author thinking when she wrote this book? In Chapter One she makes clear that the book is entitled *Appetites and Identities* because it celebrates the variety of tastes (in food, drink, family life, language and religion) and the variety of identities that can be found in western Europe (p. 1). She believes that anthropology helps to clarify many aspects of European life which would be puzzling without its findings. Her "main purpose" is to "show that western Europe contains many diverse cultures, which are not simply bounded by nation-states" (p. 3). She correctly points out that there are many areas of cultural continuity and diversity which transcend the limits of European states, and have done so for long periods of time, in some cases predating modern nation states. "Anthropologists," she notes, "have studied a range of diverse lifestyles all over Europe, and this book is a celebration of the multiple cultures and multiple populations of western Europe" (p. 3). In the rest of this review, I shall discuss some of the ways in which the author celebrates both anthropology and its perspectives on multiple cultures, appetites and identities.

This book uses a descriptive rather than an analytical approach to the writings of anthropologists, and it serves as an annotated bibliography of selected works of selected authors, drawn mostly from studies conducted in the Mediterranean, in southern rather than western Europe (in fact, more attention might usefully have been paid in this book to definitions of regional Europe, a subject of some significance in European Studies in British universities). Chapters Two and Three deal with food, production and identity. Chapter Four gives a brief introduction to anthropological studies of invasion, refugees, migrants and tourists. Chapter Five reviews anthropological studies in peripheral regions, while the next three chapters cover, in varying degrees, urban anthropology, political anthropology, and the anthropology of religion and ritual. The last two substantive chapters review some perspectives on sex and gender, and language and identity, in contemporary Europe. Overall, this is an impressive and welcome compendium of topics that have interested anthropologists in the past (for example, patronage and clientage are the principal focuses of the local politics section, and internal colonialism and periphery theory frame the regions chapter) and some which continue to concern anthropologists (for example, muted groups in society, and sex and gender role integration and segregation). But for every sensible descriptive overview of an anthropologist's work, the author also gives assessments of anthropology which are often misleading if not downright incorrect. A few examples of these often offhand remarks should give the flavour of what can optimistically be called an outdated or ignorant notion of contemporary social and cultural anthropology.

In introducing the notion that most of the anthropology of Europe has been conducted in marginal rural areas, Delamont concludes that "Anthropologists feel happier if their fieldwork site is in a remote place, away from civilisation and comfort" (p. 16). In an attempt to relate anthropological studies to the wider issues of European integration, Delamont introduces her chapter on food and identity with the comment that "The big division in the EEC is between those who live too far north to see lemon trees in blossom or to pick oranges at the roadside from those for whom citrus fruits are commonplace" (p. 19). After reviewing 1970s' critiques of Mediterranean anthropology, which lamented the dearth of urban studies, the author rather uncritically concludes that "Despite these calls for a more urban focus researchers still tend to choose small villages as research sites ... and do not

explain or justify their choices" (p. 107). She follows this statement with the indictment of selected village studies, and the perplexing criticism that the urban studies that have been conducted since the 1970s in Spain, her principal example, have tended to concentrate on large cities such as Barcelona and Seville (she cites seven studies) and have ignored small cities, such as Malaga, Toledo and Santander. In this chapter, and in most of the others, Delamont tends to review Southern or Mediterranean Europe, and apply her conclusions to all of Europe. As a result, Northern and Western European anthropology is seen to be focused on peripheral and marginal rural areas: "In each European country it is easier to find an account of life in a tiny village than in a provincial capital or major industrial centre" (p. 107).

Appetites and Identities is in most part an introduction to a social anthropology of Southern Europe of the 1970s or so. It is in serious need of ethnographic updating. Its treatment of ethnographic research in Ireland, the place and literature I know best in Europe, is woefully out of date, and mostly dependent on a book on dying peasant life in the West of Ireland which initiated years of academic and journalistic debate about the role of ethnographers and anthropology in modern Irish life, a debate ignored in this book. Since the 1970s, there have been as many studies done by anthropologists in Irish urban areas as in rural ones, and many of the so-called rural studies have been in large towns. None of this is noted in this book, possibly because it is unknown to the author, or because it weakens her argument. At any rate a book of the 1990s which purports to celebrate anthropological accounts of cultural diversity in today's Europe should be cognisant of the breadth and depth of ethnographic research which has taken place in the 1980s and 1990s. In fact, although this book presents a number of accurate and clear summaries of anthropological field studies in a variety of locales in Europe, thus "celebrating" a rather wide range of cultural experience in Europe's localities, it does a rather less comprehensive job in problematising the notion of local, regional and national identities (none of these types of identities, nor the term "identities" itself, is contained in the index).

It is not as if this book does not make an attempt to be up to date, or to make anthropology relevant to the interests and concerns of students of European society and culture. There are many references to and summaries of ethnographic studies conducted in Spain, France, Italy and Greece, many of which were published in the 1970s and 1980s. But instead of concentrating on these countries, or on Southern Europe as a region, the book takes on too ambitious an aim of summarising the accomplishments of the field of social anthropology throughout Europe, without engaging many of the theories and debates which drive the cited anthropological fieldwork (let alone that which is left out of this book). Delamont also tries to introduce many of her chapters by pointing out the significance of anthropological work to the understanding of aspects of the EEC [sic], and by framing the theme of her chapters through the introduction of parallel but often irrelevant discussions of developments in the European Union–as in, for example, her brief review of the significance of the Common Agricultural Policy in her chapter on food and identity, one paragraph of which actually begins with the trenchant claim that "Food and drink are central to the EEC" (p. 20). However, most of these tidbits on the EEC quickly become irrelevant, largely because Delamont does not include one reference in her book to any anthropological study of the EU, or its past manifestations as the European Community or the European Economic Community. There is a large and growing literature in anthropology on the local impact of EU ideas, images, and policies, which is actually surpassed in numbers of publications by anthropological studies of EU decision-makers in the European centres of policy-making. Thus, her attempt to make anthropology more important or relevant to her readers (see, for example, pp. 42-45) results in a series of red herrings, because the topic raised in the beginning of a chapter is not returned to, principally because none of the studies summarised have anything directly to do with the EU (and because no chapter contains a substantive conclusion; each ends abruptly with the suggestion of one publication as further reading).

There is one other curious turn in a very curious book. Although she attempts to avoid theoretical and methodological debates in anthropology, the author singles out at least one anthropologist for unnecessary criticism. In her warning about anthropologists "going native," she notes that, even if they return from the field, their work might be affected. "It is arguable, for example, that Herzfeld, whose many publications on Greece will be cited in this book, is so enamoured of Greece that he has lost his scholarly detachment" (p. 14). Elsewhere, Delamont remarks that Herzfeld's book *Ours Once More* is "written in a dense and difficult style which cannot be recommended to novice anthropologists" (p. 66). Why this book out of all the works cited is mentioned for its unsuitability for novice anthropologists is unclear. And as Delamont has noted, her book is not intended for students of anthropology, but for university students who want a brief and uncomplicated summary of what the social anthropology of Europe is all about.

Appetites and Identities is uncomplicated, long, and provides an unsatisfactory introduction to anthropology in and of Europe. Because it contains a good if slightly outdated bibliography and good summaries of many of the works cited, it is a book which could be recommended to those few novice students of European culture who want a painless and unchallenging introduction to some anthropological perspectives on Europe. Overall, however, this book has missed the opportunity to present an up-to-date and theoretically informed introduction to the social anthropology of Western Europe, an introduction which could be adopted by anthropologists and others as an undergraduate textbook. I am an anthropologist, and I resent the way our discipline is reduced and simplified in this book. I suggest that many, if not most, social anthropologists in Europe, and those elsewhere who conduct research in Europe, will be as perplexed, puzzled, and repulsed by its versions of social anthropology as Delamont's students have been by the social anthropology she once taught them.

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