

From the editors

The current issue of AEER is composed of articles from Polish anthropologists only – and there is a reason behind it. It is a form of showing support to Polish colleagues who have been fighting for months for the proper place of ethnology and cultural-social anthropology on the map of Polish academia. During the recent reform, the Minister of Science and Higher Education canceled anthropology as a separate discipline, combining it with religious studies and cultural studies and thus creating “culture and religion sciences”. Making the identity of the discipline and its methodological independence their main concern, Polish anthropologists have attempted to change the minds of the decision-makers, using the support of the international environment. Probably, most of our Readers have already signed one of the petitions written by international associations and institutions and addressed to the abovementioned Minister. Even though the current situation of Polish anthropology may induce interesting reflections on the influence of institutional decisions of the officials on the course of academia, as well as relations of power between the state officials and academics, for the interested party, namely the academics, this results in everyday difficulties in doing research in a responsible and reliable way, according to the methodological assumptions that they would like to follow faithfully.

The current issue presents some research results of the youngest generation of Polish anthropologists – students who are at the start of their adventure in anthropology. Four texts in the first section describe recent research by a group of students, conducted among East Poland farmers, and present interesting phenomena related to intensive structural changes, introduced by the EU several years ago. In addition to these texts, there is also included an article of a much more experienced anthropologist, professor Tomasz Rakowski, which presents a study on the border of anthropology and art, describing an experiment called “Tear Dealer”. Additionally, the issue contains an interview with professor Agnieszka Halemba, an especially engaging researcher cooperating with some of the European anthropology centers.

With this last item, we continue a series started in the previous issue, which collects interviews with anthropologists working in Eastern Europe on current topics of interest. If there is in your milieu someone whom you would like to introduce to a wider public, someone whom you admire and who inspires you – please feel encouraged to talk to them and send us the interview. We started with Katherine Verdery, but we are keen to learn about those anthropologists who are

known in their local circles or those who have recently started their careers and are not yet widely recognized on the international stage. As Agnieszka Halemba shows in this issue, there is often a language barrier for those whose mother tongue is not English: sometimes we do not know them because only they publish in their own languages, although their research and careers are well worth being known. We believe that thanks to such interviews our Readers can not only get to know interesting anthropologists but also understand the specifics of practicing the discipline across countries which differ in their academic and institutional traditions. In many countries of Eastern Europe, ethnology has undergone massive methodological changes in the recent decades, which is clearly visible in academic resumes. Both the research topics and the way they are being conducted have undergone many changes, experienced by local academics.

Relatedly, we are seeking to expand our book reviews section to include books published in languages other than English (reviews will still be published in English). If you have an idea for a book to review, in English or otherwise please contact Emily Channell-Justice, Book Reviews Editor.

Amanda Krzyworzeka

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