

affection'. Holtedahl has successfully assembled a nuanced story that instructs without projecting any assumptions about polygyny's 'otherness'. By privileging the women's voices as they recount the dynamics, woes, fears, and delights of living in a polygamous marriage, we cannot help but see striking parallels between their predicament and serial monogamous arrangements in the West. Al Hajji and his wives, as with humans elsewhere, are implicated in the business of forging 'affective' relationships circumscribed, as it were, by the forces of religion and tradition.

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POLTORAK, MIKE. *The healer and the psychiatrist*. DVD/PAL, 74 mins, colour. Watertown, Mass.: DER, 2019. £320.00 (institutional use)

*The healer and the psychiatrist* focuses on issues related to cross-cultural mental health and how well suited Western biomedical frameworks can be in treating indigenous subjectivities. Mike Poltorak's intricate film is set in the Kingdom of Tonga, where Emeline Lolohea, a rural healer, and Dr Mapa Puloka, the one psychiatrist in the country, offer different kinds of care. Its handsome and absorbing narratives tell a layered story about Emeline and Dr Puloka, the people they treat, and, not least, the filmmaker and his research. What is more, the movie fosters dialogue between healer and psychiatrist, and the contrary institutional frameworks to which they subscribe.

As a mother, wife, and lay preacher in a Wesleyan church, Emeline is deeply embedded in Tongan society. Well regarded for her healing powers, she has evident charisma and powerful oratorical skills. Like other senior women, she is a monolingual Tongan speaker who lives in humble circumstances. Careful about her hair, she dresses in formal waist-mats when she walks with her children to church. The plants she infuses into the medicinal liquid with which she treats headaches, fatigue, visions, numbness, and so on, she gathers from land she owns. Many illnesses can be treated in the local hospital, but when medical treatment fails to bring relief, she assumes that interaction with local spirits (*tevolo*) is the cause.

While most of the documentary focuses on Emeline's work, it also features Dr Puloka, who treats patients in a psychiatric unit of an urban hospital on the main island. We see scenes of his syncretic practice that include assembling patients around a kava bowl and having them sing together. Dr Puloka, who speaks English,

discusses and assesses the efficacy of treatments, his support for traditional healers, and his understanding of the role of spirits in diagnosis.

Mike Poltorak is at pains to encourage dialogue between the psychiatrist and the healer, which culminates in the case of Tevita, Emeline's husband, who is a large, senior man with a broad face, and a mane of curly, yellowish hair. When his badly infected knee does not heal, and he becomes bed-ridden, he finds little relief in hospital. With growing concern, Emeline suggests that Poltorak take her daughter and marry her off 'overseas' so she can remit money to pay for medical bills. Instead, he approaches Dr Alani Tangitau, then visiting kin on holiday, and shows him the video of Tevita's knee, which, the doctor says, 'should have been drained'.

Poltorak then plays the video he took of the doctor sceptically discussing Tongan cures to Emeline and Tevita. 'He didn't understand my view', Tevita complains. 'I left [the hospital] ... because there wasn't anything he could do for my leg'. At the doctor's request, two nurses pay a house call to check Tevita's knee. One of them politely asks him to go back to hospital, upon seeing how swollen the abscess has become. As they walk to the car, Emeline gives each woman a taro plant as a departure gift. Confident that Tevita is in good hands, Poltorak prepares to return home to the United Kingdom.

Several years later, however, Tevita has died. Even though Dr Tangitau dismissed Tongan medicine, Tevita did not trust anyone else, so he never went back to the hospital because the doctor had finished his leave and gone home. Devastated at the news of the death, Poltorak studies photos of the funeral on Facebook. To make matters worse, Emeline's daughter also dies. Poltorak decides to return to Tonga to pay his respects. Emeline takes him to visit the graves, where she informs their ghosts that Poltorak has returned, now with a partner and a young son in tow. As the documentary ends, Emeline goes on treating people and fulfilling her lay leadership role in the church while Dr Puloka continues to gather patients around a kava bowl where they sing together. Poltorak once more takes his leave, feeling respect and esteem for both people and treatment practices.

*The healer and the psychiatrist* succeeds on a number of levels. It raises useful questions about cross-cultural mental health. It conveys a complicated relationship between Tongan and biomedical systems of diagnosis and cure, one that is ambiguous rather than idealized. It offers several sensitive ethnographic portraits of illness

and suffering in Tonga. The filmmaker's role in the story is unobtrusive yet valuable. In all, I would say that the movie is a visual pleasure, tinged with melancholy, that could serve as an excellent resource in courses on psychological anthropology, cross-cultural psychiatry, fieldwork methods, and the contemporary Pacific.

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## Food, consumption, and hunger

BERTA, PÉTER. *Materializing difference: consumer culture, politics, and ethnicity among Romanian Roma*. xviii, 372 pp., map, tables, illus., bibliogr. Toronto: Univ. Press, 2019. £23.99 (paper)

In *Materializing difference*, Péter Berta has constructed a rich and intricate depiction of an overlooked dimension of Romani life: the symbolic elaboration of prestige objects. Anthropological work on Romani lives has often disregarded their material engagements. When reading ethnographies of Romani communities, it is easy to get the impression that they are completely (and even deliberately) uninterested in the tangible world of things around them. This approach is not possible in the Romanian context of which Berta writes: the Gabor Roma he works with invest tremendous amounts of concern, time, pride, worry, and money on small antique silver beakers and tankards, manufactured by non-Roma since the eighteenth century. These beakers and tankards, unavoidably reminiscent of Kula objects, have Gabor histories and biographies of ownership, and it is these that determine their value and their desirability. Non-Roma, on the other hand, see the beakers primarily as quaint antiques. The value of beakers, as determined by Gabor and by non-Roma, is therefore very different, with Gabor willing to pay many times over the non-Roma market price of a beaker. Beakers and tankards embody the upright behaviour of previous owners, their adherence to Gabor standards of manly conduct, and should ideally not be sold on but instead remain within the patrilineal group. The prestige of individual men, kin groups, and local communities is intertwined with the possession of well-known beakers with distinguished pasts.

Berta convincingly describes a Gabor value system that intersects with but is separate from that of non-Roma, one that is not static but in a fluid process of ongoing change. He places his analysis within the context of postsocialist

transformations, also encompassing present-day trends in consumption patterns that lead younger generations of Gabor to be sceptical of their elders' obsession with these objects. Likewise, Berta does not restrict his research to the place of beakers and tankards within Gabor communities. He follows the objects as they are bought from non-Roma antique dealers or at auctions, and pawned or even sold to Cărhara Roma (a better option for a Gabor family in need of money than the loss of face involved in a sale to another Gabor). Berta gives a very substantial amount of space to the analysis of the place of beakers in the lives of Cărhara Roma, who value them as much as Gabor do and use them in complex ways in their marriage transactions, for example. In the process, Berta produces a revealing account of how the interactions among Roma from different groups develop. In this sense, as he explains, his is a multi-sited ethnography, and I appreciate what this approach brings to the study, not just of Romani lives, but of contemporary European society. By the same token, I believe that the book makes a positive contribution to the anthropological understanding of prestige objects among marginalized communities more broadly, and I do wish that Berta had argued more forcefully for the clear relevance of his material for these larger debates, engaging the intertwining of marginality and materiality more directly. Whilst reading the book, I wondered about what the material lives of Gabor Roma are like beyond their preoccupation with prestige objects. What does their concern with beakers tell us about their relation to the (material) world at large?

Berta's analysis of the place of beakers in Gabor life centres on what he calls 'Roma politics'. These develop primarily among men across a variety of symbolic arenas in which the desire for masculine prestige and respectability (what he calls the 'politics of difference') stands in tension with the will to sustain a communal ethos of harmony and sociability. Berta argues that his depiction of this tension contrasts with earlier anthropological analyses of Roma communities which, he says, over-emphasized egalitarianism, and also depicted Roma in presentist terms, as living in the moment and disregarding the past. In fact, much earlier work on Romani communities took great care to disentangle the multiple hierarchies and inequalities that complicate struggles around competitive equality (a well-worn anthropological concept that might have helped propel Berta's analysis), and also discussed the nuances of Romanies' complex engagements with the past. A more attentive reading of the literature, including recent works