to that category, especially because of its virulent repression (105). Her recovery of the too readily abandoned concept of racism in Europe is particularly interesting with respect to the hostile reception Essed’s work received from the European academic establishment (13). Despite these attacks, Essed is unwa­vering in her effort to convince us that

it is important to combine bonds formed on the basis of common racial and cultural experiences with transnational and transcultural politics and strategies of cooperation. This means making room for the power that emerges from sharing cultures and experiences and for the power that emerges from drawing from one’s own specific cultural or personal characteristics within such cooperation. The new Europe will be a Europe of cultural variation, and women will be the pioneers in the transition; our mode of living will not be one of tolerating difference, but of accepting diversity. (118)

CARMEN FAYMONVILLE
Loyola University of Chicago

Works Cited


This is a very interesting collection of essays which explore ways to move beyond the traditional framing concepts in anthropology—the homology between culture, people, and place. Spatial metaphors continue to underlie most writing in the social sciences, thereby reinforcing the ideological constructions of individual and collective identity—the dominant cultural-spatial one being the nation-state. The question of culture and identity is approached by looking at the process of social and cultural displacement, mostly in the context of the relationship between the First World and Third World. They offer a transcultural analysis focused on different sites of interaction—Maghrebs in French cities, Mexicans on the U.S. borderlands, European tourists in Bali, women’s local against metropolitan knowledges in India, Palestinians in Israel, Native American resistances, immigrants in the U.S. courts, and African-American autobiography.

The collective thrust of these pieces is to retain the ethnographic project and to explore people’s historically situated lived experience by studying “third
time-spaces.” In an effort to shift the position of ethnographer and subject of study, the strategies include doing “home” work instead of “field” work. The methodological point of departure of all these pieces is subjectivity, the way we experience the world and give it meaning. The whole issue of experience, construction, and Poetics of writing is addressed in Alarcón “Frontera: Inscribing Gyneties”, Dorine Kondo “The Narrative Production of ‘Home,’ Community and Political Identity in Asian American Theater,” and Smar Lavie “Blowups in the Borderzones: Third World Israeli Authors”.

Chandler explores Du Bois’s methodology of the “autobiography of a race concept,” which involved the interrogation of his own subjectivity to explore the historical specifics of the emergence of the “African American or Negro subject.” The radical nature of this methodology, especially in its time, has implications for the whole idea of experiencing modernity. However, the self-reflexive thrust of this methodology resists the reduction of the subject. As Chandler argues for Du Bois, the subject is neither the beginning nor the end of historicity, because without the subject historicity would have no example of itself and hence no meaning.

Sarris writes on the Bole Maru cult and Californian Indian culture from a similar position of being inside and writing out. It involves an autobiographical exploration of the production of knowledge about Native American culture. Alarcón explores self-inscription as the “focal point of cultural consciousness and social change” in the writing of Gloria Anzaldúa on the “borderland of the US and Mexico” and her efforts to reinscribe the feminine in this domain. Kondo explores the theme of home, the constant reminder of one’s ineradicable foreignness and the question about “where is home” (where do you come from; where’s your home?), in Asian-American plays. This piece explores the dramatic writing of lives to produce narratives for Asian-American audiences to recognize themselves in new ethnographies which write themselves into existence.

The context of these pieces is the in-between, the margins, the third timespace. The terms to describe this space seem to be constantly in need of renewal (or if not, they are used in multiples just to emphasize their fluidity, mobility, and plasticity). Diaspora is one term used to describe the fragmentary everyday “out-of-country, even out of language” experience. Borders is another term for “this jumble of daily practices and its textual representations” (14), and borderzones is a term to describe the in-between as a site of creative creolization but also a zone of loss, alienation, pain, and death.

Borders and diasporas are the frames of analysis. They are not just distinct sites to move between but are already culturally hybridized sites. They represent contested domains where national and transnational cultures are structuring the tenure of social life and the contingencies of experience.

Lavie explores the border and diaspora through a complex weaving of individual subjectivities and their positionality in contemporary Israel. His project is an exploration of the writing position of different academics in Israel looking at the conflicting identities and disjunctions between diaspora and exile for