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Jakimovska, Iliana. 2009. *The body: An Ethnological and Anthropological Study*. Skopje: Slovo. ISBN 978-9989-103-76-6

Facing the challenge of composing a review on ‘The body: An ethnological and anthropological study’, which is Iliana Jakimovska’s Ph.D. dissertation, I could begin by proclaiming my previous encounter with this text; this is our second meeting. I believe our previous meeting would be worth mentioning (considering the fact that in the past the book passed me by with closed covers, becoming a present to a friend’s boyfriend), for its instant-attraction towards a passer-by. The promise of a scientific view on something that we are all marked by, as a limitation and empowerment, promptly qualifies this book as a treasure for any curious owner’s private collection.

From the very beginning, the author bluntly represents the intersections she encounters starting the adventure. “Is the motivation for academic form of writing on something that deeply concerns our emotions and lives, wrong, or on the contrary, in some cases the *only* possible choice”? Transparently submitting the two main sources on which this book is based, both flowing collaterally adding each other value (the accumulated knowledge of the body and the physical, as well as lived, survived and exchanged life experience) creates a clear image of the following structure of the contents. Speaking about two so-called “methodological acts of violence”, which this study must undertake in order to limit the vast field of interest that comprises the body and the physical in ethnology and anthropology- Jakimovska attempts to enlighten us concerning the dangers of losing the scientific context. This is also important for achieving satisfactory level of analytic approach.

In the second chapter “Background of the body research in social sciences and relevant contemporary theories” an attempt has been made to chronologically expose the theoretical concepts specific for Western culture referring to the body. The author notices the interest for the body and the physical in the western philosophy is always within more general analysis of the idea of the human. The duality in conceptualization of the human nature and the exclusiveness among the ideas of physical being and *differentia specifica* is emphasized here. In the comprehensive penetration, beginning with Aristotle and Plato’s especially important points of view, Descartes’ duality paradigm between *res cogitans* and *res extensa* is a crucial turning point.

In the next part “The body as a construct: nominating of the physical in the Macedonian folk culture” we can find the previously mentioned categorization based on the principle of opposition. Avoiding the nature of reduction, which is imposed by the four subtitles (Male versus female body (gender nomination), Young versus old body (age nomination), Healthy versus ill body, Beautiful versus ugly body (analysis of the criteria of ‘beautiful’ in the folk culture), Jakimovska uses an extensive ethnographic material. “The ideal order will not bear exceptions, although life is filled with it- it is real, not ideal”. This takes us away of the potentially abstract theory on the topic and gives us varie-

ty which makes “The body: An ethnological and anthropological study” available to the readers not specifically focused on ethnology and anthropology.

In the fourth segment, the focus is placed on “The punishment in Macedonian folk culture”. This part is about the very concept of punishment, its etymology in Slavic and other languages, the implications of some forms that take us in several directions (the nature of pain, the concept of compensation, and the notion of “purification”). She is placing the Foucault thesis of “the change of the punishment paradigm in Europe” as a model of comparison with the legal changes in the Balkan context and the punishment according to Macedonian custom law.

As a conclusion, the author reminds us of the few basic motives that would be a driving force in creating a study of this type. The primary quality of ‘The body: an ethnological and anthropological study’ is the tendency of fulfilling the void in treating the body in Macedonian ethnology and anthropology. According to the author, the work done worldwide in this field of interest is not even close to its potentials. Besides, this piece is contemporary in context of some global tendency of maintaining “theoretical link among the biophysical and socio-cultural physicality”. Therefore I believe that anyone prepared to consider the body as a socio-cultural construct defined by a biophysical lottery, for the way of completion of this study – at the end would give standing ovation.

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