acts and identity. It is in this key that she struggles to interpret the Securitate's informative reports, collected evidence, and operative directives and integrate them into her own field notes, diary entries, and letters. It is also in this key that she strives to know, to learn, and to obtain closure in speaking with those who informed on her and with the Securitate officers responsible for her case. All these identities are generally maintained and protectively marked in the book: the author as a young anthropologist, her several doppelgängers talking through Securitate's voices from the file, her present reflexive self as seasoned scholar.

By investigating one of its most elusive yet powerful apparatuses, the Securitate, Verdery creates an enthralling ethnography of the Communist state. Populated by a secretive species, the *securiști*, it functioned by producing files. When someone raised suspicions, surveillance began with a specific kind of file, the DUI, *dosar de urmărire informativă* or "dossier of informative pursual." Then various individuals were co-opted, cajoled, and coerced into becoming informers to contribute material to the file, which could develop into several files, following distinct leads and different territorial jurisdictions. Securitate operatives worked continuously at its content, which was transcribed, interpreted, corrected, purged, and rewritten. Mirroring the Cold War's global division, the Securitate's worldview comprised two categories of persons: the country's friends and its evil enemies. The latter needed to be detected, controlled, expelled, or even eliminated when they proved too dangerous. They could also be used to unwittingly and unknowingly contribute to the whole surveillance enterprise. Thus, despite being unmasked as a spy, Verdery was permitted to stay and to come back repeatedly, presumably because the ethnographic data she was collecting on the local population were useful to the Securitate.

My Life as a Spy will teach anthropology, sociology, and history students much about methodology, and it is exemplary in exposing the dilemmas inherent in that methodology. Anthropological knowledge is possible only by building a common space of signification between the researcher and the Other, which requires enormous effort, as the few existing candid and reflexive reports of fieldwork experience teach us. Verdery's striking account expands such scrutiny through several objectifying moments. Confronting her informers and meeting her case operatives were grueling, yet they allowed her a certain distance from which to decenter her perspective. While she ponders the various ways that the Securitate altered her relationships, her trust, her professional career, and her life, Verdery's stance is unswerving. The wisdom she imparts in this engrossing and thrilling memoir is that the ethnographer is her own work instrument. She should not hold back.

The Art of Life and Death: Radical Aesthetics and Ethnographic Practice. *Andrew Irving*. Chicago: Hau Books, 2017. 264 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/amet.12739

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To live a life in the knowledge of death is an existential conundrum that we all, as mortal beings, have to face. Yet can we really understand, let alone sense, the uncertainty and contingency that are part of a life close to death when we do not have an acute perspective on such a life? How can we describe what it means to live near death—especially when we are not so close to our (biological) finitude yet?

The Art of Life and Death is based on long-term ethnographic collaboration with persons, many of them artists, living with HIV/AIDS in New York City. They consented to share their lives as they experienced illness and approached death—or so they thought. But unlike many dominant academic and public discourses, this book does not merely describe or theorize these lives in terms of suffering, inability, and distress. Yes, the reader witnesses the deep existential fear, confusion, and pain of those persons confronted with their own mortality. Yet the book represents their courage, resilience, and wonderment as well as their surprise of reclaimed, continued life resulting from the antiretroviral treatment that by the turn of the millennium transformed their terminal illness into a chronic condition, meaning that they had to learn "to live again" (66).

For Andrew Irving, it is perfectly clear that there is no direct access to the lived experiences of other persons. Nevertheless, he found ways to engage with and learn about the inner worlds of his research participants as they emerged from that period when they lived with the ever-present possibility of death. The result—an experimental *experience-near* ethnography of life and death—is an exceptional achievement that gets under your skin from beginning to end.

Living with the uncertainty of illness involves the continuous making and remaking of one's life, which is not only a complex and mutable act but first and foremost a creative one to which the book's title refers. A second meaning of the art of life lies in the inclusion of the research participants' artworks in the (practice of) ethnography and, with this, the close attention to their aesthetic expressions while facing mortality and experiencing bodily vulnerability. Irving's sensory-aesthetic approach helps us engage with their social, economic, and moral expectations, their perceptions of time and finitude, as well as their alterity and new perspectives on the world. It is in this spirit that we learn about living with HIV/AIDS. But more than that, *The Art of Life and Death* offers a much broader exploration and, I would

claim, a deeper understanding of "what it means to be a mortal being in a world of perpetual change" (31).

This is made possible through an outstanding interweaving of theoretical critique and aspiration, collaborative ethnography, and methodological experimentation and innovation. Introducing the notion of "an imperiled anthropology," Irving advocates an anthropology that "puts itself in greater *peril* by venturing beneath the observable and audible surfaces of social life" (70) in order to gain a better understanding of people's inner expressions, dialogues, and imaginative lifeworlds. His call stems from his critique that inner worlds are rarely explored in anthropological research despite the fact that the human propensity to engage in internal dialogue and expression is foundational for experience and action and, hence, is an "integral part of what makes us human" (71). Focusing on inner lifeworlds becomes especially important when studying the lived experiences of terminal illness, because people mostly live through its diverse dimensions through ongoing internal conversations as they struggle with such questions as, Why me? What should I do?

Each chapter therefore highlights from a different angle—historical, material, political, confessional, phenomenological, aesthetic, and ironic—the imaginative lifeworlds and inner expressions of Irving's research participants. Through collaborative approaches and the coproduction of knowledge, the book shows how they navigate the challenges of living with HIV/AIDS, which often involves a reorientation of priorities, an unstable body, and a changing sense of self. The strength of Irving's ethnographic practice lies in his efforts to experiment with innovative methods, such as the walking fieldwork that was an attempt by Irving and one of his collaborators, Albert, to combine walking, narration (voice recording), and photography to recap Albert's inner dialogue after he received his diagnosis, while retracing his journey to the clinic and back home almost 20 years later. Another research method juxtaposed his collaborators' artworks alongside their life histories in order to understand their changing perceptions and inner experiences through the art they produced during periods of illness, stability, crisis, and uncertainty. Throughout the six chapters, Irving shows how art and the senses can be used in fieldwork to reveal people's complex inner worlds and create dialogues. Moreover, he shows that fieldwork itself, like art, is a sensory-aesthetic activity that opens up imagination and communication.

On a more abstract level, each chapter starts the discussion on perceptions of finitude and time by synthesizing philosophical, phenomenological, and ethnographic approaches to these perceptions. Transcending our disciplinary boundaries is, according to Irving, necessary and entails a critical rethinking of our anthropological knowledge, especially when researching the role of lived experience and inner expression. It is sometimes disappointing that he fails to bring the discussion back to anthropological theorizing—for example, about the value and meaning of life in relation to capitalism. That said, I totally agree with him that the question of how to live a life with death is more an ethnographic and methodological issue than a theoretical one.

The Art of Life and Death contributes to our understanding of life in the face of death and to the anthropology of finitude and time. This is primarily made possible through Irving's development of unconventional fieldwork methods, which makes the book inspiring, essential reading for anyone interested in new ethnographic methods to more deeply access the complex inner dimensions of human experience.

Paid: Tales of Dongles, Checks, and Other Money Stuff. *Bill Maurer* and *Lana Swartz*, eds. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017. 320 pp.
Money at the Margins: Global Perspectives on Technology, Financial Inclusion, and Design. *Bill Maurer*, *Smoki Musaraj*, and *Ivan Small*, eds. New York: Berghahn, 2018. 334 pp.

DOI: 10.1111/amet.12740

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Paid and *Money at the Margins* are seminal books—the first organized efforts toward an ethnographically informed study of payment systems. Recent rapid advances in financial technology have diversified payment infrastructures with important implications for how money is valued and transformed or even replaced as a medium of exchange. Emerging payment structures also shape who has access to such forms of exchange across and within national borders, and so we can think of them in terms of inclusion, exclusion, and power. Disruptive digital innovations potentially enable vast unbanked populations to gain access to global financial systems, but the consequences of such inclusion are as yet unclear.

Meanwhile, new sharing economy platforms empower alternative spaces for value creation. Who profits and who loses in such emerging exchange networks are still open questions. These two edited collections explore these issues by focusing on everyday practices, socialities, and materialities around money movement pathways. A sequential examination of the volumes would enable the reader to gain familiarity with historical and comparative perspectives on payment systems and technologies and allow for an informed application of that knowledge to the topics of inclusion and technology design in the financial systems of the Global South.