Eriksen, Thomas Hylland, and Marek Jakoubek, eds. *Ethnic groups and boundaries today. A legacy of fifty years*. Routledge, 2019. 220 pages; ISBN 9781138617650.

This slim and rather inconspicuous green book published in the Routledge *Research in migration and ethnic relations* series might represent, if read carefully, a new trigger in ethnicity and nationalism studies. A trigger that is, in a sense, both radical and conservative. The volume, edited by social anthropologists and ethnicity scholars Thomas Hylland Eriksen and Marek Jakoubek, is not a simple celebration of Fredrik Barth's *Ethnic groups and boundaries* and its half-century anniversary; nor is it a mere appreciation of its "monumental legacy". It contextualises "the classic", shows the numerous ways respected scholars engaged with it in their theorising and contemplates the relevance of some of the insights for the investigation today. However, it also uses Barth's legacy to show that innovative thinking on ethnicity could be revived by paying some attention to old texts.

The volume, the second book-length evaluation of "Barth 1969" legacy in ethnic studies, following the 1994 *The anthropology of ethnicity: beyond "Ethnic groups and boundaries"* edited by Hans Vermeulen and Cora Govers, opens with an introduction written by the editors, which offers a brief discussion of *Ethnic groups and boundaries* including the content of individual chapters, an account on the context of the publication with particular emphasis on critical texts that already contained some of the key arguments presented by Barth, such as Edmund R. Leach, Max Gluckman, Abner Cohen, Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan or Michael Moerman. The introduction also lists a number of important issues within ethnic studies that emerged after the publication, some of which might still draw upon Barth. Instead of an afterword, editors decided to include an interview with Gunnar Haaland, the contributor to the original edited volume as well as 'a major source of inspiration for Barth's thinking about ethnicity' (p. 187).

The core of the collection consists of thirteen short essays by authors selected based on their contribution to research on ethnic relations: Anthony P. Cohen, Michael Hechter, Katherine Verdery, Ulf Hannerz, Judith Okely, Michael Herzfeld, Valery Tishkov, Jeremy MacClancy, Steven Vertovec, Pnina Werbner and Rogers Brubaker. Two essays are written by the editors. The individual chapters vary in their focus. Some authors, such as Anthony P. Cohen, return to some common points of critical reading of Barth's approach and argue against, for instance, the "tactical" view of identity and preference of performance over the "substance of culture". Werbner and Eriksen rethink the theory of boundaries when considering "multiple" and "creole" identities. Some essays show the relevance of the 1969 text to the discussion on ethnonational ideologies and nation-state whose emergence leads to "self-reification", and this process is only further powered by the rise of neoliberal ideology, as Herzfeld shows.

Eriksen and Jakoubek's *Ethnic groups and boundaries today* also portrays Barth as a human being, as an anthropologist who set out on numerous field trips and, as Hechter put it, considered fieldwork a part of "scientific enterprise", as a real-life author who was surprised by the attention *Ethnic groups and boundaries* attracted and who had many other research interests. In other words, the book presents the text and the author as actu-

ally existing within certain circumstances and theoretical perspectives. At first glance, such a contribution would seem modest. However, when we realise the mythical status of Barth and his "Introduction" in ethnic studies and the empty signifier "Barth 1969" referring not to the actual text but to many more or less vague beliefs about its arguments (see Jakoubek & Tishkov), we begin to understand the merit of the publication under review. It is radical in that it calls for revision of the classics of ethnic studies, and it is conservative in that it invites us to re-read and engage with important texts of the discipline. As Jakoubek says: 'We could celebrate the anniversary of Barth's study by a variation on a kind of Husserlian *epoché*, that is, by bracketing all the judgements we have toward "Barth 1969" and by reading the original text.' (p. 180) Only when we actually read the text can we appreciate its merits, such as Barth's ability to ask "the right question" that is "a question that opens up new avenues of research" (Hechter, p. 33).

Nevertheless, the most significant Jakoubek's argument points to the problem we have not only with the key authors but also with the very central concept of ethnicity – a problem that causes the dead ends we seem to encounter within the studies of ethnicity. Jakoubek decidedly manages to prove that ethnic scholars keep resigning from the fundamental principles of social science and assume that what we call ethnicity is a phenomenon we can find in the social reality "out there", and then seek to interpret it. However, ethnicity is a concept, an analytical tool, we as scholars invent and should be clear about what we are doing when employing it – in the very same manner as with "Barth 1969" and many other texts and authors we ritually refer to. This edited volume invites us to cross the boundaries we build for ourselves by such ritualistic thinking.

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Giraldo Herrera, César E. 2018. *Microbes and Other Shamanic Beings*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. 274 pp. Hb.: 93.59 €. ISBN: 9783319713175.

In recent years, anthropologists have growingly sought to engage with the study of microbial worlds in order to regenerate anthropological attention to interaction, bodies, and ecologies. Cutting across the long-standing divide between social and biological anthropology, emerging trends in microbial anthropology challenge distinctions between material bodies and immaterial experience by studying humans and consciousness as ecologies or environments themselves.

The book *Microbes and Other Shamanic Beings* adds an imaginative contribution to this debate by exploring how Amerindian shamanism might be commensurable with microbiology. It suggests that shamanism, in particular, might afford unsuspected diplomatic means to interact with microbial worlds, at a time in which the classical Western antibiotic stance is being increasingly challenged. The author's central thesis is that what shamans see in their visions is very similar to what microbial ecology addresses and that microbiology thereby provides a better translation for shamanism than symbolic anthropological interpretations. The book, the first of a trilogy, develops over twelve short chapters, which address the history of medicine, the anthropology of consciousness, the anthropology of Amerindian perspectivism, but also fields including neuropsychology and the physiology of vision.

To allow a dialogue between shamanism and microbiology to emerge, the author starts by rejecting both neuropsychological and traditional anthropological accounts of shamanism. Whereas the first insist on how psychedelic drugs short-circuit the brain, implying that whatever is experienced in these circumstances is not real, the latter reduces shamanic beings to matters of faith, of belief in spirits. To Giraldo Herrera, translating shamanic beings as immaterial entities results in framing Animic ontologies as an antagonist to materialist science, and fails to acknowledge the living and social qualities that Amerindians attributed to them.

Several sections of the book are dedicated to the examination of shamanic visions, not as a source of delusion or spiritualism but as a source of knowledge. Surprisingly, instead of ethnographically addressing the situated practices through which this knowledge is performed, these are substantiated with a review of early missionary accounts and Nahuatl codices, in which we find that shamanic descriptions of beings like *zemes* share much with contemporary understandings of microbes. Indeed, shamans see these beings through entoptic visions – a range of visual phenomena whose source is within the eye itself. This suggests that what they see are not hallucinations, but actual microbes and blood cells. Amerindian shamans developed techniques for enhancing the perception of these beings, and substances like *ayahuasca* or *peyotl* foster these visions.

To the author, shamanism also resembles microbiology is its interpretation of these beings. Indeed, Amerindian ontologies relate them to processes of fermentation or putrefaction and regard them as pathogens that inflict certain diseases. Furthermore, they suggest that these beings cooperate and communicate as they inhabit our bodies and environments and affect their properties, which is similar to what microbiology has taught us

about microbes. Hence, Animic ontologies do not naively attribute mind qualities to inert objects but acknowledge the ecological complexity of these beings, just like microbiology does in the West.

However, to Giraldo Herrera, there is more than accidental similarities between microbiology and shamanism: they also appear to be historically linked. Whereas the history of science describes microbiology as a science that emerged within the modern West, we should regard it as having emerged out of a syncretic process: Western medicine veered away from humoral medicine thanks to botanic and medical knowledge acquired through colonial enterprise. This was notably done through the adaptation of Amerindian knowledge about syphilis, a disease probably imported into Europe from the Americas after the initial encounter. As Amerindian treatments and interpretations for these diseases were translated by Europeans, they became an "ontological scaffold" to the first theories of contagion, which would later lead to the development of modern microbiology. The book mostly introduces the latter as a set of facts, with only general details on how its related forms of expertise work in practice.

The author then makes the case that because microbiology is related to shamanism at its origins, it emerged as a syncretic ontology of relations. This is why, to him, the ontology of microbiology is undoubtedly naturalistic, but not in the reductionist sense, insofar as it describes highly specific and dynamic ecological communities of microbiota, produced through the history of interactions between human bodies, microbes, and environments. Because of this, it provides a better ontology than anthropology to set up a dialogue with Amerindian ontologies, which, through interaction with shamanic beings, also define humans and the world through interrelation rather than isolation.

Throughout the book, Giraldo Herrera sets out a productive debate with the ontological turn literature. He sees it as having insisted too much on the incommensurability of ontologies and observes that ontological turn scholars often assume that the decolonisation of thought should be based on non-biological understandings of the body and environment. To the author, anthropologists should instead seek synergies and commensurabilities, and take up the role of diplomats that translate between ontologies rather than oppose them. Translation is here understood in a Latourian sense of forging alliances between different actants, which makes the proposal reminiscent of the new-materialist literature – notably Stengers' work on scientific diplomacy, with which the book does not engage.

The book impresses by the breadth of its scope, the diverse literature it builds on, and the innovative bridges it establishes with research areas that have often been off-putting to social anthropologists. The hypothesis it explores is bold and imaginative, and it most certainly adds a new voice to microbial anthropology. At the same time, anthropologists might find that the lack of attention to the actual practices of both shamanism and microbiology hinders the argument. The book sometimes feels like it needs to reify shamanism and microbiology as conceptual apparatuses, so as to then seek commensurability, which contradicts the claim of not taking the natural sciences as a monolithic ontology in order to avoid reductionism.

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Yoneyama, Shoko. 2019. *Animism in Contemporary Japan: Voices for the Anthropocene from Post-Fukushima Japan.* Abingdon: Routledge. xi + 250 pp. Hb.: £115.00. ISBN: 9781138228030; Ebook.: £20.00. ISBN: 9781315393902.

From the mid-1950s, people living in fishing villages around Minamata in western Japan began dying terrible deaths from mercury poisoning traced to wastewater from a factory in the town. Thousands of people remain affected by one of the world's worst criminal cases of industrial pollution. The Minamata incident provides the starting point for this new book by sociologist Shoko Yoneyama. Given that another awful case of pollution began at Fukushima in March 2011, how are we to understand and respond to such horrors? This book analyses four Japanese intellectuals, three of whom have been directly involved with Minamata. In all four cases, the author Yoneyama argues that "animism" has formed the basis of their responses to Minamata and other crises of modernity.

This volume is published in Routledge's *Contemporary Japan Series*, but the author insists that her aim is not to 'describe Japanese culture by using the notion of animism or anything else for that matter' (p. 24). Instead, Yoneyama aims to focus on what she terms the "grassroots animism" of four individuals who happen to be Japanese. We will discuss below whether Yoneyama succeeds in this objective of escaping the overdetermined space (aka ideology) of Japanese animism, but it will be useful to begin this review by attempting to explain the significance of her approach. For many readers in Japanese Studies, the term "animism" will immediately bring to mind the reactionary atavistic writings of philosopher Takeshi Umehara (1925-2019), the first director of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (an institution known colloquially as the *Nichibunken*). From the 1980s, Umehara began to propound a vision of Japanese culture based on deep animist roots. This vision was taken up by several of Umehara's former associates at the Nichibunken, especially Yoshinori Yasuda. In her Introduction, Yoneyama (pp. 20-22) provides a short but incisive critique of the writings of this group, which we might call the *Alt-Nichibunken*. Umehara's animism was effectively an attempt at building a 'State Animism'. Even though Umehara himself was critical of the appropriation of Japan's cultural traditions by State Shinto in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, his response was to create the fantasy of a homogenous "forest civilisation" closely linked to the Japanese state and emperor. In this book, Yoneyama attempts to distance herself from this view of animism as nationalist discourse; in fact, she chooses to analyse the writings of four individuals who have taken "intellectual journeys" which have positioned themselves 'the furthest away one can get from presenting a national discourse' (p. 22).

The four substantive chapters of the volume discuss the work of Masato Ogata (b. 1953), a fisherman, activist and writer in Minamata; Michiko Ishimure (1927-2018), a writer best known for her *Paradise in the Sea of Sorrow: Our Minamata Disease*; sociologist Kazuko Tsurumi (1918-2006); and film director Hayao Miyazaki (b. 1941). These are all significant figures in post-war Japanese letters but do they, in fact, share an animist worldview? As discussed below, Ogata's view of the world could certainly be called *ecological*, but Yoneyama notes that he does not use the word "animism" (p. 54). Similarly, Ishimure rarely refers to animism, though Yoneyama stresses that 'an animistic theme runs

through her literary work' (p. 81). In contrast to Ogata and Ishimure, Miyazaki identifies his artistic philosophy as influenced by animism, although he denies its religious nature, saying 'I do like animism. I can understand the idea of ascribing character to stones and wind. But I don't want to laud it as a religion' (p. 180). Of the four individuals discussed here, it is the academic Tsurumi who was most explicit about her attempts to recover animism as a 'disappearing "*way of knowing*" that [she] discovered in Minamata' (p. 143) and to use that animism to build a new type of social science. The animism discussed in Yoneyama's book is, as the author herself admits (p. 223), *not* a religion (however one defines that) and rarely involves any rituals, although Ogata (p. 56) mentions several customs performed by fishermen in Minamata. Rather than "religion", Yoneyama offers the term "postmodern animism", defined as a 'philosophy of the life-world' (p. 224). Suddenly, "animism in contemporary Japan" looks more like an extension of phenomenology and the Romantic concern with the environment as a world of experience.

What, then, if not animism? My view is that analysing the four individuals in terms of *ecology* would have been more interesting and might have brought their ideas further away from the virally reproduced aura of Japanese Nature. The four individuals possess rather different views on nature and ecology, although all share the Romantic idea of the environment as a life-world that can transform self and society. Kazuko Tsurumi has by far the most academic take of the four, discovering animism in the beliefs of people in Minamata and being herself 'spiritually awakened' (p. 116) to its potential in developing a critique of modernity. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Tsurumi's work to appear in this volume is her discussion of the ecologist Kumagusu Minakata (1867-1941). Minakata's work on slime moulds has potential to link with recent debates in environmental philosophy—such as Timothy Morton's writings on queer ecology and the "strange stranger"—yet both Tsurumi and Yoneyama limit themselves to connections with esoteric Buddhism and animism.

Hayao Miyazaki's interest in nature began with him reading Sasuke Nakao's "broadleaf evergreen forest hypothesis", first published in 1966. This theory, which links western Japan with south China and Southeast Asia in an Austrian ethnology-inspired *Kulturkreis*, provided Miyazaki with a liberating means to understand that Japan 'was actually connected to the wider world beyond borders and ethnic groups' (p. 177). As well as an escape from nationalism, the theory also stimulated Miyazaki to 'believe that greenery was beautiful', in stark contrast to his younger days when he 'thought that greenery was nothing but a symbol of poverty' (p. 179). As a result, Miyazaki's Studio Ghibli attempts to incorporate aspects of the landscape including 'weather, time, rays of light, plants, water, and wind' in its films (p. 176). Miyazaki's comment that, 'Human relationships are not the only thing that is interesting' checks one of Lawrence Buell's boxes for classification as an environmental text, but his overall approach seems to limit the environment to "greenery", implying that, say, the depicted urban landscapes or the *un*-depicted train journeys in Yasujirō's Ozu's film *Tokyo Story* do not equally constitute environment. One critic has said that 'Miyazaki has "baptized a whole generation" with an animistic imagination' (p. 159), but in what way is Totoro more animistic than Winnie the Pooh—except that the former is portrayed within a Japanese context that invites

cultural readings associated with animism and folk Shinto?

Michiko Ishimure is well known as one of Japan's foremost environmental writers, and her work has been much discussed within ecocriticism. Ishimure's writings sometimes assign "personhood to nonhumans" including "crow-women" and *yamawaros* mountain spirits (pp. 82-84). The discussion here in Chapter 2 is unclear as to how Ishimure perceived the relations between human and nonhuman persons. Certain passages from her writings reproduced here suggest that nonhuman persons inhabited another world deep in the mountains and dark forests. Elsewhere, Ishimure claims that in the 'pre-pollution era of the Shiranui Sea, people, nature (including animals), and *kami* coexisted closely and intermingled with each other' (p. 83). The trajectory is from *living in* the world to *thinking about* the world (p. 93), the implication being that ecological relations only existed in a stage prior to modernity.

With his anxieties over consumerism, Masato Ogata is perhaps the most ecological of the four thinkers discussed here. Throwing his television out of his door into the front garden ('You beast! How dare you break into my house and order us around. Go there! Buy this!' [p. 49]), Ogata understands the close link between consumerism and ecology. Ogata's book *Chisso wa watashi de atta* ['I was Chisso'] should be an essential text for the Anthropocene, encapsulating so beautifully as it does the irony of the sudden realisation that it is we who have been destroying the world all along.

Other readers will no doubt have different takes on the ecology of the four people discussed in this volume, but my point is that thinking about their differences tell us a great deal about views of the environment in post-war Japan. By contrast, forcing all four into a box labelled 'animism' misses much that is interesting. *Animism in Contemporary Japan* succeeds in breaking and entering the 'State Animism' of the Alt-Nichibunken, but in my view, it is unable to achieve two of its objectives: escaping the dark star pull of Japanese culture and changing the world.

Let us take Japanese culture first. Yoneyama insists that her aim is not to critique the West or to develop binary East/West oppositions of the type found in the works of Umehara and Yasuda. The book indeed adopts a very different tone from the virulently anti-Western/anti-Christian tracts of Yasuda in particular (cf. the quote on p. 21 of this volume). However, 'the West' is primarily noticeable here by its absence; there is almost no discussion of how the animism of the four individuals might resonate with spiritual ideas beyond Japan. A rare exception is a brief mention of Saint Francis of Assisi who Yoneyama mistakenly describes as a 'medieval heretic' (p. 24)—although his ideas may have been unusual for his time, he would hardly have been canonised had he been a heretic! In assuming that the diverse writings and ideas analysed here can be glossed as 'animism in Japan', Yoneyama plays down the political functions of that phenomenon. Grassroots animism, like folk Shinto, is assumed to be egalitarian and apolitical. For example, in Table 3.2 (p. 130), the "Ideological function" of folk Shinto is listed as "Irrelevant". Such characterisations seem to me to overlook the agency of individuals participating in the social lives of local communities and local spirits. The work of anthropologist Rane Willerslev, for example, shows how Yukaghir hunters in Siberia regard animism as an ideology to be argued with and negotiated within.

What, then, about changing the world? Like many before her, Yoneyama seems to believe that Japan's unusual place within modernity gives the country a unique role in responding to the crises of that same modern system. Yoneyama claims that, 'the extent to which Japan has "never been modern" is greater than that of the advanced societies in the West' (p. 4). Similarly, for Antonio Negri, 'Japan's powerful cultural traditions which manage to co-exist with super-modernity have the potential to solve [the] conundrum' of 'finding a new way to coexist with nature' (p. 205). That Japan's amalgam of old and new provides a privileged position from which to build a new world order was exactly the point made by Umehara. Changing the world has always been the holy grail of what Timothy Morton calls the "religious style" of being ecological, but the grassroots animism of Japan—*however important to those people at the level of the grassroots*—is unlikely to find a broader resonance without a fundamental reframing of its terms of reference.

By now, it will be clear that I find this book's use of animism as a way of encapsulating the diverse and fascinating ideas discussed here as rather unconvincing. A sociological analysis of animism as a response to power or a focus on ecology (or environmental philosophy) would, in my view, have given the book a wider appeal. Despite this reservation, however, I found *Animism in Contemporary Japan* to be a stimulating and well-written work which provides a wonderful way to think through many important issues about ecology, society and contemporary Japan. The arguments of the volume resonate strongly with several key Anthropocene debates, especially those about responsibility, poetics, and civil society. I hope this book will be widely read and debated, both within Japanese Studies and beyond.

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Carter, Lyn. 2019. *Indigenous Pacific Approaches to Climate Change Aotearoa/ New Zealand.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan. 106 pp. Hb.: 57,19 €. ISBN: 9783319964393.

Edited by Andrew and Pamela Strathern, this series volume is as much an analysis of New Zealand's institutions relevant within the process of mitigating and adapting to climate change as it is a plea for the stronger involvement of Māori as New Zealand's indigenous people.

Against the background of New Zealand's heightened vulnerabilities alongside a perceived lack of adaptive strategies, Carter, who herself identifies as a member of the South Island *iwi* (tribal group) Kāi Tahu, develops her vision of engaging the traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) of Māori people (MEK) within New Zealand's current and future climate change policies.

The author thereby understands indigenous (IK) or Māori ecological knowledge (MEK) as a complimentary, place-based, and holistic way of knowing the environment from which, as Carter believes, countries like New Zealand could greatly benefit in times of need for adaptive solutions. Carter continues by introducing an alternative perspective on the critical concepts of mitigation and adaptation. From an indigenous or MEK perspective, mitigating and adapting are no longer viewed as representing two distinct strategies but rather become one within a state of perpetual transition and the continuous negotiation of relationships between people, land and sea, ancestors and future generations.

In *Chapter 3*, the author gives an overview of the key principles governing Māori relationships with their environment. By calling on folk tales, place names, and traditional land use practices, Carter strengthens the aspects of both interrelatedness and flexibility that characterise Māori environmental knowledge. Furthermore, the author points out the many cultural similarities and close ties that connect New Zealand with its Pacific neighbours. As part of this chapter, the author also reviews international institutional frameworks like the IPCC regarding their recognition of and potential for including indigenous knowledge.

Having evaluated the potential for including traditional ecological knowledge for climate change mitigation and adaptation on the international level, in the subsequent chapters, Carter turns back to the situation in New Zealand. In *Chapter 4*, the author retraces New Zealand's history of land use change through both indigenous and non-indigenous modifications of the natural environment while simultaneously reviewing the domestic legislative conditions, such as the Resource Management Act of 1991 for including Māori ecological knowledge (MEK). Subsequently, Carter offers a critical analysis of New Zealand's commitment to carbon emissions reductions focusing on the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme (NZETS) and Māori reactions to it. As New Zealand is currently lagging in meeting its reduction goals, Carter identifies several problems within the current ETS and calls for carbon contract models that can be applied in line with cultural values and practices.

Chapter 6 focuses on the interplay of *iwi* or Māori stakeholders, the local coun-

cils and the central government in the context of climate change adaptation. As in the previous chapters, the author uses multiple case studies to highlight successful collaborative projects. Carter further strengthens her argument by introducing a Māori-led adaptation initiative from the South Island, the NIWA Arowhenua Pā report, as an example of an integrated approach. The NIWA Arowhenua Pā report is a collaborative research project by the New Zealand National Institute for Weather and Atmospheric Research Ltd. (NIWA) and local *iwi* focusing on past and future flooding hazards. The results of the report stress the importance of social capital and capacity building for future adaptation, thereby resonating with Carter's plea for an approach that integrates long term, place-based knowledge for adaptation.

In the final chapter, the author broadens the perspective once again by reviewing mitigation and adaptation efforts and strategies from other Pacific countries. Additionally, final considerations of combining new innovative technologies, such as new adaptive crops and housing strategies with TEK/MEK approaches are presented.

Readers from social and cultural anthropology, indigenous studies and other related disciplines interested in the topic of climate change will find Lyn Carter's study an interesting read. The book offers an introduction to both New Zealand's climate change policies and institutional frameworks as well as indigenous Māori and Pacific perspectives on human-environment relations. The combination of institutional analysis and information from case studies provides interesting insights to both scholars, indigenous people, and policymakers in New Zealand, Oceania, and beyond.

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Pandian, Anand and Stuart McLean (eds.). 2017. *Crumpled Paper Boat: Experiments in Ethnographic Writing*. Durham, London: Duke University Press. 264 pp. Pb.: $25.95. ISBN: 9780822363408.

It is a widely accepted assumption that writing is an essential element in all stages of the anthropological pursuit. However, questions such as: 'What does it mean to write anthropologically?', 'Where are the limits of a text to be labelled ethnographical?', 'What does ethnographical writing ought to include, and what does it need to avoid?' inevitably produce diverse and conflicting answers. Thirty years after *Writing culture*, a group of anthropologists convened for a seminar on literary anthropology within the School of Advanced Research, which (also) resulted in the collection *Crumpled paper boat: Experiments in ethnographic writing*. Eleven authors created heterogeneous and explorative contributions, addressing some crucial issues of contemporary anthropology: representation, voice, responsibility, reality, craft, power, and ambiguity.

The *Introduction*, written collectively and signed merely as "Paper Boat Collective", establishes an interesting communal voice(s). The collective claims that 'anthropologists write, and write a lot', but the majority of these pursuits are 'evaluated with a narrow standard of accuracy in mind: how closely they 'represent' some other world out there, how faithfully they mediate between that world and those who make and consume anthropological texts' (p. 12). However, and I think this notion is crucial in understanding both the reviewed collection and the literary anthropology in general – transmission between the lived world and the written text is much more than merely an issue of accuracy. 'Writing, as a mode of expression, shares its creative energy with the milieus from which it emerges' (p. 13–14), which precisely implies that the ethnographical texts can follow a more experimental, less linear path. There is an epistemological place for both uncertainty and doubt but also for rethinking the notion of reality. For – as the contributors point out – the problem anthropologists face 'is not a lack of reality, but what to do with it' (p. 20).

In the opening chapter, Angela Garcia discusses how to incorporate a collection of letters written by her informants, three generations of female kin in New Mexico. The questions of how to archive, read and reproduce them are placed in a broader contextual frame of addiction and loss – as one informant writes in a letter to her mother: 'It's hard to write because it hurts' (p. 30). In his inventively, richly woven text, Michael Jackson elaborates on the questions of fidelity, pointing out that '[P]erhaps literary anthropology holds out the promise that we may finally do justice to appearances and find virtue in verisimilitude without the fear that we are behaving unprofessionally, or repudiating science' (p. 51). Furthermore (his writings being a beautiful embodiment of it), he claims: 'Language should be used to express rather than impress, to connect people rather than create hierarchies' (p. 64).

In the chapter about anthropological poetry or "anthropoetry", Adrie Kusserow uses poetry to convey the unsettling images and liminal places of confusion when researching refugees from South Sudan. Poetry helped her to 'bring to the forefront of consciousness a whole landscape of deep emotion, unspoken inequalities, and conceptual

complexity' but also to employ 'a different tone of voice, a more vulnerable and more emphatic one' (p. 87).

Stuart McLean's chapter is a poem, *Sea*, as well, but, unlike Kusserow's, written in a form which that his own verses as well as fragments from other texts in a somehow postmodern manner. The poem and the sea itself share its ever-moving, fluctuational nature, with no clear beginning and end. The postscript added at the end is a valuable insight into the ethnographical background of the poem. It also brings forth an interesting question, namely how much context do we need to grasp a text ethnographically? To what extent are the readers challenged when encountering experimental ethnographic writing? Do less conventional, more ambiguous texts also require more active, open or even "experimental" audiences? Especially when encountered with poetry (Kusserow, McLean), ethnographic fiction, placed in Cape Town at the beginning of the 21st century, intertwined with the thoughts on denial and denialism (Tobias Hecht), or intensive perspectival shifts in Anand Pandian's writing about desire in Indian cinema. A compelling solution to the danger of texts being too hermetic is the short reflections that follow every chapter. These commentaries widen (and sometimes deepen) the readers' experience of each chapter.

Perhaps the crucial tool when grasping these texts is the willingness to imagine. This brings us to Stefania Pandolfo's text, in which she deals with the experience of madness in Morocco. The author uses the term "imaginal" when discussing the paintings created by Ilyas, one of her informants, who suffers from psychotic illness. She compares both Ilyas and ethnographer to a seismographer when it comes to 'allowing her voice, and her words, to be transmuted' (p. 106). Her contribution is valuable because it also shows one possible way of writing about (and with) primarily visual ethnographic material.

Todd Ramón Ochoa, who is discussing the phenomenon of bembé in Cuba, effectively introduces the multi-layered features of it through a fleeting conversation with a librarian at the university in North Carolina. When describing bembé, he states: 'It moves to, and is moved by, outside forces. It is receptive to outside forces and seeks them, thus regularly churning out new versions of itself' (p. 177). Thus, in a way, it resembles ethnographic writing.

The dynamic between "outside" voice in the form of a radio conversation with a hunter and theoretical insights of Ortega y Gasset creates an interesting counterpoint in Daniella Gandolfo's contribution. The last chapter, *A proper message* by Lisa Stevenson, is a moving and masterly composed textual montage that questions care, voice, grief, and loss in the Canadian Arctic.

An interesting common thematic anchorage of numerous chapters (Garcia, Kusserow, Hecht, McLean, Stevenson, Gandolfo) is indeed loss, death or some form of trauma. Perhaps the experimental yet highly deliberate modes of ethnographic writing can also enable articulating the most sensitive nuances of anthropological pursuit. Because, as Kathleen Stewart phrase in the *Epilogue*: 'The authors […] turn these essays into a problematic of what writing does to thought' (p. 230). One of the valuable qualities of the collection is precisely its openness to potentially vulnerable encounters.

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