

the production of rock art. But these are not so much criticisms of this book as a recognition that interdisciplinarity has much to contribute to this field and there remains exciting work to be done.

Chris Low

Liisberg, Sune, Esther Oluffa Pedersen, and Anne Line Dalsgård (eds.): *Anthropology and Philosophy. Dialogues on Trust and Hope*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2015. 293 pp. ISBN 978-1-78238-556-1. Price: \$ 95.00

“The present book is no ordinary anthology. It is a workroom in which anthropologists and philosophers have commenced on a dialogue on the two research topics, trust and hope, that are important for the field of anthropology as well as for the field of philosophy. The interdisciplinary efforts of the contributors demonstrate how the coming together of anthropologists and philosophers can result in new and challenging ways of thinking.”

The above passage comes from the close of the editorial introduction (18) and is a fair summary of the book’s offerings. In particular, the book suggests methodological innovations concerning how research topics might be conceptualised, studied, and written-up in an interdisciplinary fashion.

Besides the “Introduction,” the book comprises six dialogues and an epilogue. Each dialogue sees an anthropologist and a philosopher (from Denmark or the USA) working in pairs; they work to focus their attention on a shared research topic, exploring how their specialised methodologies might be brought into profitable relation. Their deliberation is then written-up as a brief joint statement, followed either by a jointly written essay or by two essays that comment closely upon one another. The premise of the volume is that “trust” and “hope” – but surely not only these key themes – can best be understood when “a strong empirical foundation” and “an equally strong conceptual exploration” are practised in alignment. The book ends with a joint summation by Anne Line Dalsgård and Søren Harnow Klausen, “Anthropology and Philosophy in Dialogue?,” reflecting on the book’s intentions and outcome.

In “Dialogue One,” Cheryl Mattingly and Uffe Juul Jensen discuss “Practical Philosophy and Hope as a Moral Project among African-Americans.” Mattingly and Jensen jointly author a chapter that takes its lead from Aristotle, Kant, and Sartre, all of whom advised that exegetical philosophy needs to look beyond itself in order to comment successfully on worldly matters. This “beyond” includes other disciplines as well as the social practices and ordinary language of those whose affairs one would know and improve. “Hope” as a moral project entails taking informants’ first-person perspectives on the future and placing these in a cosmopolitan context.

In “Dialogue Two,” Michael D. Jackson and Thomas Schwarz Wentzer debate “Existential Anthropology and the Category of the New.” Jackson and Wentzer author two chapters that both consider the existential human imperative to lead a fulfilled life. Jackson describes “existential dissatisfaction” among the Kuranko as they endeavour to improve their lot materially, socially, and spiritually;

Wentzer examines the universal existential desire that human beings have to experience the new: a new beginning in a world that reflects our intentionality and desire.

In “Dialogue Three,” Esther Oluffa Pedersen and Lotte Meinert deliberate upon “Intentional Trust in Uganda.” Pedersen and Meinert write two chapters but coordinate their lines of research: both consider trust and distrust among the social spheres of Meinert’s Ugandan informants, combining her fieldwork with Pedersen’s theorisations of “prima facie trust” (or distrust) as against “reflective trust” as against “the locus of trust.” The exercise aims to bring out both the cultural environment in Uganda and the agency of those working within it.

In “Dialogue Four,” Sune Liisberg and Nils Bubandt deliberate on “Trust, Ambiguity, and Indonesian Modernity.” Bubandt and Liisberg begin by sharing data: Bubandt’s fieldwork material from Indonesia, where trust, authenticity, power, and forgery find a complex entwinement, is juxtaposed against Liisberg’s philosophical interpretation of trust as linked to the tolerance of ambiguity and benign forms of self-deception. Each then reaches their own conclusions in their own chapters while sharing a common research question: “Can inauthenticity and self-deception be contained within trusting relationships?”

In “Dialogue Five,” Sverre Raffnsøe and Hirokazu Miyazaki discuss “Gift-Giving and Power between Trust and Hope.” Raffnsøe has his philosophical ideas responded to by Miyazaki through the lens of gift-giving in Fiji and Japan. Raffnsøe is concerned with the way in which successful organisational management requires both power and trust. Miyazaki responds by showing how gift-givers in Fiji place trust in gift-receivers – anchoring their thoughts in hope – as part of a wider practice to obviate uncertainty in life; the Japanese government, meanwhile, failed to manage a campaign of reciprocal (hopeful) gift-giving after the nuclear disasters of 2011.

In “Dialogue Six,” Anders Moe Rasmussen and Hans Lucht debate being “With Kierkegaard in Africa.” Rasmussen and Lucht take as a common starting point Kierkegaard’s understanding of hope as an existential structure in human life. Their chapters then diverge in their analyses of Kierkegaard’s position – in particular his understanding of nihilism – and their application of it to Obama’s American Presidential campaign of 2008 (Rasmussen) and to hopes of Ghanaian fishermen that the outside world will respond to their plea for viable livelihoods (Lucht).

The “Epilogue” penned by Dalsgård and Klausen offers a “meta-reflection” on the book’s project. Philosophy and anthropology may have a history of negative bias towards one another’s endeavours; notwithstanding, recent decades of generic blurring have seen calls for interdisciplinary (or cross- or transdisciplinary) engagements. Can empirical discovery be more closely integrated with conceptual metaphysics? Moreover, the shortcomings of linking philosophy exclusively or even primarily with cognitive studies – where “empirical” findings derive from experimental laboratories – are remedied when anthropology can provide research material that is contextualised in “real life.” Is there some way for anthropological espous-

als of particularity and philosophical generality to meet in “theoretically sound understandings of real human life?” “Ideally, philosophy could be prompted by the findings of anthropology to ask new questions, which would then be subjected to fieldwork by anthropologists” (275).

This volume is a serious, innovative, and patient attempt to meet disciplinary difference with candour, and to work beyond it; it is imbued with the sobriety and good faith of its contributors. It also upholds a kind of tradition in (what might now be termed) “thinking outside the box” that characterises, certainly on the anthropological side of the fence, the work of some of the most innovative and inspirational figures, including Gregory Bateson, Edmund Leach, Clifford Geertz, Ernest Gellner, George Devereux and Marilyn Strathern. Devereux (*Ethnopsychanalyse*. Berkeley 1978: 1–3) espoused what he called an “ergodic hypothesis” whereby a natural fact of human life would be approached from a number of different disciplinary directions the better to achieve an appreciation of the “prism-sightedness” of life and matter (the latter phrasing being from the novelist Lawrence Durrell [Justine. London 1980: 28]). The fact that a natural fact could be multiply approached – made sense of in many disciplinary ways – went to prove the facticity of the world, Devereux urged. Given this complexity in nature, was it not an intellectual duty to seek to know a thing from as many vantage-points as one could command (cf. Rapport, *Edifying Anthropology. Culture as Conversation: Representation as Conversation*. In: A. James, J. Hockey, and A. Dawson [eds.], *After Writing Culture. Epistemology and Praxis in Contemporary Anthropology*. London 1997: 177–193)?

Devereux’s ergodic hypothesis could also be said to speak to the mission statement of anthropology as an intellectual enterprise: a non-specialist “interdisciplinary discipline” (Bateson, *Anthropological Theories. Science* 129.1959: 294–298) that was “born omniform” (Geertz, *Local Knowledge*. New York 1983)? Has not anthropology long recognised that only through practising its “intellectual poaching license” (Kluckhohn, cited in Geertz 1983: 21) and making use of all manner of data (however seemingly amateurishly) could anthropology expect to tackle the vast intricacies of the worlds of human consciousness, experience and interaction? “Anthropology and Philosophy” takes its hopeful place in this cosmopolitan tradition of writing individual lives in the context of universal human capacities.

Nigel Rapport

McKirdy, Carol: *Practicing Oral History with Immigrant Narrators*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2015. 177 pp. ISBN 978-1-62958-004-3. (Practicing Oral History Series, 3) Price: £ 17.99

“Practicing Oral History” is true to its title a how to do guide for apprentice oral historians or more experienced interviewers who would like to work with immigrant narrators. Hence it is a guidebook and concentrates on conveying information, reflections, and a plethora of practical advises on how to deal with interviewees who will have experiences of trauma, might have little or no knowledge of the new language, and might be suffering

from severe culture shock and homesickness. The book is written from an Australian perspective with some references to US American sources. The author lives in Sydney and practices as an adult educator, teaching English as a second language, and owns a consulting company called “History Herstory” (177).

If readers are looking for a theoretical or methodological reflection of oral history as a valid method in history or ethnography, they might need to look somewhere else. If they, however, are looking for a reader offering hands on project management, this book is a great place to start planning interviews and oral history and for training students. Immigrant narrators for McKirdy are assumed to be political refugees and she writes to prepare the reader for worst scenario cases. This is helpful as it encourages a high level of caution for the interviewer and most of all meticulous preparation.

McKirdy writes from a vast experience with oral history projects with immigrant communities and also projects with tangible outcomes such as podcasts, videos, exhibitions, and written material. She is focused on producing data and results that can be shared with these communities and ideally also have a potential to enhance tolerance and cultural communication in the new settlement areas of these migrants. The book is divided into nine chapters all of which give very useful introduction and additional literature on doing oral history research. Some of the advice can be found in any book on ethnographic fieldwork, but in the context of working with refugee communities or individuals such methodological guidance becomes more powerful and the advice to be prepared and informed about the culture you engage with develops a new urgency. Especially important are chapters 3 and 4 on “Trauma” and “Cultural Awareness.” McKirdy urges the reader to do their homework on the country of origin, to be familiar with the historical and political context and also possible migrant routes (borders, escape routes and refugee camps). She emphasizes the need to accept the narrator’s version of events, reminding the reader that so-called official sources of information likely are written by the very governments or regimes that forced the refugee to leave and caused trauma in the first place. “Terrible events the narrator remembers may have been officially justified, sanitised, or ‘forgotten’ in mainstream historical records” (55). Therefore, “what the community thinks is significant ... should be recorded” (22) and a “real understanding of the community is essential; otherwise the interviewer will not know what to ask” (21).

When dealing with trauma and, therefore, narratives of trauma and the performance, the actual telling of tragic and horrific events she rightly cautions the interviewer to be prepared that not just the narrator but also the interviewer might be negatively affected by the stories shared. As to the content emerging from transcriptions she prepares the reader that “[t]raumatic memories differ from normal memories that are articulated in predictable narrative structures. Traumatic memories are often disjointed ... and the memories may be fragmented” (51 f.).

The book ends with an example of a refugee story that was recorded and is now being used as a final step-by-