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McLean, Athena and Annette Leiba (eds.). 2007. *The Shadow side of Fieldwork. Exploring the Blurred Borders between Ethnography and Life*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. 328 pp. Pb.: £22.99 / EUR 31.10. ISBN: 9781405169813.

What do the editors mean by 'shadow'? The foreword and introduction explain their discomfort with modernity's assumption of an objective reality that still constitutes the production of knowledge in a male-dominated, academic world. Its basic dichotomy between subjectivity and objectivity invokes a series of oppositions, such as life versus work, participation versus observation, personal versus political, interior versus exterior, and experience versus representation. Their aim, however, is not merely to highlight the inevitability and importance of the former positions, often discarded as 'feminine', soft, and unscientific. Rather, they have invited authors to reflect on the twilight-zones that lie between and beyond these oppositions, that is, within the intersubjective, social process of researcher and other, and behind or underlying these relationships, hidden within the individual selves of researcher and researched. To shed light on these realms is to bring feelings, intuitions, memories, expectations to the fore, which tend to be ignored or circumvented – consciously or unconsciously – in positivist-oriented research, but nevertheless guide, sometimes inspire, sometimes restrict, the anthropological encounter. Awareness of and reflexivity on these dark sides are not to promote a renewed romanticism of the exotic other, nor narcissistic navel-gazing on behalf of the researcher. On the contrary, their disclosure is to deepen the theoretical, epistemological, and methodological soils of fieldwork, and the moral/ethical grounds on which ethnographic knowledge should rest.

The result of their call is a dozen accounts by authors of varying experience and expertise, loosely organized into five parts according to specific sets of oppositions and realms. These chapters turn out not simply to be illuminating. The courageously displayed intimacy and proximity in those texts evoke an embodied readership. They touch, arouse respect, empathy, anger, and smiles, at times also estrangement, as the authors take the reader to the heart of their encounters, with their selves and others.

Take, for instance, Alisse Waterston and Barbara Rylko-Bauer, and Anne Lovell, struggling with secrecy and silence. In each of the cases they present, the silence of their informants was not broken by words. Not words of persuasion, nor historical and political justifications to probe into their most intimate sphere, nor well-intended curiosity, but – paradoxically – silence itself made their secrets come out, in the respected silence of a mother choosing her own time, the respect of a father for his independent daughter after four years of silence, in the silence of Lovell's own secrecy, noted and appreciated by her interviewee. These accounts not only offer valuable methodological insights by de-emphasizing the importance of the spoken word in interviewing, but teach foremost lessons of respect.

Vincent Crapanzano and Thomas Csordas reach toward realities beyond what can be grasped empirically, objectively. The shades they describe, whether as a felt collectivity that may initiate collective feeling and intersubjective knowing, or as spontaneous instances of empathy and intuition that connect the ethnographer with others, are as real to their informants as they become to the ethnographer when allowing

himself to be immersed in their symbolic and material worlds. These realities are not 'delusions' only because they are beyond rational comprehension, but realms that his body experiences, senses, against all (minded) odds.

Jason Szabo and Annette Leibling expose the easily neglected historicity of epistemologies. The former illuminates the social, medical, and personal biographies in the history of American hospices, the latter the influence of personal and professional trajectories, to bring in retrospect to light what until then had remained invisible, unexpressed, and therefore unknown. Nancy Scheper-Hughes, Meira Weiss, and Rose-Marie Chierici take this lesson into the contemporaneity of the quite upsetting politics of their respective fields. Theirs are advocacies of personal and emotional involvement, which, as they argue, cannot and should not be avoided in order to acknowledge and voice the Other's humanity. In particular, Weiss's brave account gives a disturbing insight in the necessity and inevitability of an interplay between distance and proximity in forensic examinations of dead bodies in Israel, and between professional and personal positioning that confront her with ethical dilemmas of loyalty towards her country and truthfulness towards her discipline.

The chapters by Dimitris Papageorgiou, Ellen Corin, and Athena McLean, in contrast, stress that it is not the researcher but the researched who determines the development and outcome of investigations. It is the football hooligan or musician who decides on the access and quality of relationship; the psychotic and their caretakers in Zaire, Canada and India are ones who administer social inclusion and exclusion, countering the western view of their 'marginality'. The nurses, physicians, administrators, and elderly suffering from dementia are the ones who, willingly or unwillingly, force the ethnographer to take sides. The fieldworker is left but to deal with the partial views the positions adjusted to him/her inevitably entail.

At first, I must admit, I felt weary of yet another project revolting against modernity's positivist stances, to read again an urging to combine in order to transcend the dichotomies it implies. The extensive theoretical and methodological explanations and justifications for approaching the shadows, in effect, create a reinforcement of the hegemony of those very (binary) oppositions that still seem to direct our understanding of the ethnographic field. Defence, in the process of guarding ourselves, has to acknowledge the very power and strength it seeks to resist. Besides, after having been drawn emotionally and intellectually into these lucid and transparent accounts, towards both researcher and researched, I started to wonder what, in fact, is shadow and what light. If these descriptions of so-called twilight-zones arouse what should be the very essence of the ethnographic method, isn't it time by now to take modernity's 'blindness' out of its parentheses, and to dismiss the two centuries that have passed since 'Enlightenment' as the second 'Dark Age' in western history for good?

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